



Storti, Paul R.

Age 91

Passed away on Feb 17, 2005

He was born of Italian immigrant parents in Eveleth. His wife of 65 years, Carmen, preceded him in death on Sept. 26, 2004. He is survived by two children; daughter, Susan Storti (Robert Hajek) of Golden Valley; son, Fred (Dianne) of Anton; and 4 grandchildren, Paula, Alexis, Allison and Joanna. He was the oldest of 4 with brothers, Tony in CA, Dewey in NC, and sister, Flora in FL. As a musician, entertainer, band director and teacher, Paul was the quintessential 'music man'. In the Big Band era he played his trumpet with the Tammy Dorsey Band and was sought after by Lawrence Walk. Over 40 years of teaching took him from Eveleth to Harmony to Lake City and ultimately to the South Washington County Schools. He was named Band Director of the year on three occasions, and his students won many kudos and top awards for solos, ensembles and musical productions. Paul was inducted into the Minnesota Music Educators Hall of Fame and has received numerous awards, including the 'Band Masters of America' certificate, the WCCO Prep Band Award and the Governor's Volunteer Award for his many 'acts of kindness'. In 1998 Paul was chosen as an Eleven Who Care (KARE 11) Volunteer. At the age of eighty he returned to directing in establishing the South Washington County Community Band. The group continues today with Paul's students and two more generations of musicians. He was influential in many musical careers. Gabriel will certainly welcome him into his Garden. Thank you to the staff at Methodist Hospital Home Care Hospice (especially Jeff) and Walker Methodist Health Care Center. A memorial service in celebration of Paul's life will take place on February 25th at 2:00 p.m. in the chapel at Walker Center, 3737 Bryant Avenue S., Minneapolis. Memorials may be sent to ISD #833 Community Band, 7362 E. Point Douglas Road S., Cottage Grove, MN 55016.



DAWN VILLELLA, PIONEER PRESS FILE PHOTO

Paul Storti leads the South Washington County Community Band through the theme from "Rocky" in 1999.

Former Storti students, associates invited to play at tribute concert

The South Washington County Community Band, under the direction of Tracey R. Collins, will perform a "Tribute to Paul Storti" concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 24, at Cottage Grove Junior High School.

Paul Storti, the man who began the band and taught for many years in south Washington County schools, died Feb. 17.

The band is asking former students, associates, family, friends and neighbors to join the band onstage or in the audience as it plays some of Paul Storti's favorite music, including Sousa marches, Leroy Anderson and the William Tell Overture.

Admission is free and open to the public. For details, call Debie (Schaumburg) Prokosch at 459-6662 or Patti (Johnson) Blatz, at 480-8716.

■ The South Washington County Community Band is planning a concert in memory of Paul Storti, a long-time band director at Cottage Grove Park High School and founder of the community band. It's scheduled for April 24 at 4 p.m. at Cottage Grove Junior High. Storti, who founded the band in 1993 when he was 80, died earlier this year. He retired as Park High School's band director in 1976. The band is attempting to reunite former students and associates to join the band to play some of Storti's favorite music. Persons who are interested in playing with band are invited to contact Debi Schaumburg Prokosch at 651-459-6662 or Patti Johnson Blatz at 651-480-8716. The concert is free.

REMEMBERING PAUL STORTI, 91

'He never stopped teaching'

Retired music educator launched, led popular community band

BY MEGAN BOLDT
Pioneer Press

Paul Storti, a retired South Washington County educator who started a popular community band for school district residents, died Thursday. He was 91.

Storti retired from the school district in 1976. He spent 27 of his 40 years in education directing the concert and marching bands at the old Park High School in St. Paul Park and the new school once it opened in Cottage Grove. After retiring, he created the South Washington County Community

Band, which has been putting on public concerts for more than 11 years.

Patti Blatz knew Storti for about 40 years. She grew up almost next door to his family in Cottage Grove, played the trumpet for him as a student at Park High School and later joined the community band.

"He was an icon when we were in grade school," said the 52-year-old Hastings resident. "Playing for him was the goal for every musician."

Storti grew up in Eveleth, Minn., where he learned to play the trumpet. His son, Fred Storti, said music started to become an important part of his

father's life during high school.

He went to Winona State to get his teaching degree, working his way through school by playing in jazz bands. Fred Storti said Lawrence Welk, the king of champagne music, tried to recruit his father to become his lead trumpeter.

But Storti was more interested in becoming a music educator.

"His first love was really teaching," Fred Storti said. "He was a teacher at heart."

Storti's family estimates he touched

PAUL STORTI, 3B

Paul Storti

(continued)

the lives of about 5,000 students over the years through school classes and private lessons. Before moving to the metro area to teach, he directed high school bands in Lake City, Harmony and Eveleth.

Blatz, who graduated from Park High School in 1971, has fond memories of Storti both as a neighbor and teacher. Like Storti, her parents loved to garden. They always exchanged produce, and Storti liked to bring over zucchinis and tomatoes.

