



Robert Ralph Nichols

August 10, 1959 - February 21, 2021

Robert Ralph Nichols, 61 of Mesa, Arizona passed away on Sunday, February 21, 2021 from pancreatic cancer. He was in his home, surrounded by his family.

Rob was born August 10, 1959 in Oxnard, California to Ralph Calvin Nichols (97) and Mary Belle Nichols. He married Jennifer Shanks in 1983. Rob was a loving father to his four amazing kids. Gregory Nichols (33), Kimberly Nichols(31), Brittney Nichols(20), and Andrew Nichols(18).

He attended Northern Arizona University where he earned a Bachelor of Music Education and then attended Arizona State University earning a Master's in Cello Performance.

Rob taught orchestra at Mesa High School, Dobson High School and Benjamin Franklin High School. Rob volunteered his time serving both the Arizona Music Educators Association and Arizona Band and Orchestra Teachers Association in almost all positions. From 2009 to 2015 he served as President elect, President and Past President of the Arizona Music Educators Association. He was awarded the George C Wilson Leadership award, the OM Hartsell Excellence in Teaching Award, the Arizona Music Educator of the Year 2015, Teacher of the Year Ben Franklin High School 2019, and NAU's Alumni Achievement award in 2000. Highlights of his teaching career include two performances at Carnegie Hall in New York. But he would also say, "When the students and I connect during a performance and together we create really beautiful music, sometimes those moments are so emotional, and the tears just flow, those are the best moments."

Rob enjoyed fishing and camping with his family. Some of our family's best memories were camping at Big Lake, and Woods Canyon Lake. When asked which trips were favorites, Rob said, "The ones where I caught the most fish." But as a family we remember how much fun we had, and how we enjoyed being together as a family, unplugged and without stress. Because Rob worked so hard to achieve excellence in all parts of his life, having moments where we could just be together and have fun were the best.

Rob placed his faith in Jesus Christ at a young age. His church home was Trinity Church in Mesa Arizona for the last 38 years. At Trinity he lived out his faith serving in many ministries. God was very personal to Rob. He was confident, knowing that death was not the end, but just the beginning of a whole new life with Jesus in heaven. Rob's faith was built on God's sovereign plan for his life. His hope was in God for healing, either here on earth or total healing in heaven.

Rob is survived by his wife Jennifer; children Greg (Carrie), Kim, Brittney and Andrew; grandchildren Kathryn, Madilyn, Brooklyn, and Joslyn; father Ralph Nichols and sisters Jean Pizano, Marilyn Hamm, and Judy (Patrick) Allen. He was preceded in death by mother Mary Belle Nichols and brother James Nichols

A Memorial Service will be held at 10:00 am Saturday, February 27, 2021 at Trinity Church Mesa, 2130 E University Drive, Mesa, AZ. Pastor Jared Moore presiding.

A recording of the service will be posted on the "Friends of Rob Nichols" Facebook page Saturday afternoon.

Stories and condolences can be shared on the "Friends of Rob Nichols" Facebook page.

The family wishes memorial donations be made to
Trinity Church - Rob Nichols Youth Scholarship Fund
2130 E University Mesa, AZ 85203 or online at trinitymesa.church

Mesa High School Rob Nichols Memorial Orchestra Fund - donate through school website or mail to (please include note with account title)

Mesa Public Schools
Attention Accounting
63 E Main St.
Mesa, AZ 85201

Dobson High School Rob Nichols Memorial Orchestra Fund - donate through school website or mail to (please include note with account title)

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Benjamin Franklin High School <https://hs.bfcsaz.com/giving/mr-nichols>

Events

FEB **Memorial Service** 10:00AM
27

Trinity Church
2130 E. University Dr., Mesa, AZ, US, 85213

Comments



“ Mr. Nichols was one of my most favorite teachers. He was so encouraging and had an amazing ability in instill confidence in crazy teens who did not really have confidence in themselves. (AKA Me!). Thank you so much Mr., Nichols for all you spoke into my life.

Katherine Hawkins Picker (MHS Class of '89)

Katherine Picker - July 21 at 06:46 PM

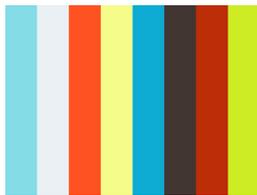


“ Rob was a great mentor for me and my friends in the MHS orchestra in the early 90s. I didn't fully appreciate his dedication at that time, but having myself passed through the stage of young family life that he was in then, I really admire how he balanced teaching, family, and faith, and gave so much to his students. I'm grateful for the expectations he held for us and the encouragement he gave us. Thanks, Mr. Nichols! And I really apologize for leaving your cello out by your truck that one time.... I was so dumb - thank goodness nothing happened, but you were right to get after me for that stunt!!

Marc Parker - March 01 at 12:09 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jenny Nichols - February 28 at 12:48 PM



“ Rob was my conductor and stand partner in the Scottsdale Philharmonic. He was a great musician and an Awesome man. I will miss playing with him and having him as a conductor. My deepest condolences go out to his family.

Richard Martinez - February 27 at 11:58 AM



“ My thoughts turned to him moreso this past year and felt a need to try to reconnect. I am saddened that I missed my opportunity. I was not popular in high school. Feeling relatively insignificant, I entered into his orchestral program in the 10th grade. Immediately, he took care to challenge me in my abilities. There was just something about being in my orchestras that gave me the passion to be better, do better, perform better. He introduced me to music I had never before contemplated listening to. Now, when I hear these masterworks, It always takes me back to those days I cherish so much. I learned to have a sense of belonging. It is the crowning achievement of a man or woman who is able to inspire so many, that at the end of their lives, it leaves a space that is meant for, and will always be meant for those who left its mark. Rob Nichols, my life has been better because you took the time and effort to help me be better. I am a string teacher now, and owe that in part to three of the most memorable years in the Mesa High School Orchestra program. 1987-1989. God bless you and your family.

Robert Wilhelm

Robert Wilhelm - February 27 at 11:30 AM



“ Knowing Rob for so many years and hearing him play his wonderful music which has now stopped and it will be hard - for a while, but you and the family of Nichols will see him again one day. I am sure he has a beautiful cello and is playing in God's orchestra!!! May God give you a very special peace and hold you in His loving arms while you go thru this time!! In Christian love,

Barbara and Joe Van Camp

Barbara Van Camp - February 26 at 12:41 AM



“ Mr. Nichols was my high school orchestra teacher. He always believed in me. I just remember his cheerful smile and one time he looked me in the eyes and told me I could be a great player. He also recognized my improvement and rewarded me. Great teacher

Jessica Mills - February 25 at 11:37 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Robert Ralph Nichols.



February 25 at 08:05 PM



“ My Jr high teacher at Taylor. Great teacher. I only dropped orchestra when he moved to Mesa High cause no room in the schedule. What a teacher!! And his groups were great caliber.

Louise Bean - February 25 at 06:31 PM



“ Mr Nichols was orchestra teacher at Mesa High to four of my children—louise, Nicole, Shannon and Blake. He was special influence to them all, but for Shannon who was excellent flutists, he chose special music n pushed her hard because he told her, “You can handle this.” His orchestra was one of the best and I felt it was a privilege for them to play under his baton. I will always be grateful for his influence in their lives. They join me in celebrating his life and pray that his family feel the comforting blessings of the Heavens. Diane S Matthews

Diane S Matthews - February 25 at 06:12 PM