OBITUARIES

Phil Woods, celebrated jazz alto saxophonist dies at 83

BY EMILY LANGER
THE WASHINGTON POST

Phil Woods, a preeminent alto saxophonist in jazz for more than half a century, performing alongside musicians including Dizzy Gillespie and Benny Goodman and featured on Billy Joel's 1977 hit "Just the Way You Are," died Sept. 29 at a hospital in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. He was 83.

The cause was complications from lung disease, said his agent, Joel Chriss. Woods had emphysema but continued to perform until shortly before his death using an oxygen tank — his "amplifier," he said. He announced his retirement less than a month ago at a concert in Pittsburgh, according to the city's Post-Gazette.

Woods inherited a saxophone as a boy, trained at the Juilliard School in New York and became a prolific performer and recording artist who worked with many of the most prominent jazz musicians of his era.

Jazz critic Nate Chinen, writing in the New York Times, once observed that Woods was capable of "bullet-like runs and flurries," with a sound that was "pinpoint-clear," and that "he leaned into his notes, giving them a physical presence in the room."

Woods received four Grammy Awards — the first for the 1975 album "Images," made with Michel Legrand, and the last for the 1982 album "At The Vanguard," featuring the Phil Woods Quartet. In 2007, he was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master.

COURTESY OF FREDERIC LEMARECHAL
Phil Woods at La Jazz Parade in Fribourg, Switzerland, in July 2005.

Woods was widely regarded as an heir to Charlie Parker, the alto saxophonist who, along with trumpeter Gillespie, introduced the lightning-fast and intricate bebop style in the 1940s. Quincy Jones, the musician and producer, heard Woods perform in the mid-1950s and connected him with Gillespie, then preparing for a State Department tour abroad.

Jones "discovered me, to make it real simple," Woods once told the Newark Star-Ledger. "I was hired to play second alto, though I played lead on all the bebop tunes."

Woods described his association with Gillespie as a "benediction," the seal of his worthiness as a musician. He later performed with Goodman, the clarinetist and big band leader known as the King of Swing, in his tour of the Soviet Union in 1962.

Other collaborators over the years included Jones, saxophonist and bandleader Benny Carter, drummer Buddy Rich, pianist Thelonious Monk, and trumpet and flugelhorn master Clark Terry.

For years Woods led his own small groups. Beyond jazz circles, he was known for his extended solo in "Just the Way You Are," a Grammy Award-winning ballad, and his displays of bebop virtuosity in "Have a Good Time" on Paul Simon's 1975 album "Still Crazy After All These Years."

Philip Wells Woods was born on Nov. 2, 1931, in Springfield, Massachusetts. He studied jazz under pianist Lennie Tristano and at Juilliard, where he majored in the clarinet and received a bachelor's degree in 1952.

His first marriage, in 1957, was to Chan Parker, a former dancer widely identified as the last wife of Charlie Parker, although they had not legally wed before his death in 1955. She and Woods lived for a period in France, where he led a group called the European Rhythm Machine.

"It was hard to be an American in 1968," he told an interviewer for Jazz Times. "Chan was very active, and we both felt we had to make a statement. But it wasn't only political dissatisfaction. I was getting sucked into the studio thing and wasn't playing any music."

Woods's marriage to Parker ended in divorce. He later was married for more than three decades to Jill Goodwin, the sister of drummer Bill Goodwin, who, along with bassist Steve Gilmore, performed with Woods for many years.

Catherine Coulson, 'Twin Peaks,' Log Lady dies

BY STEVE MARBLE AND SCOTT COLLINS
LOS ANGELES TIMES

As filming was revving up for the "Twin Peaks" television pilot, director David Lynch picked out a branch from a ponderosa pine and had it delivered to Catherine Coulson.

"The log had just been cut, under David's close supervision, when I got it the night before shooting the pilot," Coulson told Backstage.com in 2008. "So it was quite heavy, oozing sap."

For the actress — who for years had leaned toward Shakespeare — it proved to be a prop that would carry her into cult status.

In a prime time series that traded on its weirdness, quirky characters and unresolved mysteries, Coulson's Log Lady became one of the show's memorable, though deeply strange, roles.

Coulson, who was reported to have been planning an appearance in the reboot of "Twin Peaks" that is currently being made for Showtime, died Monday at 71. Her death was confirmed by her agent, Mary Dangerfield. There had been reports she had been suffering from cancer.

Coulson was born Oct. 22, 1943, and raised in Southern California, the daughter of a radio producer and public relations executive. She attended Scripps College in Claremont, California, and earned a master's degree at San Francisco State.

She devoted much of her career to the theater and for decades worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, where she lived with her husband, Marc Sirinsky. The couple had a daughter, Zoey.

