



Squire scholarship honors late band director

By [Denise Dick](#)

Saturday, September 20, 2014

By [Denise Dick](#)

denise_dick@vindy.com

YOUNGSTOWN

Donald W. "Squire" Hurrelbrink, who led the Warren Junior Military Band for 66 years, instilled band members with the ideals of duty, honor and country as well as a love for classical music, family and former band members said.

Hurrelbrink's family and the band's alumni association established a \$77,000 scholarship endowment at Youngstown State University in his honor. Students pursuing degrees in music education at YSU's Dana School of Music will be eligible, with preference given to woodwind, brass or percussion students specializing in kindergarten through 12th-grade instrumental education.

"I joined the band when I was 13," said James Cunningham, one of the alumni association members. "My mother said when I went to band I was her little boy and I came back as her big son."

Hurrelbrink, a product of Dana, took over the band in 1930, when he was 21. He served as director until 1996 and died three years later.

The band traveled around the world, performed for U.S. presidents and in events including the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Chicago World's Fair.

"Squire had a strong sense of community," said Janne Hurrelbrink Bias, his daughter.

Each year, the band performed in at least 20 venues throughout the Mahoning Valley.

"He had a love of [John Philip] Sousa's marches and a love of the classics," Bias said.

He tried to instill that love into members of the band and their families, she said.

But the biggest trait he taught band members was duty, honor and country, Cunningham said.

The band includes more than 6,000 alumni.

Hurrelbrink also was a music educator, teaching at Mineral Ridge and Liberty high schools before spending 24 years at Austintown Fitch High School. He also was a member of the Dana faculty for four years.

Michael Crist, Dana director, described Hurrelbrink as iconic.

“That’s all I can think of,” he said. “He was the epitome of what a band director would be. He was conservative with his beat, but everyone paid attention to him.”

Bart and Judi Gensburg of Lordstown spent 11 years as WJMB parents. Three of their children were in the band. Daughters, Julie Ann Sawall, who now lives in Wisconsin, and Windi Kresic of Lordstown, were on the flagline, and Bret was a drummer.

“Music has always been in our family,” Judi Gensburg said.

Both Julie Ann and Bret pursued advanced degrees in music.

Hurrelbrink, though a soft-spoken man, ran a tight ship, the Gensburgs said.

“We all went to practices,” Judi said. “That’s what you did. That brass sound was so powerful.”