

Eulogy for Bruce Benson

Delivered by Arden Moser, Roswell NHB

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BRUCE BENSON WAS A FRIEND OF MINE AND I'M SURE THAT THE PEOPLE HERE TODAY WHO KNEW BRUCE CAN ALSO MAKE THAT SAME STATEMENT. BRUCE BENSON NEVER MET A STRANGER.

I AM DEEPLY HONORED TO SPEAK ABOUT BRUCE BENSON ON BEHALF OF THE ROSWELL NEW HORIZONS BAND.

YOU SEE, BRUCE AND I WERE SEAT MATES – WE SAT SIDE BY SIDE FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS. WE PLAYED THE SAME MUSIC PARTS AND I CAN SPEAK FIRST-HAND ABOUT HIS LIFE WITH NEW HORIZONS AND HIS LOVE OF PLAYING HIS TRUMPET.

GOING BACK TO THE BEGINNING, I FIND IT INTERESTING THAT IN 2001, BRUCE ATTENDED A NEW HORIZONS CONCERT. RIGHT AFTER THAT CONCERT HE JOINED THE BAND. THE CONCERT WAS IN THIS CHURCH WHERE WE ARE NOW GATHERED TO PAY TRIBUTE.

FROM THAT BEGINNING SEVEN YEARS AGO, BRUCE DEVELOPED INTO A FINE TRUMPET PLAYER. BRUCE COULD HANDLE HIS PART VERY WELL AND I RELIED ON HIM OFTEN. HE WAS IMMACULATE ABOUT HIS MUSIC – HIS MUSIC WAS ALWAYS MARKED CORRECTLY AND PLAYED THE SAME WAY.

OFTEN, WHEN I ARRIVED FOR REHEARSALS AT THE RECREATION CENTER, BRUCE HAD ALREADY SET UP MY MUSIC STAND AND HAD MY CHAIR IN PLACE. AND WHEN REHEARSALS WERE OVER, BRUCE WOULD PICK UP MY MUSIC STAND AND PUT IT IN THE RACK. HE DID THINGS LIKE THIS OUT OF LOVE. THERE WAS NO NEED TO ASK HIM – HE VOLUNTEERED, JUST AS HE DID AT NORTH FULTON REGIONAL HOSPITAL.

ONE LADY IN THE BAND TOLD OF HER STAY AT NORTH- FULTON REGIONAL. THE SITUATION WAS CRITICAL. ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE TO COME TO HER ROOM WAS BRUCE BENSON. HE CAME IN WITH HIS USUAL SMILE, A PLEASANT AND SOOTHING VOICE, AND HE PLACED A GUARDIAN ANGEL ON HER SHOULDER.

BRUCE WAS MY EARS IN BAND REHEARSALS. I'M HARD OF HEARING AND I COULD ALWAYS COUNT ON BRUCE TO FILL ME IN ON WHAT INSTRUCTIONS BOB MARTIN HAD GIVEN AND WHERE WE WERE TO START.

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE BAND, A WOMAN, TELLS ABOUT THE RIDE TO A SWING BAND CONCERT. BRUCE PLACED HER SAXOPHONE CASE IN THE AISLE AND SAT ON IT FOR THE LONG TRIP WHILE SHE WAS AFFORDED A MORE COMFORTABLE SEAT.

AFTER A REHEARSAL ONE DAY, BRUCE LEFT HIS JACKET AT THE RECREATION CENTER. I TOOK IT TO THE OFFICE WHERE IT WAS PUT IN A CLOSET. I SENT AN EMAIL TO BRUCE ADVISING HIM ABOUT FINDING THE HIS JACKET. WITHIN 10 MINUTES AN EMAIL REPLY FROM BRUCE ARRIVED AT MY OFFICE --- SAYING A SIMPLE "THANK YOU".

TRAVEL BY THE BAND REQUIRED LOADING OF MUSIC STANDS AND INSTRUMENTS. BRUCE BENSON WAS ALWAYS AT THE BACK OF THE BUS, PITCHING IN TO HELP LOAD AND UNLOAD.

BRUCE GAVE OF HIMSELF FREELY, AND HAPPILY. I DOUBT HE REALIZED HOW MUCH HE REALLY GAVE TO OTHERS. ONE TRUMPET PLAYER, WHO HAD BEEN MOVED TO A SEAT BEHIND BRUCE, SAID HE ALWAYS KNEW EXACTLY WHERE AND WHEN TO COME IN ON TIME - BY WATCHING BRUCE. BRUCE WAS ALWAYS RIGHT.

NO DOUBT THERE ARE OTHER BAND MEMBERS WHO COULD TELL MANY STORIES ABOUT BRUCE - HIS COMPASSION - AND HIS LOVE FOR THE REST OF US. THE ONE'S I'VE MENTIONED ARE ONLY REPRESENTATIVE.

I ALSO THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO MENTION THAT IN ALL OF OUR TIME TOGETHER, I NEVER HEARD A NEGATIVE WORD SPOKEN BY BRUCE. HE WAS ALWAYS SMILING, HAPPY, POSITIVE AND MOST OF ALL HELPFUL.

AND I ASK YOU TO NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE BRUCE BENSON SYMPHONY. THIS IS ONLY THE FIRST MOVEMENT AND WHEREVER HE IS, THERE IS STILL MUCH MORE MUSIC TO COME. GOD BLESS YOU, BRUCE.