

## Pat Wiebers retires after 30 years in music

Written by Jes-c Brandt

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After 11 years in Holyoke, one would be hard-pressed to find anyone who hasn't been impacted in one way or another by teacher Pat Wiebers. With her recent resignation from the school district, Wiebers reflects on 30 years as an educator and all that those years have comprised.

Wiebers' primary role within Holyoke schools has been band and choir teacher, but her involvement extends far beyond the classroom.

Holyoke sports fans have seen Wiebers directing the marching and pep bands, as well as working in the concession stand and serving meals alongside students and parents at innumerable athletic events throughout the years. Children and adults watching parades in Holyoke have often witnessed both junior high and high school bands under her direction, and spectators of the spring musical see Wiebers' accompanying students on the piano.

Clearly her job as a teacher has called Wiebers to be more than just a choir and band director. Despite all she has given to the school, however, Wiebers is quick to acknowledge all she has taken away from the experience as well. Wiebers noted she's always known she wanted to be a teacher. She comes from a family of educators, and even before she knew she'd be in the music field, she knew she wanted to work in education.

In 1980 Wiebers graduated from Chadron State College with a bachelor's of science and music education. The composite major enabled her to teach band, choir and general music, and she has since taught in each of the three areas. In 2006 she completed her masters in curriculum at Adams State College.

Before taking her position at Holyoke, Wiebers taught two years in Ovid, two years in Nebraska and 15 years in Yuma. In Holyoke, she spent many years teaching band in grades 5-12 and choir to 7-12 grade students. In recent years, she took on additional classes teaching general music, language arts and exploratory music.

As a teacher, Wiebers has had a number of honors, including membership in Colorado Music Educators Association, Nebraska Music Educators Association, Colorado Band Masters

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Association, American Choir Directors Association and American School Band Directors Association.

Teaching in her particular area, Wiebers commented, is different than teaching other classes. Where many teachers have students for one year and pass them on to another class, she has had the privilege of working with students for several years, watching their music abilities blossom and growing along with them. It allows for different levels of relationships to be built, she added.

Another aspect that set her teaching apart from other classes was travel. As the director of extra curricular activities such as select choir and jazz band, Wiebers often found herself traveling with students to various performances and competitions. Pep band also occasionally offered the opportunity for travel. Traveling with students, she observed, adds a different dimension to the relationships she has formed with students.

“The best part is just being able to show my love for music,” Wiebers said. Music is a field that attracts a wide range of people, bringing together all kinds of kids. In her many years as a teacher, Wiebers has embraced the chance to get to know her students and to share her musical passion with them.

In both Yuma and Holyoke Wiebers was involved in musical productions, where, she noted, she was able to meet even more students, some who wouldn't have otherwise been interested in music classes. In addition to accompanying the singers on piano, Wiebers has often gone the extra mile, making and tailoring costumes for the performances. Of the numerous musicals she has been a part of, some of her favorites have been West Side Story, Fiddler on the Roof and The Wizard of Oz.

For many years, Wiebers has given her time before, during and after the normal school day, showing her immense dedication to her students' education. Now, being newly retired, Wiebers plans to find new ways to fill her days. She plans to continue her music in a more personal way, hopefully contributing to church and community events.

Also in her newly acquired free time, she plans to become more involved in the American Diabetes Association and to generally be an active part of the Holyoke community. One of the

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biggest advantages, she said, will be spending more time with family. Wiebers has three children, four grandchildren and another on the way, and she and her husband Gale look forward to spending time with all of them.

As her career has come to a close, Wiebers looks back on her years as a teacher and says that she has really enjoyed it all. She is grateful for the opportunities she has had to meet people and mold students' lives, as well as the support she has received from the community, other teachers, students, parents and the administration.