



# ORCHESTRA

## Remembering Ed Volker

by Sarah Duffy

In the school orchestra teaching world, we count on the support of many of our community members and local businesses. Our local florist, print shop, hardware store, fabric/craft store, bakery, screen printer, and other companies and small business owners help us out in a myriad of ways. No support is more crucial, however, than our local string shops.

We are lucky to have some wonderful string shops in Minnesota, and one of them is House of Note. Sadly, Ed Volker passed away on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Ed was the owner of House of Note for over 30 years.

Here is Ed's obituary that was printed in the *Star Tribune* on October 28<sup>th</sup>:

**Volker, Ed.** Age 75, of St. Louis Park, passed away October 22, 2017 at home surrounded by his family. Ed lived a good life that included many roles: Husband, Father, Grandfather, Brother. Ed was the owner of House of Note violin shop for over 30 years, a dedicated marathon runner, an Islander, an active member of AA for 44 years, an avid golfer, a staunch Minnesota Twins fan, baked good connoisseur with apple pie being the favorite. Ed touched many lives and will be respectfully remembered as a humble, loyal, generous, spiffy, deeply loved, thoughtful, remarkable human. Survived by loving family members, wife of 53 years, Leslie; children, Greg and Beth (Steve); treasured grandsons, TJ and Sam; brothers John, David and Kevin. Beloved staff at House of Note (AKA "The Noters"). His loss will be felt by many more family members and friends. ... Private Interment Lakewood Cemetery. Memorials preferred to [The Church of St. Albert the Great, 2836 33rd Ave South, Minneapolis] or plant a tree in his honor, because that is what Ed would do for you.

Ed was a kind and generous man who supported our school orchestra programs

in countless ways. His luthiers repaired many of my school instruments without complaint, including the basses that were nearly destroyed and the viola that ended up with Super Glue all over it thanks to a student "home repair." I could always trust that my students and their families would have a positive experience when I sent them to House of Note.

He offered us quality instruments at a reasonable price, and our programs were all the better for it. If he didn't have something available that I needed, he would go out of his way to make sure it was ordered. Ed frequently made generous donations to our school programs to help out students in need. If someone needed an instrument, Ed made sure the student got it.

There were many lovely sentiments shared about Ed on Facebook. Miriam Edgar, orchestra director at St. Louis Park High School, wrote, "Ed was always good to the orchestra and made sure our program has never been without."

Julia Bartsch, private violin instructor in Bloomington, wrote:

Ed was an important part of my musician/teaching life and a very important and supportive part of my children's upbringing and violin lives. There were many a time when we went in for supplies and strings and the cost was magically less than I thought was profitable for his business. Ed took careful care of my family. His first question when I would go into House of Note in these past years was always, "How are the girls?" Ed Volker was a wonderful human being.

Julia also shared this amazing story that sums up the Ed many of us were lucky to know:



A story which involves the kindness of Ed Volker: When I was in the pit for the Holiday show (*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*) at the Children's Theater way back in the day, there was an accident. An actor fell on me, my violin and my bow. Both the violin and bow were destroyed. Too many pieces to put together...

After the accident, I was distraught and in shock. What I remember is Shelley Hanson, who was playing in the pit at the time, went into the pit and gathered as many pieces as she could find and put them in a box... I really did not understand how much I loved that violin until it was destroyed. Life lesson—for sure. When I showed Paul Dahlin [at House of Note] the box of parts, he looked up at me and shook his head. Paul is a miracle worker as many of the string players in the Minneapolis area understand, and when he shook his head, I broke out in tears (quietly). Ed gave me a replacement instrument at no charge as later that night I played the preview show for Children's Theatre. Dear Ed Volker—please RIP. I love you.

Some wonderful tributes were shared on Ed's obituary in the *Star Tribune*, also. Here are two examples of the sentiments people have shared:

So terribly sad to read of Ed's passing.

He was always kind and generous to me and my students. Deepest sympathies to the entire family.

I only became aware of Ed's passing today and I am deeply saddened. While I only knew Ed through our association with House of Note—me as a customer and Ed as the owner—I always felt of him as a friend and looked forward to my trips to House of Note to visit with him and the wonderful staff. In fact, I was looking forward to June of next year to stop in the store to remind Ed that as of June, 2018, I have been doing business with House of Note for 50 years.

Over the years, Ed treated me so incredibly well as a customer. I can't begin to recall all the "deals" he gave me, whether I was purchasing instruments for my school district, or instruments for my three children and myself. I always felt I was getting a "great deal."

A number of years ago, when I was teaching private lessons in the

Hutchinson area, I had a brother and sister taking lessons who were very talented but, for financial reasons, were playing on instruments that were really pretty terrible. I contacted Ed and asked if he ever provided instruments free of charge to deserving students. Within a week, I had two very fine violins available for these two students. That's the sort of person Ed was.

Ed will be missed by all who knew him. You have my deepest condolences.

Jennifer Thomas, private violin/viola instructor, provided this beautiful summary of what many of us are thinking and feeling:

The string world has lost a giving and gentle soul. Ed provided a wonderful service to all string teachers and families in our area. He will be greatly missed.

Our lives are better for having known Ed. Our thoughts are with Ed's family and

the staff at House of Note. Thank you, Ed, for enriching our lives and making our jobs just a little easier in both small and large ways. You are gone 'way too soon, and you will be missed.

If you are interested in planting a tree in Ed's memory, there are many resources available online. Here are a few options: <https://shop.arborday.org/>, <https://www.alivingtribute.org/>, <https://thetreesremember.com/>

[David Holmes also wrote about Ed in his article on page 6. *ed.*]

*Sarah Chelgren Duffy, a graduate of St. Olaf College and Northwestern University, currently teaches 4th and 5th grade orchestra at Turtle Lake Elementary School in Mounds View Public Schools. She began her career teaching orchestra, grades 4-12, in Robbinsdale Area Schools, and then she was the orchestra director at Edina High School for six years before joining the team in Mounds View. Sarah was a member of the GTCYS conducting staff from 2006-2012, and she is a past-president of MNSOTA. She is currently pursuing her Ed.S. degree (administrative license) at the University of St. Thomas. †*