



Richard J. Norris, 1928 – 2008

Journal Gazette, The (Fort Wayne, IN) - Saturday, September 6, 2008

A veteran conductor of the Auburn Community Band has died.

Richard J. Norris died Thursday at DeKalb Memorial Hospital. He was 80. Norris retired in 2004 as the band's original conductor. He spent 22 years leading the group, with members ranging from middle school students to adults. The year before he retired, he took the group to Washington, where it performed at the Lincoln Memorial representing Indiana during the Festival of States.

His life as a musician began in Fort Wayne, where he learned to play a metal clarinet as a child. He graduated from South Side High School and earned a bachelor's degree at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y.

After college, he directed at Hamilton High School, then obtained a master's degree from Ball State Teachers College, now Ball State University. He later taught music at Auburn High School, DeKalb High School, DeKalb Middle School and most recently at St. Jude Elementary.

Last summer, the community band marked its 25th anniversary with a concert tour, and band members credited Norris for its lasting success.

Norris is survived by his wife, Margery, and two sons.

Visitation will be from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday and from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Monday at D.O. McComb Dilgard & Cline, 502 N. Main St., Auburn. The funeral will be at 10:30 a.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 211 W. Ninth St., Auburn.

Memorials can be given to St. Mark's or the Auburn Community Band, the funeral home said.