

Robert John Mobilio

1923 - 2014

“Bob Mobilio believed that everyone can find their own joy through music – find a purpose and discipline that carries through everything they do.”
– John Mobilio, son of Bob Mobilio

Robert John Mobilio was born in Waterbury, Connecticut on December 19, 1923, son of Connie and James Mobilio. His music career began at eight years of age, first on the banjo, then the accordion. The soundtrack of his life was a symphony of swing, a big band odyssey that saw him through the perils of World War II and had him crossing paths with musical icons.

In January 1943, Mobilio enlisted in the US Navy and was appointed to the Navy Band. While stationed in California, Mobilio performed in USO shows and at Hollywood nightclubs. He was later stationed on Okinawa as a member of a unit of Naval Construction Battalion “SeaBees.” He was honorably discharged with a rank of Boatswain’s Mate, 3rd class in January 1946 following the end of World War II. For his service in the US Navy, Bob was awarded the Navy Good Conduct Medal, the Marksman Rifle Badge, the American Theater Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Medal with one Battle Star, and the WWII Victory Medal.

After the war, Mobilio returned to his hometown of Waterbury. During the 1950s, he operated the Bob Mobilio Accordion School on Grand Street, wrote and published music for the accordion, and performed the accordion to large crowds throughout the Northeast. By 1960, his career included performing with the Glenn Miller Band, starring on radio shows, and appearing on television shows. Following a brief stint in NYC around 1960 and 1961, Mobilio came back to Waterbury and opened the Bob Mobilio Music Center in 1962, where he taught all types of musical instruments to thousands of people over the next several decades.

Mobilio performed at countless public and private events. During the 1940s, he performed with the Francis Delfino Orchestra at Waterbury’s Hamilton Park House on Sunday evenings, and people came in droves to dance there. He formed a trio that performed regularly at D’Angelo’s Restaurant on Watertown Avenue in Waterbury and at Armand’s Restaurant in Watertown.

At Di Napoli’s Nite Club in Waterbury’s Brooklyn neighborhood, Mobilio performed for visiting celebrities, including Johnny Carson, Rodney Dangerfield, and Red Buttons. At the State Theater in downtown Waterbury, he performed with singer Vic Damone and others. Victor Borge and Malcolm Baldrige invited Mobilio to perform at their suburban homes many times.



Mobilio’s band performed at the Waterbury Municipal Stadium Fourth of July celebrations for many years, while his brass band was featured at the annual Christmas Tree Lighting in downtown Waterbury for over 30 years. He was a member of the Governor Ella Grasso’s Foot Guard Band and marched in the inaugural parade for President Jimmy Carter in Washington, D.C.

Mobilio continued his higher education over the decades, all while running a business, performing as a professional musician, and raising a family of four children with his wife, Mary. When he was in his 50s, Mobilio earned a Master’s degree in Education and began a 20-year career teaching music in the Waterbury public school district, retiring in 1996. Mobilio served as secretary/treasurer of Local 186, American Federation of Musicians for 33 years, until his retirement in 2013.

Mobilio leaves his legacy of music to the people of Waterbury, to his family, to his friends and, most notably, to countless students and aspiring musicians who passed through his music store for decades or had him as a teacher in the Waterbury public schools. Mobilio lived his life as a patriotic citizen, a pillar of music entertainment in his beloved city, a staunch advocate for the arts and an inspiration to all he touched with his strong belief in education and his passion for music.