

***Gerald S. Crawford***, 76, of Dearborn, Michigan, died early Wednesday morning, September 3, 2008 after many years living with Parkinson's disease. He died with his family gathered around him with songs, hymns and prayer.

*Known as Jerry to his friends, he was born December 10, 1931 in St. Joseph, Missouri, the son of Otto A. and Sara P (Searcy) Crawford, who predeceased him. Raised in Denver, Colorado, he began playing organ professionally at the age of 12, worked as a soda jerk in his father's pharmacy, and was valedictorian of the South Denver High School Class of 1949.*

*He went to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where, as an organ student of the late Dr. Barrett Spach, he was granted the degrees of Bachelor of Music with Highest Distinction (1953), and Master of Music (1954). From 1954-1957 he served as Associate Organist and Choirmaster at Fourth Presbyterian Church, in Chicago and also as an Instructor of Organ at Northwestern University. From 1957-1963 he served as Director of Music for the First Presbyterian Church in Muncie Indiana, during which time he also taught organ and church music at Ball State and Christian Theological Seminary of Butler University, and organized the Muncie Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, providing leadership as its first dean.*

*In 1963 he married his beloved, Candace L Ramsay, also an accomplished musician and music educator. Together they spent their honeymoon year (1963-1964) studying at the Academy of Music in Vienna, Austria, where Jerry was a student of the famed organist, composer, and conductor, Anton Heiller. Additional study was also done at Haarlem, Holland, and at the International Academy of Organists, under Professor Heiller, Marie-Claire Alain, and Luigi Tagliavini. In 1964 they returned to the United States for Jerry to serve as Director of Music at Mount Lebanon United Presbyterian Church, in Pittsburgh PA. He served as dean of the Pittsburgh Chapter AGO from 1966-1968.. In the summer of 1969 he served as organist for the Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York; and in January 1969, began his ministry as Minister of Music at First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Michigan where he served for twenty-five years as musician and artist dedicated not only to music and worship but even more to the faith being proclaimed and to the seeking its solace and praise.*

*Upon retirement in 1994, he joined the Jackson Chorale, volunteered at The Community House in Birmingham, took up the guitar, attended many concerts, and graciously received the honor of being named Minister of Music Emeritus at First Presbyterian Church. Furthermore, he volunteered at Presbyterian Village in Redford, where he formed a small choir, called (ever the punster) the "Jerry-atrics." In 2001 he and his wife moved from their home in Birmingham to Henry Ford Village in Dearborn.*

*He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Candace (nee Ramsay); his daughter Adele and her husband Kurt Shaffert of New Haven, Connecticut; his son David, his wife Tracey, and three step grandchildren, Chelsey, Macy, and Brandon of Clarkston, Michigan. He loved them all dearly.*

*Throughout the joys and challenges of life, Jerry expressed an unceasing love for his family, for music and sweets, and for Christ's Church. He was forever grateful for the prayers and love shared by family, friends, and the many good people who touched his life.*

*A public Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, September 6, at 1:00 PM, at First Presbyterian Church, 1669 W. Maple, Birmingham, The Reverend Mary E. Austin officiating. Family will receive friends at the church Friday 7:30 to 9:00 PM. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Music Fund at First Presbyterian Church, 1669 W. Maple Road, Birmingham Michigan, 48009.*