



# The swing is gone

## Famed musician, Jazz Festival icon dies at age 94

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**L**ionel Hampton, the man who introduced the world to the Vibraphone, broke jazz's racial barrier, and is the only jazz musician to have a school of music named in his honor, died Saturday morning. Hampton died at Mt. Sinai Medical center, where he spent his last few days.

Manager Phil Leshin said Hampton's last few days were not painful, but uncomfortable.

"He never said it, but he had a sense about him as if to say 'please let me go now,'" Leshin said. "He had been having trouble sleeping and eating, but he was not in pain."

Hampton was born April 20, 1908 to Charles and Gertrude Hampton. After his father was killed in World War I, Gertrude moved the family to Birmingham, Ala., and later to Chicago.

Hampton started his music training at Holy Rosary Academy, taking drum lessons from a Dominican nun. His training on the drums continued while he attended St. Monica's School in Chicago, where Hampton learned to play the drum set.

Hampton made history with the Louis Armstrong Orchestra in 1930 when the band recorded "Memories of You," with Hampton on vibes. That was the first time the vibes had been used in a jazz recording. The song became a hit, and Hampton and vibes were immediately fixtures in the jazz world.

Hampton made history once again in 1936 when Benny Goodman asked Hampton to join his small group, which included Teddy Wilson on piano and Gene Krupa on drums. The group went on to become known as the Benny Goodman Quartet. This group was the first racially mixed group in the history of jazz. Hampton has since been an inspiration to jazz artists of all race, and helped pave the path for Jackie Robinson to break baseball's color barrier. Robinson has credited Hampton for helping give him the courage to be the first black baseball player in the all-white Major League Baseball.

Hampton formed his own band, The Lionel Hampton Orchestra. Through his band, Hampton helped bring to light many of the great jazz musicians of the past 75 years, including Dinah Washington, Quincy

Jones, Clark Terry, Nat King Cole and soul diva Aretha Franklin.

In 1984 Lionel Hampton and his New York Big Band made their first appearance at the University of Idaho Jazz Festival. Hampton was so impressed with the festival that he returned again in 1985, and the festival was named in his honor, the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival. In 1997, the University of Idaho School of Music was renamed the Lionel Hampton School of Music, making it the only school of music named after a jazz musician.

Hampton's memorial will begin Saturday at 9 a.m. at the Apollo theatre. A New Orleans-style funeral procession will be lead by Wynton Marsalis to the Riverside Church, about 15 blocks away, with Hampton's casket being pulled by two horses. The service will begin at 10 a.m. at The Riverside Church on Riverside Drive.

The service is to feature performances by the Lionel Hampton New York Big Band and also will feature Bucky Pizzarelli, Clark Terry and Russell Malone. Former President George Bush also is expected to say a few words.



ARGONAUT FILE

Lionel Hampton plays his last public performance at the Jazz Festival Feb. 23. The University of Idaho's Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival was named after Hampton in 1985.



COURTESY PHOTO

Hampton, center, performs with his band early in his career.