

Gabriel J. Viera, 74, music teacher, dies

Gabriel J. "Gay" Viera, 74, a long-time city organist and music teacher who died yesterday at Morton Hospital, was the husband of the late Madeline M. (Howe) Viera.

A lifelong resident of Taunton, he was the son of the late Joseph M. and Josephine (Cayton) Viera.

He retired about 10 years ago as organist at St. Joseph's Church, where he had played for services since 1947. He had also given organ and piano lessons for 45 years, until failing eyesight



GABRIEL "GAY" VIERA

forced him to retire about two years ago.

He began playing piano when he was 12. As an eighth grader at Cohannet School, he was once sent to the cloak room by the late music teacher Rosanna Reilly, who chastised him for playing "Yes, We Have No Bananas" in march time.

While he was a student at

Taunton High School, where he graduated in 1928, he played the organ for films, newsreels, and performances at the old Park Theatre under the instruction of Park organist Clifford Hughes.

After high school, he played with several area orchestras, including Charlie Weygand's Alhambra Orchestra and Stu Waterfield's Lion's Club Orchestra. He also filled in as organist in various churches in the area.

When he was a senior at Providence College, he wrote a musical entitled "Tars and Feathers," which was acclaimed from Providence to his hometown.

He worked for several years as a shipping clerk at Craft Weave Fabrics, and later worked in the accounts receivable department of the McCarthy Transportation Co., but later decided to devote his time to teaching music.

In 1962, during his 25th year of teaching and his 15th year as organist at St. Joseph's, he was honored with a testimonial at the former Cotillion. Approximately 250 people attended it.

He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, Msgr. James Coyle Council 82; American Federation of Musicians, Taunton Local 231; and the Massachusetts Musicians Union.

Surviving him are two brothers, George E. Viera and John Viera; a nephew, John A. Viera; a great-niece, Kathleen Viera; and a great-nephew, Stephen Viera, all of Taunton.

He also leaves several cousins.

1/26/83 TG