



## Herbert Hardesty

December 3, 2016

Pete, please note I made an addition under survivors. Please use this obit for Herb. Confirm you received this, please.

Herbert Hardesty, New Orleans legendary tenor sax musician, passed away in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 3, of mantle cell lymphoma and complications. He was 91.

Hardesty was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on March 3, 1925. He began trumpet lessons at age six using a horn that was given to his stepfather by Louis Armstrong. He took lessons from Professor Valmore Victor and at a young age played with bands led by Papa Celestin, Sidney Designe and Chick Webb.

In 1941, Hardesty enlisted in the military two years below minimum draft age. While he was stationed in Jackson, Mississippi, his commanding officer bought him an alto sax which he learned to play in two days. He trained at Tuskegee, Alabama as a radio technician with the 99th Flying Squadron making him part of the Tuskegee Airmen. He was stationed in Morocco, Italy and Germany and, whenever he could, he played trumpet and alto sax with local European musicians. When the war ended, Hardesty returned to New Orleans.

He began performing in clubs with his first trio consisting of him playing double bass accompanied by a guitarist and pianist. About that time he purchased a tenor saxophone and began lessons to play it. In 1948, Hardesty formed a group called The Four Dukes where he played both trumpet and tenor sax.

In 1946, Hardesty met Dave Bartholomew and shortly after became part of the studio band at Cosimo Matassa's J&M Recording Studio. For six months, he toured with Roy Brown then returned to record again with Bartholomew. Herb recorded with Jewel King, Tommy Ridgley, Fats Domino, Lloyd Price, Shirley & Lee, Smiley Lewis, T-Bone Walker, Big Joe Turner, Little Richard and others while still performing in local clubs.

In 1955 Bartholomew invited Hardesty to tour with Fats Domino. While on the tour, Herbert was photographed playing his sax while laying on his back on the stage floor. That picture appeared in Life Magazine in its April 18, 1955 issue.

During this same tour, Fats recorded Blue Monday in Los Angeles and on that recording Hardesty played a baritone sax solo at Fats' request. It was the one and only time he had ever played baritone sax. One music writer said Hardesty's solo, "is as close to perfection as one can imagine. The eight-bar sax break is a gem of almost frightening economy. It is one of the most memorable, bluesy, and yet simple runs in all of R&B." Herb went on to play solo on most of Fats' recordings. Hardesty wrote and recorded several original pieces which were not released until his CD, The Domino Effect, came out in 2012.

Herb toured and recorded with Fats for more than 30 years. In 1971, he moved to Las Vegas where he played with a variety of bands such as Count Basie and Duke Ellington and backed vocalists such as Tony Bennett, Ella

Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra.

In 1978, he recorded with Tom Waits on Blue Valentine and toured with him throughout the United States, Europe and Australia. With Waits, Hardesty played his trumpet more than his tenor sax.

Hardesty rejoined Domino from 1980-2005. He also played with other artists such as Dr. John, Bobby Setter, Olaf Polziehn Trio and Plas Johnson. Herb recorded on Mitch Woods' CD, Big Easy Boogie, and toured with him as well.

In 2012, Hardesty played at the Jazz Festival in New Orleans with his own group, Herb Hardesty and The Dukes. Almost every time Dr. John and Herb happened to be in the same city, Mac would invite Herb to play with his band. It was Herb's great pleasure to perform with his good friend.

A review of his solos for the 2012 Jazz Fest came out in Gambit Weekly and read as follows: "All hail Herb Hardesty, one of the few remaining alums of the J&M Studio Band whose talents helped created so many hits and classic songs for Fats Domino, Little Richard, Shirley and Lee and so many others. His presence and fine soloing in Dr. John's sets this Jazz Fest added to the New Orleans feel in Dr. John's new songs."

In the Las Vegas Review Journal, he was described as follows: "Hardesty is a titan of the tenor sax, a feisty yet smooth, technically accomplished yet highly instinctive player whose personality saturates his solos. He can be a complementary or a commanding presence, given the song, but either way, you know it's him."

Hardesty continued playing local gigs in Las Vegas until he became too ill to do so.

