

## John Cullen "Jack" Knowles

<b>BIRTH</b>	5 Mar 1923 Stillwater, Washington County, Minnesota, USA
<b>DEATH</b>	18 Sep 2014 (aged 91) Rapid City, Pennington County, South Dakota, USA
<b>BURIAL</b>	Cremated, Ashes given to family or friend, Specifically: Unknown
<b>MEMORIAL ID</b>	136062253 · <a href="#">View Source</a>

*Obituary from Findagrave.com*

He was the son of Elmer David Knowles and Lulu May Brown Knowles, his father was a salesman. The family moved to Grinnell, Iowa, when he was four years old. At age 17, Jack was diagnosed with polio. As a result of that illness, he lost much of the use of his right arm. He was one of 12 children of his father with two mothers.

He was very proud of his family and that his family on his fathers side was 1660 American. He also enjoyed being of Scottish heritage and played his Bagpipes in several neighborhoods around town. He had four step siblings, Emma, Ruth, Elmer Jr and Norma. His siblings were Evelyn, Marian, Faith, Lois, Lawrence, Paul and Richard. He was the last surviving relative of my mother Faith Knowles Barnes.

Jack was unable to serve in WW II and so did War Work in California at an aircraft plant building P-51 Mustang fighter-bombers. Jack held a keen interest in that aircraft throughout his life. Jack earned bachelor's and master's degrees in music from the University of Iowa. He taught instrumental music in Oregon, Iowa, California, Montana and in Australia.

In 1969, he and his family moved to Rapid City, SD, where he spent the rest of his career (23 years) as the band director at Rapid City Central High School. In 1975, he and his friend and colleague, Milo Winter, organized a band tour to Europe, beginning a tradition of Rapid City music students traveling to foreign countries as "musical ambassadors." That legacy of student foreign travel for Rapid City high school students that continues today. Jack retired from teaching at age 70. In 2009, he received the South Dakota Governor's Award for Outstanding Service in Arts Education. He always said he loved going to work every day.

Jack and Milo Winter were co-conductors of the Rapid City Municipal Band—a responsibility they shared and enjoyed for many years. Jack was well known in Rapid City for his role as conductor of the Black Hills Symphony, a position he held for 36 years (1978-2008). He loved the Symphony and spent countless hours planning concerts and choosing music. As conductor, he arranged collaborations with nearly every Rapid City arts organization, from choruses to theater, dance, and visual arts groups.

Jack was married twice. First to Imogene Newcomer in 1949 in Grinnell, Iowa. The family spent seventeen years moving to Tama, Iowa, Cambria, San Jose CA, and Beaumont, California: then back to Iowa to Mason City and to Great Falls, Montana. It was in Great Falls where the marriage terminated, she was the mother of Scott, Bruce and Allan Knowles. Jack I married Debby Dresser in 1966 and they came to Rapid City SD in the fall of 1969 where he took over the Rapid City Symphony Orchestra.

Jack is survived by his wife of 48 years, Deborah (Dresser) Knowles, and his eight children: Scott Knowles and his wife Ellen of Milwaukee, WI; Bruce Knowles and his wife, Carol, and sons Cullen and Patrick of Rapid City; Allan Knowles of Cedar Falls, IA; John Knowles of Minneapolis, MN; Robert Knowles and his wife, Neha Lall and their son, Rohan, of Chicago, IL. Meghan Knowles and her husband, Robert Stevens and their children Faith, Abigail and Jack of Rapid City; Elizabeth Knowles and her husband Paul Stevens, and their children Seth, Poppy and Penelope of Rapid City; and Jennifer Knowles and her husband David Stuck and their sons Connor, Cameron and Cooper of Rapid City. Also surviving are the children of his siblings, children of Faith Knowles Barnes, Carol Reed of Rapid City, Ellen Bishop of Rapid City, Bruce of Colorado and Evan of Rapid City. Children of his sister Evelyn Knowles George, are Kathy of Chicago IL and Marilyn in California, children of his brother Richard are Mark in Florida, Helen Kremer in New Mexico and Karin Knowles of Bristow Virginia.

A musical memorial service for Jack will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 4, in the new Central High School Theater. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations in Jack's honor to the Black Hills Symphony Orchestra at P.O. Box 2246 Rapid City, SD 57709 or online at [bhsymphony.org](http://bhsymphony.org).