Sometimes his passion for instruction would creep outside the classroom. Blatz remembers how she would practice on her trumpet at home during summer. The windows were always open because her family didn't have air conditioning.

"He'd stop by and say, 'You know, you have to change how you do this,'" Blatz said. "He was listening to me while he was walking down the street and I didn't even know. That

was just like him. He never stopped teaching."

The Storti clan shared a passion for the arts. Storti's son, Fred, played the trumpet. His daughter, Susan, was an excellent flutist. And his wife, Carmen, loved music, drama and the arts.

The two were married for 65 years. Carmen Storti died in September.

"They made quite the arts team," Fred Storti said of his parents.

His love for teaching didn't end at retirement. About 17 years later, in 1993, he started the community band, and he served as director for about seven years. About 50 people — ranging from teenagers to those in their 80s — still show up once a week to practice.

There is no fee to be in the band. Storti never wanted a paycheck for it. He just wanted a place for people of all ages to come together and make music.

Blatz said she saw Storti last fall, and he asked if she was still playing the trumpet. "I could tell it was important to him that we were still playing, even though he wasn't still around."

KARE-11 TV named Storti an Eleven Who Care winner in 1998 after the community band members nominated him for his volunteer work.

Storti was inducted into the Minnesota Music Educators Hall of Fame in 1997 and received numerous awards, including three-time Band Director of the Year, Band Masters of America certificate, WCCO Prep Band Award and the Governor's Volunteer Award in 1996.

Storti is survived by daughter Susan of Golden Valley, son Fred of Afton, four grandchildren, brothers Tony and Dewey and sister Flora.

A memorial service is scheduled for Friday at 2 p.m. in the chapel at Walker Center, 3737 Bryant Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Memorials can be sent to the South Washington Community Band, 7362 E. Point Douglas Rd. S., Cottage Grove, MN 55016.

Blatz said the community band members hope to schedule a concert in his honor as well.

Megan Boldt can be reached at mboldt@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5495.

Community bands let the beat go on

MEMORIAL CONCERT

What: The South Washington County Community Band concert to honor Paul Storti.

When: 4 p.m., April 24.

Place: Cottage Grove Junior High, 9775 Indian Blvd. S., Cottage Grove.

Who: The band welcomes former members as well as former students of Storti.

Admission: Free.

Practices: 7 p.m. Tuesdays in the Park High School band room. Those who want to play in the concert are invited to practice on April 12 and April 19.

By Joe Kimball
Star Tribune Staff Writer

It's a good thing Joe Nauer doesn't play the clarinet in the community band, like his wife, Priscilla.

They're both 75, but he doesn't see so well. So the tuba is the instrument for him.

"The tuba only has three valves, so I can play with one hand and still hold a magnifier in the other hand so I can read the music," he said. "The clarinet, and most other instruments, you need two hands to

play."

Like thousands of Minnesotans, the Nauers are dedicated members of a community band — stalwarts in the South Washington County Community Band, which practices every Tuesday night and performs a dozen or so concerts a year.

The band will hold a memorial concert April 24 for its former director, Paul Storti, who died in February.

Storti was a beloved band teacher who directed bands at Park High School for 27 years and then, after retirement, start-

ed the community band in 1993. Organizers hope his former students will attend the concert, to listen or play.

South Washington County is one of 100 or more such community bands in the state, said Herminio Diaz, a music professor at Inver Hills Community College who maintains a website of local band information. (You can access it at www.startribune.com/224.)

BANDS continues on B5:

— *All ages come to play.*

— *State has musical tradition.*



Jeff Wheeler/Star Tribune

The South Washington County Community Band brings together a wide range of ages and experiences, including trumpeters Beth Formanack, right, Peter Swanlund and Patti Blatz.

Concert honors Storti

On Thursday, Feb. 17, 2005, we came to the end of an era. Paul Storti, the man who brought music to so many through the years with his award-winning bands, passed on.

In honor of his memory, the South Washington County Community Band, under the excellent direction of Tracey R. Collins, will perform a "Tribute to Paul Storti" concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 24, at Cottage Grove Junior High School.

For this concert, the group hopes to reunite as many former students and associates that can be found as well as family, friends and neighbors to come and listen or join with the band and play some of Paul Storti's favorites.

Sousa marches, Leroy Anderson and the William Tell Overture will be on the program.

The concert, as always, will be free and open to the public. The band hopes to get in touch with people who have played under Paul's direction over the years, whether as a student or as a community band member.

For further information, please contact Debi (Schaumburg) Prokosch (Class of 1970) at 459-6662 or Patti (Johnson) Blatz (Class of 1971) at 480-8716.

Debi Prokosch
Cottage Grove

OBITUARY

Paul Storti, 91, teacher, musician

BY MEGAN BOLDT
Pioneer Press

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But Storti was more interested in becoming a music educator.

"His first love was really teaching," Fred Storti said. "He was a teacher at heart."

Storti's family figures he touched the lives of about 5,000 students over the years through classes at school and private lessons. Before moving to the metro area to teach, he directed high school bands in Lake City, Harmony and Eveleth.

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