



## Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto

December 23, 2012

Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto, age 70, passed away on Sunday, December 23, 2012 at the Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare Center with the support and blessings of his family.

Born in Utica on August 9, 1942, Dominick was the son of the late Michael and Virginia M. (LaRocco) Robilotto. He was a graduate of T.R. Proctor High School class of 1960. He then attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music. He pursued his post-graduate work at Syracuse University where he was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Music Education. On November 18, 1967 he was wed to the former Dorene Vance; they were a fun-loving couple who shared a relationship that fell short of years when she passed away on August 22, 1980.

Dick began his lifetime career as an educator and mentor in the field of music instruction. He began at the Poland School District where he taught for 28 years and was affectionately known as "Mr. R.", and "The Mayor of Poland". Thereafter, he accepted a position with the Utica City School District where he educated students at multiple sites for 9 years. Lastly, he worked as a private teacher for students from Our Lady of Lourdes, Sacred Heart, and Notre Dame. He was a teacher who knew patience and followed through with his students. He was masterful at playing the trumpet and also was proficient in playing all brass and woodwind instruments, as well as piano. Music was his life and he devoted a vast number of years to this passion. At the age of 9, he

joined the Utica Post 229 Drum & Bugle Corps. This led him to many years as the Drum Major and later instructor of the Magnificent Yankees. He wrote, arranged and taught music with the Syracuse Brigadiers, Syracuse University Marching Orangemen, Cicero North Syracuse North Stars and many marching bands and drum corps along the East coast. This earned them the honors of marching in the Orange, Rose Bowl, and Sugar Bowl Parades. He was a lifetime member of the NY State Federation of Judges and Local 51 of the Musician's Union where he served as a Past Officer. At one time, he played with Sal Alberico's Big Band, the Utica College Band, and conducted the Summer Band Concerts in Dolgeville.

Dick was quiet by nature and a comedian at heart with a witty sense of humor. He raised his children as a single parent and he adored his daughters. He taught them to trust in themselves and develop a sense of family bond that held them together to this very day. Dick was blessed with a second chance at love when he was reunited with his childhood friend, Geraldine "Gerri" Vivenco. Together, they enjoyed 23 years of happiness and adventure, with 13 of those years bonded by marriage. He was also afforded a second opportunity to be a father to Gerri's sons who loved him as a Dad. The community graciously acknowledged Dick and referred to him as the "Best of the Best", and he was respected and admired by all. He was also a concerned son and a beloved brother who never forgot his humble beginnings. Throughout his life and career, he had the support of his entire family. In his earlier years, he enjoyed snowmobiling and downhill skiing, and he had an affection for antique cars and attended many car shows. He savored the serenity of his home and was proud of the fact that the West Canada Creek was in his backyard, a place where he could sun himself and hear the water ripple past, enhanced by the sounds of the kayakers and canoers yelling out "Hi, Mr. R.!" Dick was of the Catholic faith.

Dick is survived by his wife, Gerri; his daughters, Marlene M. Robilotto of Lowell, MA, and Renee A. Robilotto of NY Mills; his step-sons and daughters-

in-law, David and Donnamarie Sprague of N. Utica, and Gaetano "Guy" and Beth Ann Sprague of Sunapee, NH; and the apple of his eye, his step-granddaughter, Ellis Margaret. He also leaves behind his sister, Marie Robilotto of Utica; aunts and uncles including Anne LaNeve, Lucy and Jim Rondinelli, and Joseph Vivenco; many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, in-laws Ann and Thomas Scheuer, Eleanor Acquaviva, and Guy and Shirley Vivenco. He was also blessed with a life filled with many wonderful friends, especially acknowledging Anthony and Marilyn DeFazio, longtime and devoted friends who demonstrated great support; and "Corky" Fabrizio, his music collaborator and longtime friend. He was predeceased by his infant sister, Phyllis Ann.

The family would like to thank the ICU and 6th Floor staffs at the Faxon-St. Luke's Healthcare Center who were outstanding in their care of Dick and his family.

