

Music has always been part of retiring Alton teacher Tim Jarden's heart and soul

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Music has always been a big part of Tim Jarden's life. It started with piano lessons with his mother, Dorothy, in the Jarden family home in Alton during Tim's childhood.

"Both my mom, Dorothy, and dad, Irv, inspired me with music," Tim said. "It was largely my mom who inspired me because she played the piano and organ and loved music.

"I can remember standing at the Alton Halloween Parade and my mom would say with excitement, 'Here comes the Marching 100. I sure hope one day you will be in the that.' I have a scrapbook and I am in a picture in uniform when I made the Marching 100. I loved music, too, when I started practicing as a kid."

Tim is retiring from his work with Alton Middle School/Elementary band/jazz students as summer unfolds. He said he has sadness about his retirement but is looking forward to his next journey in life. Music will always be in his life, Tim said.

"I have kind of mixed feelings about retirement," Tim said. "I am sad about not being around the faculty and kids. I do think I will be teaching some at Lewis Clark Community College and keep busy there doing some part-time stuff."

Tim also plans to keep playing in the Third Coast Band, named and organized by one of his best friends, Kenny King, also an Alton music teacher. Tim describes King as an outstanding teacher and one of the best friends he has ever had in his life.

"I am Alton boy, so it has been really special that I have had a chance to work with some teachers that were my teachers," he said. "I have taught kids of friends and taught grand kids of my friends. I never wanted to leave Alton and I wanted to give back. I think there are at least seven teachers in area middle schools and high schools that I taught. I think that keeps the music alive."

He said he has loved his time in the Alton School District with the administration, faculty and support personnel.

"Alton has a special group of really nice people," Tim said. "The staff in Alton schools are dedicated to trying to help the kids learn and be there for them. I am fortunate to have worked with a lot of tremendous teachers."

Tim's prime instrument is trumpet. He now plays primarily guitar in the Third Coast Band.

Tim and his wife, Dana, have been married 31 years. The two have two boys - Andy and Chris. Chris will be taking his place in Alton schools, something that makes Tim very proud. He said he knows his son will do a tremendous job in his place.

The retiring Alton music teacher said he is proud he inspired his son to follow his footsteps in music. He knows with his son, the Jarden tradition will continue in Alton schools.

As he retires, Tim is reflecting a lot on the past and his own start with his mother.

“We would play little songs together in my key,” Tim said of his early time with his mother. “I feel a lot of my success in music comes from playing music with my mom and in the Alton school program. I owe an awful lot to my mother. My dad was awfully proud of his kid, too.”