

# Dr. Paul E. Eickmann: Musician, Professor, Administrator, Mentor, and Friend

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Dr. Paul Eickmann profoundly impacted me and changed the trajectory of my life. I first met Paul in the fall of 1975—my first semester at Syracuse University. After earning a double master’s degree at California State University, Fullerton in trumpet performance and instrumental conducting, I had accepted a graduate fellowship as one of two graduate assistants to the Director of Bands. Paul hired me to play a trumpet solo with his church choir. Let me excerpt the story of our first meeting.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the first rehearsal, I played a fanfare. Paul glanced at me with a pleased expression on his face and with a twinkle in his eyes. An instant connection formed. After the performance, Paul said I performed beautifully. He also said it was among the best trumpet playing he’d heard in Syracuse. That was great encouragement. He asked me to play several more times at his church. I enjoyed the experiences and respected him as a musician. I thought it was interesting that he wasn’t teaching courses in music even though he held a music faculty position. In the spring, Kristy and I accompanied Paul and the choir on a tour throughout New York and New Jersey. Our relationship grew based on our common musical bond and mutual respect.

As I had during my master’s degree studies, I applied myself to my doctoral studies and earned straight A’s. But I wasn’t fulfilled. Something was missing. The rate of my musical development stagnated. I knew I needed something more, but I didn’t know what. I searched for other course offerings. A new course caught my eye. The title, *The Design, Development, and Evaluation of Instruction*, intrigued me. Offered in the School of Education’s Instructional Technology Department, I signed up for this second semester class.

In this class, a new world unfolded. During one memorable library study day, I reviewed some unpublished works suggested by the teachers. A paper on the topic of instructional development caught my attention. It laid out a systems approach to the improvement of undergraduate instruction. The education formula concepts captivated me. I searched for the author. I saw a music professor authored the well-written article! It was by... (gasp)... Dr. Paul Eickmann.

His paper inspired me. Immediately, my horizons broadened. I threw my heart into that course. My final paper analyzed several interesting inverse correlations between the improvement of teaching and tenure. I received the top grade in the course.

But I wanted more. I thirsted to learn more about this fascinating subject – a new world to me. Near the end of the semester, I called Paul. I told him how much inspiration his paper gave me. I asked him to guide me in an independent study. We set an appointment to meet in his office at the Center for Instructional Development (CID).

When I arrived, Paul explained the mission of CID: “To improve the quality of undergraduate instruction at Syracuse University.” The faculty and staff assembled at CID were dedicated to supporting other faculty to improve the quality of their teaching, courses, and curriculum. My imagination was captured with that compelling vision.

Has that ever happened to you? Immediately, something powerful unleashed from inside me. What happened to me at that moment may have been best described by Oliver Wendell Holmes: ‘One’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimension.’

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<sup>1</sup> William E. Cole, *The ABC Formula: Building Your Life’s Enduring Core Values* (Authority Publishing, CA 2011), 144-7. Available on Amazon in softcover or as a downloadable pdf at Bill’s website: <https://www.passionategenealogist.org>

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At the end of our meeting, Paul said he’d be pleased to guide my independent study. He asked me to get back with him in a couple of weeks.

When we met again, Paul introduced me to Assistant Vice Chancellor, Dr. Robert Diamond. Bob headed CID. As we chatted in his office, we quickly discovered a common bond. We both swam competitively in college in our respective eras. We immediately connected. It’s really a small world, isn’t it?

After a series of discussions with other staff throughout the day, Paul and I again met in his office. He offered me another opportunity. He proposed I switch my music department graduate assistantship to work with him as an instructional development intern at CID. That shocked me. I didn’t know much about the subject and profession, much less how to apply it. But I was intrigued. An opportunity to do something I didn’t even know existed just three months earlier was just presented to me. I asked Paul for time to think it through.

For two weeks, I agonized over the ramifications of the switch in my educational focus from music to something new. Never, in my wildest dreams, had I ever considered such a thought. Music was what I did and who I was. I’d spent a lifetime honing my skills. It was my comfort zone. My internal debate raged over the issues associated with what was comfortable – music – and what was unknown – instructional development. The difficult process challenged me.