Visitation will be held Thursday from 4:00-7:00 at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. By family request, please omit floral offerings. Dick's funeral service and Celebration of Life will commence on Friday morning at 11:00 from the funeral home and at 12:00 noon at St. Mary of Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Parish where his Mass of Christian Burial will be offered by Rev. James Cesta. Interment will take place in Calvary Cemetery at the convenience of the family

# Cemetery Details

## Calvary Cemetery

2407 Oneida Street  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 735-2727

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **27**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.  
932 South Street  
corner of Hammond Ave.  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 724-6714  
eannacefh@roadrunner.com  
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ Eannace Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto



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**Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.** - December 23, 2012 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ Mr. Robilotto was a major, positive influence on my life through junior high and high school at Spokane Central School, where I played piccolo and flute. His humor, his patience, helped him deal with my less-than-perfect playing. His dedication to the band, launching of the jazz ensemble and dedication to 1-on-1 lessons made him an important role model for me during my time at PCS during my formative years in the late '60s and early '70s. Thank you, Dick. You were truly a mensch. I love you.

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**Elizabeth Stein** - December 13, 2025 at 04:31 AM

ES

“Spokane” should read “Poland”. But you knew that, right?

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**Elizabeth Stein** - December 13, 2025 at 04:33 AM

CP

“ My sister Nancy played clarinet, my sister Patty played the flute and piccolo, my brother Michael played the trumpet and sang in the PCS Jazz band, and I played the clarinet from second grade until I graduated from PCS because of this man. . .he was more than just our music teacher and band instructor. . .he was our neighbor and friend that brought us into his family and became part of our family. . .we babysat his daughters, Marlena and Rene. I can close my eyes and see/hear him playing "House Of The Rising Sun" on his trumpet on a rare occasion while conducting and then moving into the horn section and performing with the PCS Senior Band and I am so very PROUD to have been part of many winning trips to Sherburne!! Many of us experienced the best mornings of our youth 3 days a week in that basement of PCS. . .will always remember his masterfully conducting the band to perform "Niagra" and the emotions he could get out of all of us. . .know that "Mr. Robilotto" is a very blessed man and may he play his trumpet beautifully in Heaven for all of us to hear . . .God Bless You Dominick J. Dick Robilotto with our love, Cathy Slocum Perry

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**Cathy Slocum Perry** - March 24, 2013 at 06:38 AM



“ Dear girls.....

*About Dick....what he meant to the Rommel Family...how do we count the way?...to Cheri..he lead the way....he showed her how to perform, to practice... to do her best in music, in academics and in sports...He INSPIRED... as a Mom, I looked to Dick for help in showing me how to parent....When it came to Scott...he said..."don't worry!..., he's having fun and he like's it....we'll let him stay...even though his more talented younger sister insisted he get OUSTED!! "NOPE", said Dick, he wanted every KID who loved music to be a part of it...AND THAT IS THE REASON POLAND HAD THE REPUTATION OF A MUSIC SCHOOL...AND THAT IS WHY.....Dick Robilotto's reputation will live as long as his students do.....even to this day....Cheri, Holly and. yes, even Scott, can play a Tune on a Horn...*

*SO, DICK, listen up....it may not measure up to the highest standard...but,,,you'll LOVE IT..*

*GOD BLESS YOU FOR CARING FOR EVERY BIRD IN THE FOREST.....*

*Love*

*Mary Rommel*

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**Mary Rommel** - January 06, 2013 at 05:21 PM



“ *So sad to hear about a great loss to all of us. He was a wonderful teacher and a great influence on so many. I will remember him fondly. My prayers and thoughts are with his family and friends. He will be missed.*

*Sincerely, Therese Lawless*

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**Therese Lawless** - January 02, 2013 at 06:52 PM

CM

“ A beautiful tribute to a beautiful man. He made the lives of all those lucky enough to know him, more special. He made me love music through Stage, Concert and Marching band. Many of us recall the "Kazoo" march? Thank you for all of the wonderful memories. Here is to a life well lived. We'll miss you, Mr. R. Enjoy your wings.

