



## About Richard G. Hardy

by Greg Bates, Sports Editor and a Staff Writer at the STAR newspaper in Cambridge, Minnesota.

On Tuesday evening, March 15, 2005, at a special dedication ceremony, speaker after speaker reiterated how special Dick Hardy (a.k.a. "Leader of the Band") really was. His colleagues spoke for his passion for his students and for the arts.

Hardy's legacy will forever live on as the Performing Arts Center (PAC) at Cambridge-Isanti High School (CIHS) was named the Richard G. Hardy Performing Arts Center. The ceremony took place in front of a large audience in the auditorium and students at Taikyu High School in Japan live via Internet 2. [They are Cambridge's sister school]

Master of ceremonies, Cambridge-Isanti High School Principal Dr. Craig Paulson...worked with Hardy for 30 of Hardy's 50 years in the Cambridge-Isanti school district....

In a letter of congratulations from Minnesota Commissioner of Education Alice Seagren, she stated that Hardy exemplified CIHS's five quality character traits ? respect, responsibility, honesty, self-discipline and compassion. "These sum up what Dick modeled," Seagren wrote.

According to Bruce Danielson, CIHS teacher and theater director, Hardy was so proud of the PAC, which he pushed for including when the high school was remodeled in 1997.

"I can only image how proud Dick would be tonight hearing the band play and the choir [sing]," Danielson said. Having the PAC named after Hardy, noted Danielson, "I know now Dick's spirit will be here for years and years to come." "[Dick] was not just the music," CIHS and Cambridge Middle School music teacher Lynn Wedlund quoted a former student as saying. "Mr. Hardy always made us feel a part of everything."

Hardy had a close-knit relationship with his students, and the girls "started to call him dad," Wedlund said. "District 911 will always remember and cherish Dick Hardy."

District 911 Superintendent Ken Runberg said that he and Hardy had a very close working bond. As District 911 School Board chairperson for 16 years, Hardy always shared a special relationship with the superintendents. Every time Hardy and Runberg went to a local restaurant to discuss work, most of the time was not spent conversing together, said Runberg. Community members kept approaching Hardy to say hi. "He clearly was respected as a leader," Runberg said. On the last day Runberg spoke to Hardy, Christmas Eve 2003, Runberg recalls Hardy, who was not feeling well, still "wanted to know what was going on at school." And when Runberg stood by Hardy's bed side, Runberg was told to pull up a chair. "He was more concerned that I was comfortable," said Runberg. "I am deeply honored to have worked with him."

Jack Williams, who took over for Hardy as the school board's chairperson, noted it was a privilege to have Hardy as his colleague for 14 years. "He was a servant leader who put others first and who was truthful and honest," Williams said. "He was a personal friend. He was a mentor." After Hardy's wife, Claudia, shared a brief speech, a final tribute to Hardy was shown on the PAC's big screen with a collage of Hardy photos as "Leader of the Band" played in the background.

He was truly the "Leader of the Band," and he will be forever remembered at the Richard G. Hardy Performing Arts Center.

