



## Robert Dennis Chmel

August 1, 1943 - June 28, 2024

A true gentleman, Bob Chmel passed away on June 28, 2024 at age 80 after a lengthy hospitalization. He was an incredibly talented but modest musician who was much revered by his peers in the music world.

Born in Canton, Ohio on August 1, 1948, Bob maintained a life-long loyalty to the Cleveland Browns and Cleveland Indians. He also loved history and visiting historical sites. Bob took up drumming early and earned both Bachelors and Masters degrees from Kent State University in the 1970s. He played in the Kent State Lab Band, and was named KSU's "Alumni of the Year" in 2003.

His professional career spanned nearly 5 decades, and led him to perform in all 50 states, throughout Europe, and in Mexico, the Caribbean, South America and Japan with numerous big bands and well-known vocalists. The bands included those of Guy Lombardo (where he drummed with Buddy DeFranco, Peanuts Hucko, Buddy Morrow, Jimmy Henderson, Larry O'Brien, Woody Herman, and Artie Shaw); Jimmy Dorsey; Ron Hawking and Glenn Miller. Bob also played for/with Bill Dobbins, Rob Parton, Jerry Lewis, Don Rickles, and Doc Severinson. While living in Chicago, he played with the Jazz Members Big Band of Chicago, the Chicago Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra (with which he played at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. many times), and others.

Bob also played for Frank Sinatra Sr., and was the longtime drummer on tours and recordings for Frank Sinatra Jr. Most recently, he drummed for Bob Anderson's "One More For The Road" Sinatra retrospective tour (including a performance at Carnegie Hall in 2021) and Dave Halston's "The Sinatra Experience" tour.

Bob left Chicago and moved to Las Vegas approximately 25 years ago to be with his beloved Renee Evers, who passed away in 2023. In addition to local performances in Las Vegas, where he was a regular drummer for "The Rat Pack is Back" and other shows, he was last recorded on the CD "Congo Lament," released April 30, 2024, just days before he was hospitalized.

Bob loved sharing his deep expertise with younger musicians. He was a patient and admired instructor at Birch Creek Music Performance Center in Wisconsin for 30 years, and mentored young musicians in the Las Vegas area.

He is survived by a cousin and her family, as well as his countless friends in the music industry who so respected his artistry. He requested that his ashes be spread, along with those of Renee and his favorite cat Patootie, at the Birch Creek Center in Wisconsin, where he said they had enjoyed spending time and could forever listen to the jazz and Big Band music he loved.

# Tribute Wall

WV

“ My cousin Bobby will be deeply missed he had the heart of gold and would spends hours on the phone with me tell me about my father and things that he did growing up.

Wendy Morgan Vardiman - October 13, 2025 at 10:58 PM

BF

“ Bob as mentioned in his obituary was always friendly and genuine. In Door County, WI, I along many of my friends got to spend lovely times with Bob and prior to her passing, the lovely and cordial Ms. Renee Evers. There will be big hole at Birch Creek without his memorable music history that Jeff Campbell, the leader of the Big Band session, always asked Bob to comment about, I was also honored to see Bob at Carnegie Hall on December 12, 2021 playing drums for Bob Anderson, the supreme Frank Sinatra performer, 🥁



Bud Fenner - July 15, 2024 at 12:00 AM

TP

“ One of the finest musicians ever and a genuinely nice person. Playing music with Bob on drums was truly an inspiration to the other players and brought out the best of his musical peers.

Thom Pastor - July 13, 2024 at 12:00 AM