

New Music Hall Honors Marching Band Legend

Leadership skills are what KU band director emeritus Richard Wells taught his students. And leadership skills are what KU music alumni are providing to help fund the Richard G. Wells Music Rehearsal Hall, a soundproof annex to Schaeffer Auditorium for use by the university bands, ensembles and orchestra.

"What a fitting tribute to a great man," said Dr. Willis Rapp, chair of the Department of Music. "He is the person who single-handedly developed the university program for bands during his years at KU."

As the plans take shape for improvements to Schaeffer, this addition will fulfill the dream of Wells, who served Kutztown for 29 years.

"I injected the importance of leadership into all my bands and ensembles," Wells said. "When I started, we didn't have a major in music; the students joined the band because they liked to play music."

Through the establishment of the woodwind, brass and percussion ensembles, the jazz band, the marching band administrative council and the band honor fraternity and sorority, Wells continued to expand the program, using every new opportunity to teach leadership skills.

"I realized that most of these students would not pursue a career in music, so it was important to build their confidence so that they could succeed in their chosen fields," said Wells, who continues to support the university through the R.G. Wells/Jazz Band Scholarship and as director of the Graduate Organization of Bands and Alumni Jazz Band.

Many band and ensemble alumni said they have found Wells' approach to music as a model for career and business a vital learning experience.

"You can't sum him up in a sentence or two," said Ken Hoch '84, owner of Hoch Insurance Agency. "He was the one who got me to go back to school, and his influence has continued throughout my life."

Rance Block '74, owner of Block Insurance Agency and principal fundraiser for the new Temple Beth El in Allentown, Pa., agrees.

"Richard Wells would always give of himself and his time way above the call of duty. He did it for the love of the university, students and music," Block said.

For more information, please call the KU Foundation at 610-683-1394. [KU](#)