Have you ever wrestled with a difficult choice? Most of us have. Sadly, many people never venture outside their comfort zone. They fear the unknown and stay where they feel safe. They operate in a world described by Nido Qubein: ‘People would rather be comfortable than be excellent.’

Dr. Eickmann recognized talents in me that I didn’t see. Sometimes that’s how life is. Others often see things you don’t. His broader world view provided insight I didn’t have. And yet the magnitude of this change overwhelmed me. There were pros and cons to consider. Finally, I realized that if I didn’t take advantage of this opportunity, I would never *know* if it was right for me. I knew I could always go back to music if it didn’t work out. But I truly felt that if I didn’t try this, that one day I’d face the possibility of looking back with regret. I decided to go for it.

That moment changed the trajectory of my life. The next year, as Paul’s instructional development intern, was an incredible growth spurt. When Paul decided not to take the overseas assignment in Teheran, Iran to teach a master’s course in instructional development, he recommended me. In year two, Paul joined us in Teheran with his wife, Helen, and three young girls, Tanya, Carolee, and Alisha. Unfortunately, the Iranian Revolution forced our evacuation in November 1978. We all ended up together in Athens, Greece and had an adventure together on the island of Aegina before heading off in different directions.

I saw Paul again in the spring of 1979 when I spent an additional four months in Syracuse working on my doctoral studies in music. Unfortunately, the university was unable to provide additional support, and I abandoned my degree pursuit.

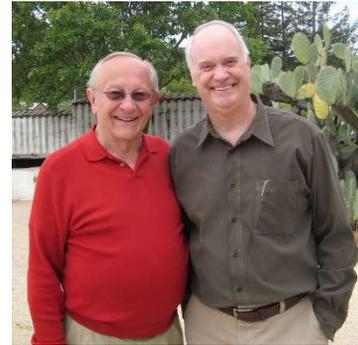
That led me into the corporate world in California. In my first position, I oversaw a national restaurant chain’s management training and development followed by a high growth technology company stint as Director of Human Resources. I then joined a startup firm focused on helping small business owners develop a systems approach in their businesses to achieve their goals. Our twenty-one hour video based training program was sold internationally, and I became a professional speaker in 1989. In 1996, I founded Advanced Business Solutions, Inc. and conducted a one year leadership development course for more than twenty-one consecutive years and became an executive coach. When my first book, excerpted earlier, was published, I sent a copy to Paul.

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When he read it, he said, “What you wrote about us is exactly how I remember it.” His comment put a smile on my face that continues today when I recall our conversations.

On a visit to California with his daughter, Alisha, and her family, Kristy and I met Paul and Anne at Sonoma Plaza. After several hugs and a short wine tasting, we sat on a bench and started catching up on each of our lives. It was as if no time had passed. After a couple of hours, Paul and Anne expressed what we were thinking: “we don’t want to stop and leave.” We found two hotel rooms, continued over dinner, had breakfast the next morning, and then parted with sweet memories. Here’s a picture of Paul and me in the courtyard of the Sonoma Mission.



In June of 2023, we visited Paul and Anne at their apartment near Cleveland. Again, it was as if no time had passed between visits. We had lovely conversations and dinner together, although Paul was obviously weaker. But his wit and charm stayed the same—just a little more labored. We stayed in touch by text and phone.

As I texted Anne a few days ago, “Kristy and I send you our love. While we were saddened with Paul’s passing, we rejoiced at his entry into eternal life. You two have been such good friends ever since we reconnected at the Sonoma Plaza years ago. We want you to know how we cherish our memories of Paul and you.”

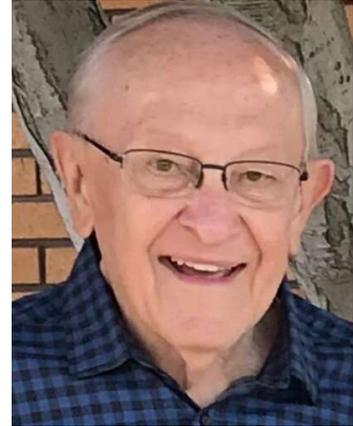
It’s impossible to sum up all that Paul meant to me in a few pages. Perhaps the two best words describing our relationship are mentor and friend. Paul, I’m so happy to have had you in my life for forty-eight years. I look forward to seeing you again in the heavenly realm. In fact, I already picture you leading the choir up there. I might need to dust off my trumpet just to be able to play for you again. With much love and gratitude, Paul. Kristy and I miss you dearly.



