

A Life Well Lived...
Remembering Bill Kick



Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.
Berthold Auerbach

Mr. William J. Kick passed away peacefully around 2:00 p.m. on February 9, 2013 at Hospice. Bill had been battling cancer for the last several years and fought the good fight. Bill was the vocal music director at NRHS from 1974-1996. He formed our famous Troubadours, who under his tutelage received straight superior ratings at the OMEA State Competition for 13 consecutive years. He was famous for his commanding voice, raised eyebrow, and high expectations. I always knew I wanted to be a music teacher since the seventh grade, but Mr. Kick sealed the deal for me! Many NRHS graduates involved in our fine arts department went on to become professional musicians, actors, and music educators during his tenure. Always the teacher, Bill accompanied me for my college scholarship auditions, was instrumental in my returning to NRHS as the band director, and even chaperoned when I took the band away for week-long summer band camps at Canter's Cave and the University of Rio Grande. Always the true friend, Bill was there for me when my father passed away from the same dreadful disease; cancer. Private services were held for the family, which is typical Bill fashion. My teacher, mentor and most importantly, my friend will be sorely missed by many. His impact was far reaching and the "ripple effect" continues. I am sure as educators we all wonder if we make a difference from time to time...do we touch the heart and soul of the students we teach...Bill truly did.--Mark Bailey



Anyone who was in Troubadours knows Mr. Kick's resounding "yeeeeeeeeesssss" in a deep baritone. He would lift that eyebrow at you and look at you as if you had just done something very embarrassing. I always loved Mr. Kick's cynical sense of humor. It's required when teaching 50-80 high school kids at once. His serious demeanor was a facade. He goofed off more than any teacher I have ever had. He just did it without anyone knowing it. Regardless of his joking, when it came to music he was very serious. I remember him quite frequently site-reading a difficult piano piece for us for fun. Something would sound off and terrible. It took me years to realize he was playing each hand in a different key with seemingly little effort.

I am now a property manager and have several employees under me. They all know Mr. Kick even though they have never met him. I give them the same eyebrow and the same resounding "yeeeeessss" all the time. Mr. Kick affected my life in ways that I can not explain as well. He inspired me to take music seriously in a fun way. I am not a professional musician, but I do teach guitar lessons. My students also know Mr. Kick without knowing it. I use the same techniques that he used on me to teach them. I guess what I am saying is that Mr. Kick has touched the lives of so many just through me. I can not imagine all the good he has done throughout his life through all the kids he has taught. He was a wonderful and hilarious man and will be missed by many. Even those who don't know it.... --Andrew Vornholt



God bless his heart! My favorite class ever...music appreciation--mostly goofed off and got an A in that class! He had a lot to share and I certainly paid attention. Lots of memories.--Russell Havens

I loved music appreciation, too. I think we really got to see a fun side of Mr. Kick in that class.--Tia Brewer

What a great man he was! Especially for putting up with so many of us...you will never be forgotten.--Holly Jackson

Words cannot express how amazing Mr. Kick was as a teacher and how valuable his encouragement was to so many. He will be greatly missed while hundreds of his past students continue to see that smile on his face and laughter in his voice when we hear a great piece of music. Thanks for sharing and teaching your talent to so many...rest in peace---Patty Hoagland

As the principal of New Richmond High School from 1987 until 1991, I had the pleasure to experience Mr. Kick and the Troubadours. Mr. Kick was a revered and respected educator in our region. The Troubadours routinely competed with the finest high school choirs in Cincinnati including the SCPA. The whispers in the audience were never about the schools from the city, but the whispers were about how those kids from Clermont County could sing. The awe was inspired and established by Mr. Kick. Further, Mr. Kick commanded respect from students and it was returned two-fold. Students knew it was an honor and privilege to be a New Richmond High School Troubadour and they presented themselves above reproach in the classroom, the community, the region and state. Mr. Kick would have it no other way and students and parents believed! Mr. Kick touched thousands of young people with his masterful teaching, his high expectations, his strong rapport and his love of music. If given the opportunity, those generations of students who now have children in the New Richmond Schools surely would name the Troubs and New Richmond High School "the House that Bill Kick built!"

Mr. Kick was very influential at New Richmond High School as another critical role that he maintained was as the system scheduler. Well before my time, Mr. Kick, Guidance Counselors Gibson and Roberts and Principal Larry Graves were critical to maintaining high expectations and the integrity of the academic program at New Richmond High School.--John Frye





No one will ever
be able to take
his place...--
Valerie Beckett

I loved him! He
was an awesome
man!--Carla
McMillan Scharber



He yelled at
us...wonder
why?--Julie
Baugus Fetchak



He taught notes, excel-
lence, character, and
most of all, I think, the
LOVE of music.--Georgia
Stilwell Dunn

