



Frederick Frank Brush

July 27, 1939 - February 4, 2025

On Tuesday, February 4th, 2025, Frederick Frank Brush, our dad, our grandpa, and our friend passed peacefully from this world, at his residence in Portland, Oregon. Fred shared his music and talents freely in his communities and touched many lives with his incredible sense of music and artistic sensibilities. Fred went out of his way to connect with people by sharing his music, his eye for beautiful art, or just in a simple caring word.

Born July 27, 1939, to Perry Oliver Brush and Ruth Lowry Brush, Fred started his childhood years in Lovell, Wyoming. Later on, Fred, his sister Jane, and his parents moved to Billings, Montana. His mom, a talented ukulele player, started Fred on his musical journey early, and taught him the foundations of music first on the ukulele. Fred flourished and moved onto guitar and bass, teaching himself how to read and play music. One summer, Fred broke both of his legs exploring the wilds of Montana and whiled away the summer days healing by honing his guitar skills. Fred graduated from Senior High School in 1957. Fred attended college at the University of Montana after high school, where, always the cool cat, he started up a great swing band called the Sultans of Swing.

In the fall of 1959, Fred joined the Air Force as a linguist. He spent a year studying Russian at the University of Indiana before his first duty station in Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. He intercepted Russian communications and

translated for the Air Force. Later, the Air Force transferred Fred to Misawa Air Force Base in Japan. There, he met and married his wife Kiyoko Kubo and adopted his daughter Sonya (Hidemi). In 1964, just before leaving the Air Force and still stationed in Japan, he and Kiyoko had their second daughter Adrienne Marie.

In the autumn of 1964, Fred, Kiyoko, Sonya, and baby Adrienne all moved to live with Fred's parents in Billings, Montana. As they got their feet under them, Fred and Kiyoko found their own apartment and settled into Billings. Fred worked in jobs ranging from retail management, musical instrument repair, to business ownership, and finally, as a pipeline scheduler with Cenex Refinery to support his burgeoning family. Making Billings their permanent home, Fred and Kiyoko had five more children: Mitchell Oliver (1965), Keith Nicholas (1972), Patrick Phillip (1978), Melissa Susan (1979), and Jennifer Lisa (1983). Fred and Kiyoko were married until 2001.

Fred met his partner Lynn Nelson in 2001 through their common passion for jazz music. The two took their musical act on the road and moved to the warmer seasonal air of Pinehurst, North Carolina in 2004, where they both integrated immediately into the music community. The two made music and cherished one another until Lynn passed away on January 17, 2025.

Fred moved to Portland, Oregon in June 2024 to live near his son Keith and daughter-in-law Jodi. He found peace and happiness in his final memories with family and the simple life he made there.

In all of his adventures, Fred always had time to continue to develop his growth and secondary career as a musician. He played in and led multiple jazz and pop groups in Montana and North Carolina, like the Gentlemen of Jazz, the Noel Collins Jazztet, Meadowlark, and the Sandhills Community Jazz Band. He studied the bass guitar extensively and ultimately tried out for

and won a prized position in the Billings Symphony playing the double bass. He contributed greatly to the schools and other musical organizations across Montana and North Carolina through musical lessons and composing commissioned musical arrangements. There wasn't a gig he would turn down.

Fred also had a passion for painting, photography, and art. He always had a camera slung around his neck on family vacations and snapped candid shots of his babies and young kids. After he retired, he spent much of his free time painting landscapes and still lifes. You can always find a Fred Brush original hanging in the homes of his children and grandchildren.

Fred was preceded in death by his father and mother Perry and Ruth Brush, his stepmother Laverna Brush, his sister Jane Vander Voorden, his daughter Adrienne Brush, and his granddaughter Megan Steger.

Fred is survived by his daughter Sonya Brush, partner Lance Johnson; grandchildren Kristine, Sarah, and Jordan (from daughter Adrienne Brush - deceased); son Mitchell Brush, wife Blaire Brush, and grandchildren Kristian, Davis, Parker, and Cooper; his son Keith Brush and wife Jodi Brush; his son Patrick Brush, wife Victoria Bruyette, and grandchildren Saiyuri and Asher; his daughter Melissa Berry, husband Cyrus Berry, and grandchildren, Noah, Amaya, and Chriyoko; and daughter Jennifer Brush, partner Brad Morse, and grandchildren Marian, Elissa, and Alex.

Fred's remains will come back to Billings, Montana to rest with his family. The family is currently making plans to hold the memorial service and reception in Billings and will share further details soon.

Tribute Wall

ES

“ One time me and grandpa were sitting at the piano AMD he was playing it I was really little I think I was like 5 years old and uncle Keith was there uncle pat and I think uncle Mitch too but that is one of my favorite memories

Evalyne Steger - February 13, 2025 at 05:31 PM

DD

“ When I was a sophomore in high school, I joined the Noel Collins Jazztet as their drummer and met Fred Brush at my first job with the band at the Holiday Inn in Billings Heights! We had some printed music, but often songs were called with no music! During the first hour we played a tune I did not know and Noel's only help for me was to tell me it was a bossa nova!?! We took a break and Fred pulled me aside to tell me what a bossa nova was and what it should sound like! He became a wonderful starting that night! That was first of many memories and wonderful hours of making music with Fred and that band! He always had a smile and always made me feel like his best friend. The world has lost a true “gem” of a person. A part of him will always be a part of me!
Dennis Dell

Dennis Dell - February 13, 2025 at 11:55 AM

LW

“ I met Fred shortly after retiring to Pinehurst directly across his house and learned he too was a guitarist. We had many days playing together and comparing our guitars. Fred had so many talents. My wife and I performed at our daughter's wedding and Fred was kind enough to help with the musical arrangements for voice, piano, and guitar. We also met them at their favorite restaurant, Dugan's, who treated them as family. Another favorite time for me was when I saw Fred on his front porch in the mid afternoon and I would walk over with a glass of wine to join Fred. I miss Fred and those days. Larry

Larry Williams - February 12, 2025 at 06:13 PM

JE

“ Grateful is what comes to mind when I think of memories with my dad. For the passion of music he instilled in me, for my colorful imagination and love of stories, for my desire to create, and for my love of learning. I can't pick just one favorite memory - but all of them are wrapped up into what has made me into the woman I am today, and he used to tell me all the time that he sure was proud of me.
I love you Dad. I miss you, and I'm so grateful that I got to have you as my dad.



Jenny-Bun - February 12, 2025 at 01:26 PM