

Les Lieber, Who Served Jazz to the Lunch Crowd, Dies at 106

By [Neil Genzlinger](#)

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Les Lieber, who for more than 45 years ran Jazz at Noon, a fabled New York institution where talented amateur players got together every week to stretch their skills and to perform alongside top-flight professionals, died on July 10 on Fire Island, N.Y. He was 106.

His stepson Jamie Katz confirmed the death.

Mr. Lieber had already had a substantial career as a publicist and journalist when, in September 1965, he organized the first Jazz at Noon, partly to give himself a chance to play his alto saxophone and penny whistle for an audience. It was on a Monday at lunch hour at Chuck's Composite, a restaurant on East 53rd Street.

"I was dying on the vine as a musician," he told The New York Times in 1975, recalling the origin of the sessions. "I hadn't had my sax out of its case in eight years. I felt there must be others like me who would love to play but couldn't get a rhythm section together without disrupting their families."

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