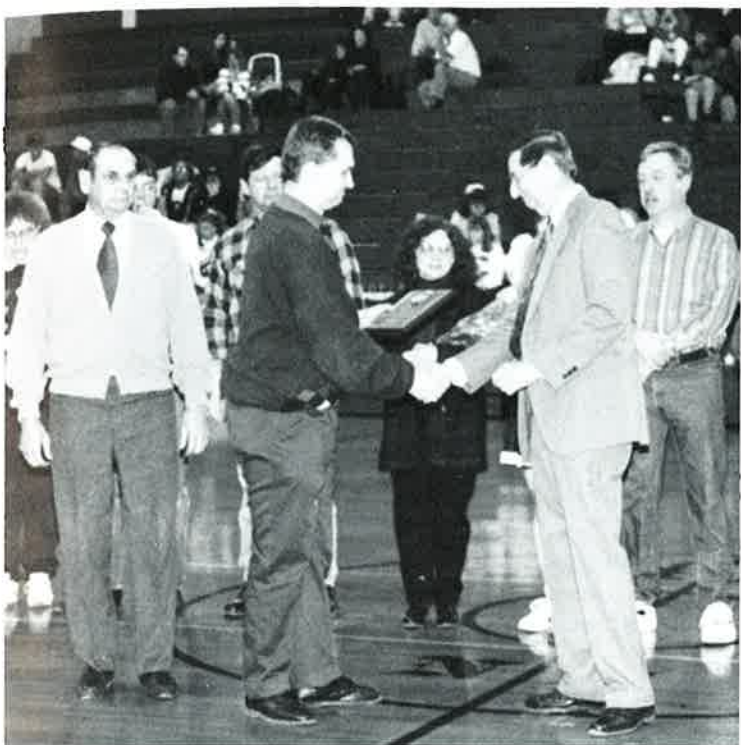


Salute to John T.



Mr. King honors Mr. Wilson for his years of participation at athletic events.



Mr. Wilson previews the next selection at "An Afternoon Concert."



Sam Green and the band honor Mr. Wilson (sitting in rocker) with a gift and a standing ovation.

It's hard to say good bye.

For 39 years, John T. Wilson made such an impression on his students that many of them would come back during his last year and play for him again. That was at the annual Variety Show in April. Mr. Wilson was presented with a rocking chair so that he could sit back and rest during his retirement.

Parent Mike Hamilton said that Mr. Wilson's contribution was that he was an "excellent band director." This made his students "more dedicated and more willing to play for him." He said Mr. Wilson had a way of making the "worst sound good . . . so that it made them (the kids) feel good." Certainly, that's what John T. did when the band placed a disappointing sixth at State Marching Contest. He managed to get cheers from the crowd of parents and students surrounding him as he read the results of the marching category in which the band placed second. He emphasized that North Putnam was in tenth place coming into the competition based on the regional scores. "To come out sixth," Mr. Wilson announced, "was just incredible."

Parent Sharon St. John emphasized that Wilson's success was in the things he brought out in his students. "He doesn't just teach music. He teaches self-discipline, determination—things that will help the kids years down the road. . . I'm not sure how he does it." She stated that parents recognize this and will "bend over backwards for him."

Mr. Wilson stated that his last year was special because the band went to the state finals for the sixth straight year. Seeing the kids work hard is "quite motivating to myself," Mr. Wilson said just prior to leaving for the Hoosier Dome.

He cited his bands' major accomplishments over the years as "the actual performances themselves," but points specifically to the his bands' selection to march in the Cherry Blossom Parade in Washington, D.C., Disney World in Florida, the 500 Festival Parade, and the opening ceremonies of Union Station in Indianapolis.

From the students' perspective, they were aware of his impact as well. "He's taught us right from wrong," Scott Curran said. "He's taught us . . . a lot of stuff about life, not only band, but about ourselves."

Drum major Bob Miller agreed, "He treats everybody like a person."

On the lighter side, Tracey Schraub pointed to one familiar characteristic that Mr. Wilson is known for. "He always says, 'Ho band!' to get their attention."

Assistant band director, Kathy Dory, worked with Mr. Wilson for eight years. She credits his attitude as a quality that draws students to his program. "Mr. Wilson has a very caring attitude that comes through in everything that he does. He is also very patient.... John's legacy will be his successful program."

Saying good bye isn't easy. That's because Mr. Wilson's influence will live on long after his students lay down their instruments. Maybe what Jim Risk said at Mr. Wilson's retirement banquet is a better parting, "Find an easy chair. Rair back and enjoy." Many alumni might add, "In the meantime, we'll keep marching." ©By Jerry Goshert, adviser



Mr. Wilson-1st year-1953-54