

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

SPECIAL RECOGNITION CATEGORY - SOLO MUSIC DIVISION

Love Is a Many Splendored Thing

PAUL AARONBERG

VA MEDICAL CENTER

NORTHPORT, NEW YORK

Paul Aaronberg is an Army veteran who served in combat in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. Before entering the service, he sang in a choir at his synagogue and was also hired to sing at local functions. He continued singing after his time in the military, mainly songs by Frank Sinatra and Perry Como.

Though he is now diagnosed with dementia and experiences confusion and difficulty with memory, singing is one thing Aaronberg continues to enjoy. He actively attends music therapy groups one to two times weekly, recalling the lyrics and melodies of songs with little or no cueing. During music therapy sessions, his mood brightens and he becomes interactive and supportive of the other group members.

Through music therapy, Aaronberg benefits from successful treatment outcomes that include memory stimulation and improvement in cognitive functioning, as well as social interaction. In the words of Northport VA music therapist Tracey Enright, "Mr. Aaronberg transcends the disease of dementia when he sings, and during that time he is able to make a positive connection with those around him."