*Charlene Lawless Mock*

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**Charlene M. Mock** - January 02, 2013 at 10:10 AM

MM

“ *Marlene and Rene,*  
*It deeply saddens me to hear of the loss of your dad. When I heard the news, everything in my world stopped just as it did when I was in the cellar of PCS and heard Mr. R playing his trumpet. Mr. R was an incredible man that I will always remember as a teacher and as a friend of the family. He truly touched the hearts of many and will never be forgotten. Lots of love and prayers are being said for him and all of your family.*

*Maggie Byszewski Mastay*

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**Maggie Byszewski Mastay** - December 29, 2012 at 10:03 AM



“ *Marie on the loss of your brother, Marlene and Renee and the loss of wonderful Dad, my heart goes out to all of you and you are all in my thoughts and prayers. Dickie was the original "Gleek" - he made music cool in school. He had such talent for making music and laughter. He was an upbeat, good guy, kind and caring. I idolized him when we were kids - the only male cousin in the crowd of crazy girls. He was special. He's gone too soon. I'm so sorry, so sorry for your loss. They are listening to Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White in heaven today! Much Love, Kathy*

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**Kathy Burgin** - December 28, 2012 at 08:10 PM

DL

“ David (Lee) Lia lit a candle in memory of Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto



David (Lee) Lia - December 28, 2012 at 02:02 PM

DL

*Sorry for the loss of another classmate at Proctor. May he rest in peace.*

David (Lee) Lia - December 28, 2012 at 02:03 PM

JW

“ John Wnuk lit a candle in memory of Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto



John Wnuk - December 28, 2012 at 10:21 AM



*I had the pleasure of meeting Dick in 1963 when I first joined the Magnificent Yankees Drum & Bugle Corps. He was a friendly and upbeat person. That remained true over the years. Whenever I saw him over the years he always had that big smile and friendly greeting. He was a great Drum Major and horn instructor. The bond that those of us share through drum coprs is a lifetime thing. I will always remember him fondly and miss him.*

John Wnuk - December 28, 2012 at 10:33 AM

CP

“ Over the years I have had the fortune of having many great teachers that have influenced me. Dick will always be in my memories as one of the best. His energy and passion for excellence will go unmatched. Later in life I got to know Dick as a colleague as well, for this I feel extremely fortunate. He will be missed by the many, many, students and teachers he touched.

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**Chuck Penfield** - December 28, 2012 at 09:30 AM

CC

“ I have such enormous respect and admiration for Dick, for the passion and joy that he brought to everything that he did. Helping students to love music is a special gift, and Dick blessed us with this gift that he possessed. And, he treated his colleagues, of which I was proud to be one, with such respect - he was the consummate professional. I am saddened by Dick's passing, but I have nothing but joyful memories. My thoughts and prayers to his entire family - with special thoughts from my family to his special friends, the Fabrizio's, who I know are hurting so deeply today.

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**Chris Calhoun** - December 28, 2012 at 06:40 AM

PR

“ Renee and family, My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. Dick was such a special man, and it showed in the daughters that he raised and loved so much. Heaven must be filled with the sound of beautiful music. Cherish the memories.



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**Peggy Robinson** - December 27, 2012 at 07:57 PM

JB

“ *Jeanne Blue lit a candle in memory of Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto*



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**Jeanne Blue** - December 27, 2012 at 07:01 PM

GS

“ *Marlene and Renee,  
So sorry to hear of the loss of your Dad. He was a memorable teacher, and friend and a very special part of our PCS experience. His love of music and dedication to teaching instilled in us a special pride in the music program at PCS. We also enjoyed his fun loving comradere outside of school and our many escapades in Russia Corners with the Caspers and Hodges. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Sincerely,  
Gale and Dodi Soltys  
St. Albans, VT.*

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**Gale Soltys** - December 27, 2012 at 06:43 PM

