

KENOSHA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

# THANK YOU KENOSHA

## FOR ADVOCACY

## FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

School is back in session! Thank you, teachers, staff, volunteers, and administrators, for your service to this—and many future generations of learners and leaders.

An adult's success in forging meaningful connections with students through our educational systems has everything to do with the lifelong success of those whose lives were touched. Lifelong, and quite possibly, permanently positive impacts are left upon youth because of even just a few caring adults.

I had a call awhile back from a prospective KCF donor and our conversation soon turned toward his deep appreciation for formative experiences by fellow Kenoshans, primarily the teachers and students he engaged while working in the Kenosha Unified School District. He followed up our call with a heartwarming letter that, with permission, is shared here. A truly moving reflection of a life forever changed.

I was 23 years old in the Fall of 1959 when I was appointed to serve as Bradford High School's Assistant Director of the Concert Band and Director of the Marching Band and Stage Band. My assignment also included several beginning band classes. I was appointed Director of the Bradford Concert Band in 1960.

Thank you Kenosha for Ralph Houghton. During my teens coming of age in Racine, Wisconsin, Ralph Houghton gave me opportunities to learn how to coach, teach, conduct, and arrange music for the Racine Elks Youth Band.

Ralph Houghton's mission as Coordinator of Music was to give every student in Kenosha an opportunity to experience the joy and educational value of making music. His success became a model for Music Coordinators and Supervisors everywhere. The year before the opening of Tremper High School, Mary D, Bradford had students enrolled in seven choirs, five bands, and a full orchestra.

Thank you Kenosha for Harold Maurer, Superintendent of Schools. I was introduced to Mr. Maurer at a teacher orientation meeting. At that gathering of newly employed teachers, he stated that "Our educational mission in Kenosha is not only to teach our students how to become responsible adult citizens and productive workers, but also to teach them how to live." And, he continued, "That is the mission of arts education in our schools." He was an avid supporter of the fine and performing arts in Kenosha.

Thank you Kenosha for Otto Huettner, Principal of Bradford High School. His advocacy for music education was unwavering. He insisted on a comprehensive curriculum for every Bradford High School ensemble.

Thank you Kenosha for the Kenosha Band Boosters. Parents engaged in active, rigorous, and necessary support of their children was an important asset to our band programs. Their support allowed the Bradford H.S. Band to travel, compete in and perform at regional and national events. The Boosters also provided support for the Rambler Band composed of Jr. H. S. students.

Thank you Kenosha for Manny Mitka, music dealer, friend, consultant, and teacher; Vito Pascucci, Leblanc CEO an active supporter of music education in Kenosha, and Dr. James Neilson, Educational Director at G. Leblanc. He was a dear friend and mentor. Jim Neilson taught me lessons that lasted a lifetime.

My good fortune also included a Board of Education that sustained its support for constantly improving and expanding elementary and secondary school music education programs during Kenosha's good times and bad times.

And finally, thank you Kenosha for the excellent elementary and secondary music teachers and directors that I experienced in Kenosha as the result of an exceptional collaboration of human and material resources.

I find it moving and inspiring to be presented opportunities to come into direct contact with the immense quality of leadership that has existed—and surely still exists locally. Thank you Kenosha (from me too).

**Amy Greil**

*Executive Director*