

Strike up the band! Former orchestra director celebrated by students 50 years later

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY - Former Alton High School Orchestra Director Charlie Musgraves was celebrated with a luncheon at the Alton Wood River Sportsman's Club.

Musgraves worked in the Alton School District for 18 years, he said, working as orchestra director and the assistant director of the Marching 100 at Alton High School, after serving the music programs at North Junior High School. Musgraves, who is now 85, has since moved to Sun City, Arizona with his wife, Toby, but travels through his beloved Alton every year during a nearly 7,000 mile trip he and his wife take through the entire Midwest, starting with a volunteer mission at Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

"I feel wealthy to have so many friends and family across the entire country," Musgraves said at the luncheon.

While he and his wife have been traveling through the area for the last five years, Musgraves said they have never had such a large showing of former students.

V.J. Dickson, a former student of Musgraves who has kept in touch using Facebook, said Musgraves asked her if she could maybe bring some more students to meet with him. She said she would do her best, but was not sure of how many she could reach. Around two dozen were in attendance at the luncheon.

"I've been friends with him since high school," she said. "Every time he comes into town, I try to have lunch with him or something to catch up, and I have been keeping even more in touch with him through Facebook. Last time, he asked if maybe I could tell more students about it, and I said I would do my best."

Musgraves was impressed with the showing of his former students. He said he was also happy with the impact his presence in their lives made. Many of the students traveled many miles just to enjoy lunch with their former music teacher.