JS

*I agree with everything my sister said above and remember him with love and admiration. He was an amazing teacher and mentor and a fun friend that will be missed by many! My thoughts and prayers are with all his family and fiends!  
Jill Soltys Schildkamp*

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**Jill Soltys Schildkamp** - December 29, 2012 at 07:17 AM

MC

“ It deeply saddens me to hear that one of my great mentors and one of my most favorite people on the planet is no longer with us. I can't thank Dick enough for all the lessons he taught me about teaching, laughter, life, and professionalism that I learned during my time at Poland Central School! If it wasn't for Dick, Bonnie, and Ann my teaching career would not have had the great start that it did. Dick, you touched so many lives with your music, your teaching, and your humor that it's truly immeasurable! You were and always will be the BEST in all of our minds and hearts! Thank you for your gifts of music, teaching, mentoring, caring, guidance, laughter, and your selfless caring for all of the people in your life! You truly set the bar for all of us!

Renee and Marlene – your Dad, you both, and your family will be in my family's thoughts and prayers. Like I said earlier - I can't thank your Dad enough, but thank you Dick, thank you!

Sincerely and Musically,  
Mike Carbone

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**Michael Carbone** - December 27, 2012 at 05:07 PM

RO

“ I majored in music due to 3 GREAT Band Directors....Dick was one of them....his patience and sense of humor was legendary. I first met Dick in 1964 when the Yankee Cadets formed....from there he helped me in the Mag. Yankees....In the late 70's I had a dance band and he played a few times....later on in life we played in the NHC Band...

My wife and I own a small business in the NHSC and whenever he was in town he stopped and always always had a joke....Dominick.....you will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with the family during this time....Richard and Julie Orilio

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**Richard and Julie Orilio** - December 27, 2012 at 04:43 PM

TJ

“ If it wasn't for Dick... I know I would never be doing the things I'm doing today. I went to visit him 2 week ago and he was sleeping and I didn't get a chance to talk to him but the summer before last I had a chance to thank him and I told him what a great teacher/friend he was..... Dick touched alot of people...  
Terry Johnson

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**Terry Johnson** - December 27, 2012 at 11:53 AM

SH

“ For the family of Dick Robilotto, especially Marlene and Renee- As a former teacher at PCS, I,too, remember the warm welcome of your dad. He was a wonderful musician, friend, and peer! The band was an outstanding force at the school when I taught there. Music was such a part of my life and your dad added to it. I remember the times that our dads performed together- mesmerizing is all I can say. To you girls, you had the best parents, a wonderful legacy to be left to such beautiful children. I loved your dad, his sense of humor and his passion for music! Take heart in the fact that soooo many did love him. Both my parents are now gone as well, but when I least expect it... someone shares a little known story or memory that just warms me to the bone.  
With hugs, blessings, and love to all,  
Susan Teachout Heneka

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**Susan Heneka** - December 27, 2012 at 10:26 AM

RM

“ It's often the memories of you, Joe and me, growing up together and evolving with musical groups since we were kids. At least we have these memories Brother.

*My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.  
Bob and Elaine Morey*

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**Robert Morey** - December 27, 2012 at 09:21 AM

FH

“ So sad to hear about Mr. Robilotto's passing. What a terrible thing to happen and made worse by the timing near Christmas. He made the band at Poland into something great and everyone wanted to be in it. I would guess that around 25 to 30 percent of the school was in band including all types of students from the smartest kids to the star athletes and some who were both and some who were neither. We all loved being in the music program and Mr. Robilott, Mrs. Sanderson and Mr. Hood were all a big part of why it was so much fun.

*The last time I spoke with Dick was a few years ago when he was kind enough to use his influence to get me a horn from the school to use at a job when I was back for a visit so I wouldn't have to bring mine on the plane. He was still looking out for me over 30 years since I'd been his student.*

*Thanks for everything Dick  
Fred Hiscock*

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**Fred Hiscock** - December 27, 2012 at 07:52 AM

FH

*Sorry to have left out Mrs Covey also a big part of mine and many peoples musical lives at PCS,  
Fred H.*

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**Fred Hiscock** - December 27, 2012 at 08:35 AM



“ I am very saddened by the news! I will ALWAYS remember Mr R, and our annuals band trips to Sherburne. He made us one hell of a concert band, never accepting less than the best from us! He will be definitely missed!