He was a great
influence--Erica
Ford

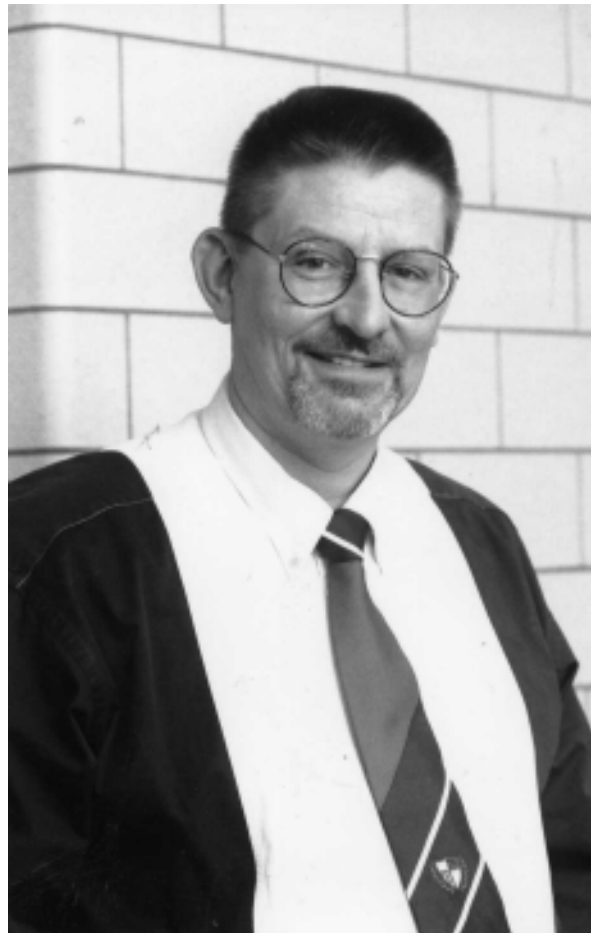
I was recently thinking
about him. Great man!--
Julie Bond



Passing auditions in high school was very tough, especially with Mr. Kick being one of the judges. There were always so many people auditioning to play and only few spots were filled for a concert. I had the opportunity to play 8 solos on stage, one duet, within 3 years time. I was even privileged to go on tour with the Troubs and play, "Ave Maria" downtown and other tours to elementary schools. That just made me feel so special!! I remember in specific one night after performing he had complimented me on my performance. That felt so great!! I have been playing as an instrumentalist in my church, and some weddings since high school, 30 years. Thank you for making it tough for us.. I also felt called to share a song, "How Can I Keep From Singing". It is on New Richmond High School facebook page. I encourage all of you to lift your voices or instruments in song... (For me this was a major building block for my self confidence. It made a world of difference to me.)
--Marie (Appelmann) Ustick (flautist)

What an incredible man. I was telling Kirby last night how crazy that man made me, but also how much he influenced my life. He will be raising that eyebrow to everyone in heaven now. -
-Jennifer Summerville Goldhahn

I can see him raising his eyebrow at me! I got a few (hundreds) of those! So sad to hear of his passing.--Radona Wells Scott



Everyone lives a life wondering what legacy they will leave behind. Wild Bill's legacy will be that he positively impacted lives from several decades-worth of students. An amazing man and friend.--Tim Cherry

What a legend! He will be missed.
--Staci Jenner Heiden

I was a member of the Troubadours from fall of 1976 until my graduation in 1979. I was the vice president during my senior year. The '78-'79 Troubadours were the first to receive a 1 rating at the state OMEA contest. Mr. Kick put his heart and soul into his work, all of the choirs, Troubs, and musicals. He just knew how to get the best out of his students. When your behavior was not up to his standards, he would give you the "eyebrow," which I received many times! RIP Mr. Kick! You are missed!--Lori Richards

I think often of all the fond memories of Troubs and the musicals. RIP Mr. Kick.--Toby Matthew Lewin

I can't believe he's dead. He is one I thought would live forever. A big influence on so many people!--Monica Monmesiac Tucker

Mr. Kick was one of the sternest, funniest, most talented and inspiring men I've ever known. He could command fear, respect, or even amusement with a single raise of his arched brow. As an eighth grader at New Richmond Middle School, auditioning before him to join the high school choir the following year was terrifying - I had never heard him speak, only seen him occasionally and his presence was a formidable one if you didn't know him. When I finally became a Troubadour, it was extremely gratifying to become a part of his elite group, his State Champions - he truly made us feel that we were part of something bigger and more special than our individual selves.