Coulson befriend Lynch in the mid-1970s and worked on his breakthrough art film, the surrealistic "Eraserhead." Though her role in the movie — a nurse — was cut, she worked behind the scenes on lighting and with the camera crew.

She appeared in and helped Lynch write "The Amputee," a five-minute short that was made for the American Film Institute. She also worked as a camera operator or assistant on "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan," "Modern Romance," "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" and other features.

But the Log Lady hurled her into the pop culture pantheon.

In "Twin Peaks," which ran for two seasons from 1990 to 1991, the hunk of ponderosa pine was a constant companion of Coulson's character, Margaret Lanterman, the mystical woodsman's widow who claimed her log knew secrets about the town.

"My log has something to tell you," the Log Lady tells a law enforcement officer on the show. "Do you know it?"

"I don't believe we've been introduced," came the reply.

Coulson said she was stopped at airports, once asked to sign a Presto log and offered money by collectors who wanted the actual log.

"A surprising number of Shakespeare fans ... have also seen every episode of 'Twin Peaks,'" Coulson told the Register-Guard of Eugene, Oregon, "I wonder what the appeal is? Probably complicated plot lines — that's something Shakespeare has in common with David Lynch. And cross-dressing."

In a statement, Lynch said he considered Coulson one of his dearest friends.

"Catherine was solid gold. She was always there for her friends — she was filled with love for all people — for her family — for her work," Lynch wrote. "She was a tireless worker. She had a great sense of humor — she loved to laugh and make people laugh. She was a spiritual person — a longtime TM (transcendental meditation) meditator.

"She was the Log Lady."

Doug Kendall, Constitutional lawyer dies at 51

BY EMILY LANGER
THE WASHINGTON POST

Doug Kendall, a litigator and activist who challenged conservative and even some liberal legal traditions by promoting the view that the Constitution is an essentially progressive founding document, died Sept. 26 at his home in Washington. He was 51.

His death, from complications of colon cancer, was announced by the Constitutional Accountability Center, a Washington-based think tank, law firm and advocacy group that Kendall established and led since its founding.

Historically, constitutional debate has created two broadly defined camps: a conservative one, favoring "originalist" theory hewing to what is believed to have been the intent of the Founding Fathers, and a liberal one, advocating the view that the Constitution is a "living document" that must be interpreted in the context of a dynamic and shifting society.

Kendall adopted and then helped advance another legal framework, in which originalist readings of the Constitution could produce liberal conclusions.

Jeffrey Rosen, the president of the National Constitution Center and a law professor at George Washington University, described Kendall as "the most important advocate in the public square for a vision of progressive originalism."

"Doug Kendall had a vision," Rosen said in an interview, "and that was that liberals and progressives — by making arguments rooted in constitutional text and history — could persuade open-minded conservative and libertarian judges of the correctness of their position."

"It was an idealistic vision; it was a bipartisan vision," Rosen said, and "it took seriously the idea that there are constitutional arguments that transcend politics."

Kendall established the Constitutional Accountability Center in 2008. The center's key conviction, according to its website, is "that the Constitution is, in its most vital respects, a progressive document, written by revolutionaries and amended by those who prevailed in the most tumultuous social upheavals in our nation's history."

The center weighed in with briefs and arguments on a range of legal matters, including affirmative action, voting rights, same-sex marriage, campaign spending by organizations, health care and immigration.

In Padilla v. Kentucky, a case involving a Honduran immigrant who pleaded guilty to trafficking marijuana not realizing that the decision would probably result in his deportation, the center compared deportation to banishment, which the framers of the U.S. Constitution regarded as one of the most stringent of criminal penalties.

In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7 to 2 that lawyers who represent immigrants must advise their clients when a guilty plea might result in deportation.

Douglas Townsend Kendall was born on July 3, 1964, in Huntington, New York. He received a bachelor's degree in economics in 1986 and a law degree in 1992, both from the University of Virginia.

Early in his career, Kendall practiced with the firm Crowell & Moring in Washington and with the National Environmental Trust, a nonprofit organization. In 1997, he founded the Community Rights Counsel, which sought to defend environmental-protection legislation using traditionally conservative legal arguments.

"I became convinced that the same approach could be employed in a much broader range of disputes," he told the New Republic magazine in 2012, explaining why he founded the Constitutional Accountability Center in 2008.

For seniors, hearing trouble linked to greater risk of death

REUTERS

Older adults with hearing impairment may have a higher risk of dying than people with normal hearing, a recent study suggests.

The reasons for the connection are not clear, researchers say, but the results point to hearing impairment at least as a sign of, and possibly a contributor to an older person's survival odds.