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**Heidi Linke** - December 26, 2012 at 10:24 PM

SB

“ Renee and Marlene - So sorry for your loss. Your dad will always hold a special place in my heart. He could always make me laugh and always tried. He was a master of his craft. He made beautiful music and also created beautiful music through all those he taught and inspired. When I arrived at Poland in 1976 the band was the most impressive aspect of Poland. Everyone was in band. It was cool to be in band. They always won every competition. There was a wonderful Jazz band also. Your dad left fond memories in the hearts of many. He also, most importantly, raised 2 very beautiful (inside and out) girls that he so adored and was so proud of. You have lost a great dad but are so rich because he was yours.xoxox  
Sue Quinn Bawarski

*PS He also caught the garter at my wedding.*

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**sue bawarski** - December 26, 2012 at 09:11 PM

KP

“ Kathie (Ron) Pomichter lit a candle in memory of Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto



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**Kathie (Ron) Pomichter** - December 26, 2012 at 08:39 PM

JL

“ *Dick you were the nicest man when you came to the Dr's always looked forward to seeing you and my daughter Amanda just loved all you kisses*



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**Judy Lindsay** - December 26, 2012 at 08:37 PM

JP

“ *All of us who new Dick will hold a special place for him in our hearts. He was a great trumpet player, teacher, and friend. Dick always "told it like it was" and seldom pulled a punch. As a brass instructor for the Avant Garde Drum Corps in 1975 & 1976, he brought the proficiency of the line to new heights and set new standards of performance. He was an amazing teacher who loved the jazz idiom. His influences on so many youth have helped them blossom into great players and great adults. So long, old pal!*



*Jeff Perkins*

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**Jeff Perkins** - December 26, 2012 at 07:47 PM

MR

“ *0 file added to the tribute wall*

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**Marie Robilotto** - December 26, 2012 at 06:34 PM

LC

“ *Lou Ciccone lit a candle in memory of Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto*



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**Lou Ciccone** - December 26, 2012 at 06:26 PM

PL

“ *Mr. Robilotto was my band teacher at Poland. He was a great teacher, but I just didn't have what it took to be a trumpet player and he very sweetly let me know. But he was always so pleasant and treated everyone equal. I always admired him. I didn't see him for a few years yet he remembered me by name. Marie and family, Dick was a great man and I am proud to say I knew him. My prayers are with you. He will be missed.*

*Pam Long*

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**Pam Long** - December 26, 2012 at 05:40 PM

MT

“ *I had the pleasure of meeting Dick in Drum Corps many years ago and remember him as a great educator with an amazing personality. My condolences to the Robilotto family.*

*Mark Thurston*

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**Mark Thurston** - December 26, 2012 at 02:05 PM

DM

“ *Marie... ur deepest sympathies to you and your family... We all loved Dick and wish you all the best at this time... God Bless and take care...*

*Penny and Dave Malachino*

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**David Malachino** - December 26, 2012 at 01:53 PM

AC

“ You will be greatly missed Mr. Robilotto! You taught both of us, Andrew Cirillo and Ryan Franz, to be great players and even better people! Thanks a million for a brilliant education all around!!! God Bless!!!



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**Andrew Cirillo** - December 26, 2012 at 01:28 PM

RG

“ My condolences....Dickie was the best brass staff member we ever had in Avant Garde drum corps. His 2 years teaching us in Saratoga 75-76 made many of us better players. We all loved Dickie. His humor and his talent...just the best.

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**Richard Gathen** - December 26, 2012 at 01:10 PM

JB

“First let me express my condolences to the family of this great man. He was an inspiration to the many young musicians that had the good fortune of being his students.

