

John Holstead Mead

(September 24, 1937 - February 8, 2014)

Monroe, NH- John Holstead Mead, 76, of Monroe, died on Saturday, February 8, 2014, at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, NH, following a brief illness. He was born on September 24, 1937, in Westerly, RI, the son of Samuel and Sarah Holstead Mead. He was preceded in death by his parents and a younger brother, Alan. John was a fine trombone player, and his work with the instrument shaped his life. While he served in the US Navy he attended the Navy



School of music and then played in a service band on the island of Guam. After military service he earned a bachelor's degree from Ithaca College in music performance and education, a master of arts in music education at the University of Vermont, and a doctor of musical arts degree from the University of Kentucky, where his dissertation on shanties and fo'c'sle songs of tall ships broke new ground in folklore studies. He was a professor of low brass at Marshall University in Huntington, WV for 31 years. As a classical trombonist, John held first chairs in the Hudson Valley Symphony, the Vermont Symphony, the Lexington Symphony, the Huntington Symphony, and the West Virginia Symphony. He performed in numerous brass quintets and ensembles and gave solo recitals throughout his professional career. Also he was active in swing bands, show orchestras, Dixieland groups, pops orchestras, and he played in pickup ensembles that accompanied star performers that included Glen Campbell, Bob Hope, and Shirley Jones. He even played in ice show orchestras and the Ringling Brothers Circus Band. John had a sharp, irrepressible sense of humor, and whenever he could, he wore red socks with his tuxedo for performances. He was a demanding and inspiring studio teacher, and throughout his career at Marshall, his students were a loyal, close-knit group—distinguished by their red socks at concerts. His additional interests included piloting single-engine aircraft, maritime music, the aviation history of World War II, and woodworking. Upon retirement and the move to Monroe, he became active in the Dartmouth Concert Band, the Dartmouth Brass Quintet, the Constitutions Brass Quintet, the Vermont Philharmonic, several town bands, and the NH/Canada annual Christmas TubaFest. John is survived by Joan (Tyler) Mead, his wife of 52 years, and by Aunt Janet Mead, cousins Charlie and Stuart Walls, goddaughter Sarah Wormsley, godson Jon Mori, brother-and-sister-in-law Geoffrey and Anna Tyler, sisters-in-law Gail Arnold and Damaris Tyler, nieces, nephews, and their children. He leaves many respected colleagues and many friends.