He was honored at the 2009 Asante Awards Festival as a Legend and Cultural Ambassador.

In 2016, the Preservation Resource Center honored him for Outstanding Musical Contributions to The New Orleans Community and Jazz Heritage at the Red Hot Jazz Gala's 16th Annual Ladies In Red Event.

Hardesty is predeceased by his mother, Ella Blue, and his son, Troy Hardesty. He is survived by his longtime, devoted life partner and "love of his life," Marty de la Rosa; his beloved children, Michael (Carolynn) Hardesty, Kirk (Elaina) Hardesty, Shari (Randy) Weber, Joe (Angele) Givens, Tony de la Rosa, Mike (Wendy) de la Rosa; Leslie (Michael) Echols, 17 grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to the caregivers at Twin Lakes View Care Home, for their devoted and loving care. Special thanks to Jerome, Susie and Mercy; and Carlito, his hospice nurse.

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend the funeral service on Saturday, December 10, 2016 at 11:00 AM at Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave., New Orleans. Visitation will be begin at 10:00 AM. Interment: Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Arrangements by Rhodes Funeral Home. Please visit [www.rhodesfuneral.com](http://www.rhodesfuneral.com) to sign the online guestbook.

# Cemetery Details

## Mt. Olivet Cemetery

4000 Norman Mayer Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70122

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 10. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Rhodes Funeral Home - Washington Avenue  
3933 Washington Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125  
(504) 822-7162  
<https://www.rhodesfuneral.com>

## Service

DEC 10. 11:00 AM (CT)

Rhodes Funeral Home - Washington Avenue  
3933 Washington Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125  
(504) 822-7162  
<https://www.rhodesfuneral.com>

# Tribute Wall

SW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



shari weber - January 06, 2017 at 08:41 AM

TF

“ To the Hardesty family and his BELOVED, M. Del La Rosa, my condolences and prayers. Love Trisha Finch.



Trisha Finch - December 14, 2016 at 10:00 PM

GR

“ Thank you Herbert for the many good memories of you and I and Fats together and to your family I give my condolences. George Roussell.



Geroge Roussell - December 14, 2016 at 12:30 AM

DL

“ It was inspirational to know Herbert for the last twenty years, and I first met him through Fats. I'll never forget the Harrah's New Orleans grand opening show in October, 1999. It was at Spanish Plaza, & I was sitting on a metal support pole just behind Fats, and Kirk Hardesty was sitting next to me ... for the entire show! Herbert told me of his Tuskegee Airmen exploits (including some in Morocco!) and also told me of his musical memories with many, many greats. First and foremost, however, I will remember Herb being a perfect gentleman. Rick Coleman and I took Herb and Marty to dinner in the Quarter one New Year's Eve night before a Fats performance, and it was a wonderful evening. Many blessings to the Hardesty family, to Marty, and to music lovers worldwide, as we have all lost a singular and accomplished man.  
David Lind; Alexandria, Louisiana

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**David Lind** - December 12, 2016 at 11:13 AM

LB

“ I have only met Mr. Hardesty once within the last five months and found him to be a very kind spirit. An example of what I have experienced for years after meeting Shari and the rest of his family. May God grant this family peace and as much comfort as they need during this bereavement period or as long as needed.

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**Lynn Brown** - December 08, 2016 at 03:50 PM

WW

“ Herb H.  
THANK YOU for All you did for our country. War,  
Peace, Entertainment, & foremost Relations with One Another! Safe  
Flight Home.  
Woody Walker

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**W.M.F. Walker** - December 08, 2016 at 12:13 PM

LF

“ Love, The Bransford family- purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Herbert Hardesty.



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**Love, The Bransford family** - December 07, 2016 at 02:55 PM

PB

“ Herb,  
You made the world more beautiful through your spirit and music. Those of us who knew you and loved you are so fortunate to have had you in our lives. There will always be a place in our hearts where your memory will reside. Thank you for the joy and love you shared with us...we miss you. The Bransford family (Bill, Patty, Wendy, Jennifer, Geoff, Liam and Skye).

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**Patricia Bransford** - December 07, 2016 at 01:28 PM