

# Barbers say goodbye to Farmington Schools

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Paul Barber, director of fine arts for Farmington Public School District, describes himself as one spoke of a wheel. "You start out with a well-educated community which is pretty well-heeled and can afford what they want," Barber begins. "They have productive children eager to learn and succeed."

Add a "dedicated and talented teaching staff and a board of education and administration which supports the arts."

And then there's Barber. "I'd like to think that I unify the direction as the chief steward," he said. "You take away any one of those spokes and things start crumbling."

After 37 years in Farmington schools, Barber, whose name is synonymous with music, will retire June 27.

He hopes the district hires his successor before he leaves so that he can show him or her around.

"I have a few things to tell him," Barber said with a twinkle in his eyes.

Barber's staff is in place and no one else is leaving. He's grateful for the continuity his successor will enjoy and warns someone used to immediate feedback from children in a classroom might not like his position.

"In this job, you may wait six or seven years to see if an initiative paid off," Barber said.

"You get delayed reaction. You are working with all adults and adults who are majors in their field who are very knowledgeable and specialized. They have their own ideas about things. There's a tremendous time commitment, nights and weekends." Those adults need a pat on the back, too, Barber said of the more than 70 people on the arts staff.

He credited Superintendent Bob Maxfield as "an incredible person in terms of his time and support to be at so many functions."

"When I have colleagues come to one of my perform-

## Barber backs up philosophy with facts

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Music is good for you. Just ask Farmington Schools' Director of Fine Arts Paul Barber, who will retire June 27 from the Farmington Public School District.

**Ninety plus percent of music students go on to college and graduate with undergraduate degrees.**

"This statistic was taken from a study that was done at the University of Connecticut in the late 90s," Barber said. "It was not done by a musician, but rather a person tracking the graduating rate of college students."

**Fifty percent of non-music students drop out of college and 52 percent of non-music students get fired from their jobs.**

"The statistics come from the College Board, an association that monitors various college statistics," Barber said. About 52 percent of the

work force is fired because they don't show up for work, Barber said. "Music students have the highest attendance rate of any group of people in the work force," Barber said. "The 50 percent drop out rate from college is aligned with the work force firing template. Students flunk out of college not because they can't do the work, they simply don't attend class."

**Musicians minds fire (respond) three times faster than non-musicians. While musicians are performing, their brains respond five times faster.**

Barber quotes several sources including the Fran Raucher studies and Don Campbell in his writings, primarily, "The Mozart Effect."

"The International Music Products Association has an ongoing research program working on everything from the health benefits of music-making to brain enhancement," Barber said.

After traveling to all 50 states and 23 countries, they've decided to retire in a gated retirement community in Flat Rock, South Carolina. The town has 3,000 residents.

The area is a cultural hub. A playhouse is around the school home, Barber said. He advises they'll need to be careful not to become too involved in the artsy area so they don't let people down if they want to travel some. Still, it would be almost impossible for them to stay away from volunteering altogether.

"Just hitting the ground cold turkey with nothing to do might drive us a little nuts," Barber said.

To obtain their undergraduate degrees in music education from the University of Michigan, they needed to know how to play every instrument. "If you are going to teach

it, you have to know it," Barber said. The couple met in violin class.

They remained true to their goals by working on their masters degrees at U. of M. for four summers in a row. It was a promise they kept to each other.

His primary instrument is the trombone; hers is the clarinet. "It's what we play the best," Barber said.

The couple's children are Randall Scott, a music teacher who works for Anderson Music as a school service representative, and Julie Anne who just graduated from U. of M. She studied photography.

"Both our kids are named for former students," Barber said. "We got that close and felt so good about those kids."

Their children will remain in the area. Both Barbers have worked hard during their years in local schools; in fact, Paul accumulated more than 350 good hours of volunteerism.

"You don't have a community without a sense of belonging," Barber said. "You don't have a sense of belonging unless you contribute in some way."

A frequent topic of discussion is, "Has it been a good year?"

"Any year that the school district loses money and the arts are left alone is a very good year," Barber responds. "The districts value the arts as a complete education for its children. In my 37 years here, they have never wiped out a program."

## OBITUARIES

### Chester N. Card

Services for Chester Norman Card, 78, of Farmington Hills, were held May 23 at Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington with the Rev. Steven Thasler officiating.

Mr. Card was born April 20, 1925 and died May 20, 2003 at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. He was a watch maker.

He is survived by his wife, Verna; son, Charles Weston Guthrie; daughters, Nila (Bob) Semposki, Gayle (Roger) Slaggs and Mary Lou (Harel) Varny; brothers, Russell (Rene) and Gary (Arlene); 27 grandchildren; and several great and great-great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his daughter, Laura Crawford.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association.

**Thelma Dawber**  
Thelma Dawber, 76, of Farmington Hills died May 19 at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.

Funeral services were held at McCabe Funeral Home in Farmington Hills Friday.

Mrs. Dawber was a homemaker. She is survived by her husband, Eugene; a daughter, Pamela Dawber Harmon; sister Joyce Sheen; and grandchildren Sean and Ty Harmon. Daughter Leslie and sister June Johnson preceded her in death.

The family prefers memorials to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, 1421 E. 12 Mile Road, Madison Heights, 48071.

### John Emmett

John Edward Emmett, 85, of Farmington died Thursday, May 22 at his home.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, May 27, 11 a.m. at First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, with Rev. Daniel Noble officiating. There will be a military honor guard at the church.

Mr. Emmett was born in N. Tonawanda, N.Y. on Jan. 14, 1918. He had been employed in the auto industry as an engineer, and was a member of SAE, SPE and Marine Veterans of World War II.

Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Betty; daughters Clover (John) Uecker and Kelley; sons Craig (Lori) and Kevin (Joanne); 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Arrangements were by Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home. The family prefers memorials to Hospice.

**Barbara Faletti**  
Barbara Angela Faletti, 69, of Livonia died May 22 at her home.


Funeral services were held Saturday, May 24 at St. Genevieve Church in Livonia, with the Rev. Howard Vogel officiating.

Mrs. Faletti was born on Oct. 23, 1933 in Detroit. She was preceded in death by a son, Anthony.

Survivors include her husband, Charles; sons Vincent (Terri) and Douglas; and grandsons Carlo and Victor.

Arrangements were by Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home.

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