*What do you write about someone who literally shaped your life? Back in the 1970's Mr. Robolitto had the arduous task of teaching me trumpet. I was an energetic youth with little direction when I first encountered him. Little did I know the impact he would have on my life: he taught me the art and discipline of music, to take chances and to have patience. I remember listening the great Maynard Ferguson, and asking him "how can I play like that!?" He told me to keep practicing and I'd get there! He was always encouraging, always positive, a true educator and musician, equally skilled at both, which is a rare commodity.*

*I remember spending every spare moment in the band room. One day I was playing this one song from the Fiddler on the Roof, one which I played every day, over and over, and had been doing so for some time, when he had finally had enough, he came into the band room and told me to find a new song...or something to that affect, if you know what I mean. Everyone's patience has limits... Mercifully, I found some new things to play, but he should have yelled at me much sooner! I don't know how he could stand it for so long! I still laugh about that, especially now that I have students that do the same thing!*

*I recall the trips to Sherburn and other competitions. He was a skilled conductor of both concert and jazz music, and an outstanding arranger. As a result, the bands always blew the competition away. He was able to see the strengths in his musicians and capitalize on them in his arrangements. I recall performing numerous arrangements in the jazz band. The only thing we were not good at was marching-man we looked bad, but we sounded great! I still have the record we made in the gymnasium. Man that was a blast! That band was really good!*

*After moving from Poland to Florida, I continued to study and perform music, joined the Marine Corps Band where I was a featured soloist in both Jazz and Classical genres, studied Music at the University of Maryland (Okinawa, Japan), The University of Miami, and the earned a Master of Science degree in Higher Education Administration with a minor in music from Florida International University. I still perform, and I also teach music at Miami Dade College: I teach a jazz band and music theory, and am arguably the most sought after professor there in these areas, due in no small part to the concrete foundation laid by this great man. I have thought of him often throughout the years, and am forever grateful to him for everything he did for me in those few formative years. There's a new trumpet man in heaven, move over Gabriel!*

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**James Broderick** - December 26, 2012 at 11:54 AM

MC

“ *He was a wonderful Man! We Love you Ney! Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.*

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**Mike, Robyn, Jacob & Cali** - December 26, 2012 at 11:29 AM

RT

“ *Our condolences to your family - Mr. Robilotto was fun to watch when he brought the Poland Jazz Band to the Sherburne Pageant of Bands. He had such energy and the kids played so well under his direction. We are sorry to hear of your loss.*

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**Rose Tenney** - December 26, 2012 at 10:04 AM

FD

“ Marie , Renee and family,

*So sorry to learn of Dick's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this difficult time.*

*Sincerely,*

*Flo, Tom and Amanda DeSimone*

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**Flo DeSimone** - December 26, 2012 at 09:34 AM

LL

“ To all the Robilotto family my sincere condolences for your loss.  
Lori Lake

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**Lori Lake** - December 26, 2012 at 07:56 AM

SC

“ Marie and family, so sorry for your loss , my prayers are with you and your family, during this sad time ..... treasure your memories, it may help you to get through your sorrow

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**sharon I campola** - December 26, 2012 at 07:41 AM

FM

“ Donnamarie & David and all the family: Frank and I are so sorry to hear of your loss. I remember Dick from High School. He was a great guy.

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**Frank & Donna Merhib** - December 25, 2012 at 12:55 PM

FM

“ Frank & Donna Merhib lit a candle in memory of Mr. Dominick J. "Dick" Robilotto



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**Frank & Donna Merhib** - December 25, 2012 at 12:53 PM

TS

“ May God bless you and your family in this time of sorrow.



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**Thomas J Saladino** - December 25, 2012 at 12:39 PM

MA

*Mr. Robilotto was a dear sweet man. I loved being in the band under his direction. I will never forget when I went to the band room looking to play a clarinet or flute. He had none of these instruments left. He handed me a large tenor saxophone and said "how about this"? I said "yes"! I just wanted to be in the band! He will be greatly missed. So sorry for your loss. I am so glad I had the honor and pleasure to know him.*

*Marina (Linke) All*

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**Marina All** - December 27, 2012 at 08:35 PM