**Dr. Paul E. Eickmann, with his daughter, Alicia**

## **Paul Edward Eickmann (1938-2024)**

### **A Life Well-Traveled and Full of Harmony**



Dr. Paul E. Eickmann, a man of exceptional faith and character, passed away peacefully on Monday, July 8, 2024.

Paul was born to Norma and Albert on September 26, 1938, in St Louis, Missouri and grew up in Wichita Falls, TX with his older brother Nathan and sister Charlotte.

Paul's life was a symphony of accomplishments and passions. A 1961 graduate of Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebraska, he briefly attended the University of Michigan, where he touted his musical talents in the marching band before returning to Seward. Shortly thereafter, he continued his academic pursuits at the University of Rochester's prestigious Eastman School of Music where he earned his Master's degree in Music Education as well as his Ph.D. in Music. In addition to expertly playing the slide trombone, he also masterfully played more than 15 instruments. Paul was often heard proudly saying he could play every brass and woodwind instrument as well as nearly all percussion instruments PLUS the piano and organ!

After completing his education, Paul spent his entire career working in academia. He had a passion for teaching and learning which served him well in his work with students, faculty, and college administrators. He held numerous teaching and leadership positions, most notably as the Vice President for Student Services at Syracuse University as well as the Vice President Academic Affairs at the Cleveland Institute of Art.

Given his deep background in designing and developing curriculum, Paul was selected as part of a special team to partner with the Iranian government in the late 1970s to develop and expand their educational programs supporting communication and broadcasting. This opportunity led Paul and his young family of five to live in Tehran, Iran and integrate into the local community. However, the Iranian revolution in 1979 led to their upheaval. Prior to and immediately following this pivotal moment, Paul transformed his family into global explorers. Together, they embarked on a worldwide adventure, creating cherished memories across continents, from the vibrant cultures of India and Singapore to the historic echoes of Greece and Egypt. His adventurous spirit even led him to a clandestine escapade in Moscow, where he captured unforgettable winter photos of the Kremlin and St. Basil's Cathedral.

Beyond his travels, Paul actively enriched his community. He participated in men's groups, most notably The Professional Men's Club of Cleveland. Paul was active at The First Baptist Church where he participated in Stephen Ministries, sang in the choir, and served as Moderator of the Church Council for three years.

Paul fostered a deep passion for sports, music, and art. He was a devoted fan, cheering on the Cleveland Indians with season tickets in his section 113 seats alongside his wife Anne and friends, all fueled by hot dogs and good company. The Cleveland Orchestra also held a special place in his heart, with a particular fondness for Bach performances at Severance Hall.

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Paul's love for sports transcended mere spectating. He embraced everything from table tennis to softball, with a hidden talent that landed him a coveted hole-in-one on the golf course. His travel bug never subsided, with recent adventures to Turkey, Israel, and the majestic Machu Picchu adding vibrant colors to his life's tapestry. Paul reveled in experiencing foreign cultures, savoring exotic cuisines, and immersing himself in local traditions. His family always enjoyed reliving his travels with him and gaining insight into his fondest recollections.

Above all, Paul was a man of great faith. He shared his love of faith and worship with his family and instilled in all of us the same deep belief in God. He embraced the joy of knowing something much greater than we can imagine awaits us when we leave this world and start our eternal life in heaven.

Paul leaves behind a loving family, including his wife Anne, daughters Carolee (David) White, Tanya (Mark) Robbins, and Alisha (Chris) Collier, along with his step-children Suzanne (Scott) Flynn, Michelle (Steve) Murphy, Michael (Jackie) McKay and Erin (Harold) Mansfield. He cherished his 22 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, who undoubtedly will inherit his adventurous spirit and love for life.

Paul's legacy is a testament to a life well-lived – a life filled with music, leadership, travel, and unwavering love for God, his family, and his community. He will be deeply missed.

Funeral Services were held Tuesday, July 16th at 11am at The First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland, 3630 Fairmount Boulevard, Shaker Heights, OH 44118. A private family entombment followed the service at Knollwood Mausoleum.