His musical talent was matched only by his teaching skill. He knew exactly what to say to push us harder and precisely when to make the perfectly-timed joke to loosen the tension during concerts and competitions. His students (including myself) would bend over backwards to curry his favor or to simply gain his attention, and when we succeeded it felt like we had been given a gift. By the time I became the music librarian for the Troubadours, I felt I had a duty to make him proud and do the best job I could, and he didn't let my efforts go unnoticed. He really made me feel important. I was contributing to, and drawing inspiration from, this wonderful thing that he had honed and crafted over the years: the synergy and magic of a group of people singing well and learning music together. He had that effect on us. His presence, his talent and his confidence in our own talents reflected back upon us and propelled us to be great, to make the most beautiful music possible. To this day, my love for music and singing is due in large part to him. Thank you, Mr. Kick.--Amy Goetz



He was a wonderful music teacher!--
Beth Curtis

Music Appreciation was one of my favorite classes ever. I used to listen to Tommy and some Suite Judy Blue Eyes in his honor. --Regina Lexi Rickert

Most memorable time: I tried out for O Holy Night at Christmas time. And I got the song. I sung it solo and when we returned back to the music room, Mr. Kick gave me a side hug and told me that when the song was completed, I received a standing ovation. As he told me this he had tears in his eyes. It was then that I really understood the hard work that he put into each of us. He stayed several times with me after school to get that song just perfect; and it paid off. He took so much pride in his teaching and it would be amazing if everyone could have simply a part of his dedication.--Kathie 'Ginn' Davis

By far, my fondest memory from high school was being a member of the Troubadours. I still vividly remember the day my class became a part of Troubadour history by being the first group to earn a 1 at the state OMEA competition in class AA. Experiences such as the exchange concerts with Anderson and Fairborn High School and the Christmas concerts downtown at the Westin made it much more than simply a performance group. Being a Troubadour always felt like an honor, an accomplishment. Mr. Kick demanded our very best, and somehow, he always managed to make this group of average high school students from little ol' NRHS sound - and feel - like the most magnificent choir on the grandest stage in the world. I was always a little bit in awe of him, and I am forever grateful for his gift to me -- the love and respect of music. Mr. Kick was a legend, and his legacy will live in the hearts of his students and the halls of this building for generations to come. --Nicole Parker



Mr. Kick, thank you for your dedication. You inspired more lives than you could ever know through your expectation of excellence through practice. You truly will be missed.--Kelby Bittman, NRHS Troubadours 1992

What a great guy!!--Bill Summerville

He was an amazing influence...RIP--J. Russell Gray

He was such a positive influence to many of us. With the comments you see here (Facebook), you realize what kind of man he was. Once in a lifetime educator. It was a pleasure to know you, Mr. Kick. RIP--Michael Frey

Regarding Mr. Kick:

Mr. Kick was a dedicated and highly professional educator who demanded the best that his students could deliver. He was not content to allow students to just "be there taking up space" in his class. He wanted his students to apply themselves and over-achieve what they believed they were capable of. I believe his commitment to helping students over-achieve is the main reason that during his tenure at New Richmond High School the choir known as The Troubadours won so many awards year over year.

From a personal perspective, Mr. Kick is the reason that I won a voice scholarship my senior year in high school at New Richmond that helped pay for voice lessons, and he was the primary reason that I applied to colleges with performance voice programs and ultimately was accepted into Indiana University's School of Music. Although music was not the career I chose to pursue long-term, the drive and confidence that Bill Kick helped instill in my DNA remains with me today and I am truly grateful to him for that lifetime gift.

Thank you Mr. Kick. Your legacy stands on its own and lives on in the many New Richmond students that you instructed.--Sincerely, Ralph S. Windle II, Esq.

In the course of a life, we each take a different path. Each turn, each mountain, each river that we face bears great influence on our direction in life. Occasionally, we hit a crucial place in our journey; a place where the decision will have an immediate and life changing impact on our journey. This crucial piece of my life's puzzle came to me in the form of Mr. Bill Kick.

Upon hearing of his passing, I was overwhelmed with a sense of profound emptiness as the realization of my mentor's death moved from the surreal to my reality.

I first met Mr. Kick at Anderson Middle School where my brother attended. From that day, Mr. Kick played an ever increasing role in helping me become who I am today. The amazing thing about this realization is that dozens of people saw him in the same light; a teacher, a mentor and a friend.

As the person who took over for Bill upon his retirement, I never really felt like I had to impress him, but I always felt an overwhelming desire to do so. A smile, a grin or an approving nod of the head meant the world to me. I first learned how to listen to music from him during high school, and I still try to follow his example to this day. Bill had an uncompromising approach to excellence, and was able to communicate this goal to all he worked with. He also had the ability to convey support to his students and colleagues in a profound way, and his lessons still resonate within me today.

The world lost a true connoisseur of the beauty of music, a passionate creator of excellence and a true friend to those who were fortunate enough to spend time with him. --Doug Heflin



In March of 2012 I was inducted into the NR music theater arts hall of fame. Bill Kick has most certainly been a part of my journey. My favorite memories from my children's (Mandy Vornholt Friedman and Andrew Vornholt) high school years are the Troubadour and band concerts. He gave me the opportunity to travel with the Troubadours as the accompanist, as well as accompanying for concerts and contests. (I will always remember getting to watch the seniors shave the curly locks from his head because of their success at a state concert.) The sound he coaxed from the voices of those high school students was amazing. Under his direction and mentorship they touched the souls of their audiences. For me, I count it an incredible honor to be in the same Hall of Fame as Bill Kick. His influence is far reaching and will continue for generations to come. --Judy Schaechter