"In the simplest terms, the worse the patient's hearing loss, the greater the risk of death," lead author Kevin Contrera said of the study's findings.

Past research has linked hearing problems to a variety of negative health effects, but few studies have looked directly at mortality risk, Contrera and his colleagues write in JAMA Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

Two thirds of adults over 70 experience hearing impairment, said Contrera, a medical student at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland.

He and his colleagues looked at data on 1,666 adults from a nationally representative survey conducted in 2005-2006 and 2009-2010, as well as death records through the end of 2011.

The people included in the analysis were all over age 70 and had undergone hearing testing. Using World Health Organization criteria to define hearing impairment, and accounting for individuals' age, the researchers found that people with moderate or severe hearing impairment had a 54 percent greater risk of dying than those with normal hearing. Mild hearing impairment was linked to a 27 percent increased risk.

The researchers then also adjusted for more variables that could influence hearing and death risk, including sex, race, and education, as well as heart risk factors, like stroke, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Even after accounting for those factors, the study team found that people with moderately or severely impaired hearing had a 39 percent higher risk of death than those without hearing problems, and those with mild hearing impairment had a 21 percent greater risk.

Piers Dawes, who was not involved in the new study, notes that hearing impairment can directly affect a person's health and wellbeing.

Older people with hearing loss tend to have more difficulty with communication, are more socially isolated, and are less able to care for their own long-term health conditions, said Dawes, a hearing loss researcher who teaches at the University of Manchester in the U.K.

"These sorts of secondary problems could potentially impact on health, wellbeing and mortality," he said.

The study observed the link between hearing problems and death, but more research is needed to know if hearing loss is somehow a contributing cause, Contrera cautioned.

For instance, the researchers did not investigate whether treating hearing impairment reduces the risk of death, which would help to clarify the relationship.

In his own research, Dawes noted, "Among people with hearing loss, hearing aid use was linked to better communication and better general health, but not with reduced risk of mortality."

A majority of older people suffer from hearing impairment, Dawes said, and hearing loss could just be a marker of being older and sicker in general.

Although the study focused on seniors, the findings may have value for people of all ages, Contrera said. "Although hearing loss is most common in older ages, certainly the earlier the treatment, the better," he said in an email.

Addressing hearing problems using "communication tactics, hearing aids, or wireless communication devices could promote social engagement, increased physical activity and better communication with doctors and other health professionals," Dawes said.

Obamacare not spurring more early retirements yet

BY MARK MILLER
REUTERS

CHICAGO — The Affordable Care Act is doing plenty of good for older Americans, but one thing it is not doing is convincing them to retire early.

One prediction of the impact of the health care law, commonly known as Obamacare, was that the ACA would end "job lock" — the phenomenon of workers hanging onto jobs just for the health insurance while waiting to become eligible for Medicare at age 65.

Instead, the ACA's guaranteed issue of insurance would let them leave the world of full-time work for more flexible self-employment, start businesses or launch encore careers — or just retire.

A 2013 study by the Urban Institute's Health Policy Center and Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute, for instance, forecast that health reform would boost the number of self-employed people by 1.5 million.

But new research shows the ACA has not turned the job-lock key — at least not yet. A team of University of Michigan researchers studied Census Bureau employment data for 2014 — the first full year of the law's implementation — and found no evidence of a higher rate of retirement, or a shift to part-time work, for Americans age 55 to 64.

"We looked for it. In fact we really looked hard for it," said Helen Levy, a research associate professor at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. "This just hasn't been the labor supply Armageddon some were predicting."

Still, the ACA has had an enormous, positive impact on older Americans.

At the end of the ACA's first full year, the share of Americans ages 50 to 64 without health insurance had fallen by nearly a third, to just 8 percent, according to research by the Urban Institute and AARP. The uninsured rate was even lower in the 27 states that chose to expand Medicaid eligibility — just 5.5 percent at the end of last year.

It is too early to document improved health, but Levy and other experts think the higher coverage rates will mean healthier seniors in the years ahead.

"For these folks, health insurance really matters," Levy said. "They're the ones who tend to get sick, and they have a nest egg to protect. It really is a matter of life and death."

Levy thinks uncertainty about the ACA may have kept some older workers on the job who otherwise would have exited.

In part, she credits the lengthy, failed battles by Republicans to repeal the law in Congress or upend it in the courts. Another factor, she thinks, was the messy launch of the federal health exchange website, Healthcare.gov, and the ensuing bad publicity.

"If I am an older worker and working primarily for the health insurance, that means I'm a cautious, careful person — perhaps someone with a serious health problem or a spouse with a problem," says Levy.

She adds that if people were in that situation on January 1, 2014, they would not retire so fast. They would want to make sure this new insurance will be there for all the years needed until they get to Medicare.