

# Jilka made impact on SJ band

*Editor's note: The following column was submitted by Maralyn Woodbury, a member of the St. Johns High School band when Frank Jilka was the band director.*

"I am writing this article to honor a special band director who taught in the St. Johns school district from 1952-62 – Frank Jilka.

Mr. Jilka was born Jan. 29, 1924 in Salina, Kansas. He graduated from Sacred Heart High School in 1941. After graduation, he served in the U.S. Naval Reserve until 1946. He attained the rank of Lieutenant (JG).

Mr. Jilka graduated from Kansas Wesleyan University in 1948 and earned a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan in 1951. Mr. Jilka taught instrumental music in St. Johns. He was named the St. Johns Jaycees Man of the Year in 1959.

After leaving Michigan, he taught in the city of Oakland and the Mt. Diablo School District in California. He retired in 1994 after teacher 35 years.

But, Mr. Jilka decided retirement was not for him, so he became a volunteer

teacher in the music program for Analy High School in Sebastopol, Calif. from 1995 to 2008.

He was also the founder and conductor of the Sebastopol Community Band.

Mr. Jilka and his wife Dee had five children: Greg Jilka of Sebastopol; Steve Jilka of San Diego; Dennis Jilka (deceased); Suzanne Jilka Albin of Sebastopol and Mary Jilka Moore of Escondido, Calif. After working with Roy Davis, Jr. in the St. Johns Community Band, I related to him many times about what a great director Mr. Jilka was.

Mr. Davis suggested that we honor him by hanging his photo in the high school band room.

The Holland Tulip Festival plaques are also hanging in the band room, a testament of one of the great achievements of the St. Johns High School bands under Mr. Jilka's direction.

Mr. Jilka was serious director. Inspections of our uniforms before a performance were mandatory. – brass polished, shoes shined and everything clean.

He took great pride in his band, and there were no excuses.



Photo by Sue Lounds

Roy Davis Jr. and Maralyn Woodbury display a photograph of Frank Jilka, the St. Johns High School band director from 1952 to 1962. The photograph is being hung in the high school band room in honor of Jilka.

One of my great memories of band was going to the Interlochen National Music Camp for a week in the summer to prepare for football (marching) season.

So, Mr. Jilka, I know you will be reading this and viewing your picture, so on be-

half of your former students and friends, I would like to say, "Thank you for being our director and making us stronger for having a teacher like you. God bless you."

— From Maralyn Woodbury