George DeVine, retired UT music professor, dies

Whether solving the New York Times crossword puzzle or drafting program notes for the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, George Francis DeVine delighted in words.

“He loved words and was excellent at using them,” said Helen Johnston, a former student and longtime friend.

Mr. DeVine died Friday at the Shannondale Health Care Center. He was 84.

Mr. DeVine, a professor emeritus of music at the University of Tennessee, helped David Van Vactor in 1947 found what would become the university’s School of Music.

A Chicago native, Mr. DeVine played bassoon with the Chicago Civic Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Ravinia Festival in his early adulthood. He was also bassoonist with the Kansas City Philharmonic, the Oak Ridge Symphony Orchestra and the Knoxville Symphony.

Mr. DeVine’s wife, the late June Nowack DeVine, also was an accomplished bassoonist.

While at UT, Mr. DeVine was an instructor in instrumentation and orchestration and a professor of music history for 38 years.

He also spent 40 years writing program notes for the Knoxville Symphony’s concerts. When he retired in 1985, the university’s music library was named in his honor.