

Biography - Allgaier
BIO 00035

Local History

Yakima Herald-Republic EXTRA! Tuesday, October 20, 1987-3

Yakima couple makes beautiful music together

If they can't do it together, they don't do it, and so, after 40 years, they are retiring from the YSO, together

By LEANNE LABISSONIERE

Of the Herald-Republic

In their 38-year marriage, Don and Rose Marie Allgaier have lived up to a simple motto — if they can't do something together they don't do it at all.

The Yakima couple recently applied that adage when they retired from the Yakima Symphony Orchestra. After 40 years of membership in community orchestras, the Allgaiers laid down their instruments at the end of the 1986-87 season.

Don and Rose Marie met while students at Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane. They started going steady while attending music camp at Washington State University.

While in high school, Rose Marie played trumpet and Don played tuba with the Spokane Philharmonic.

With music education degrees from Eastern Washington University in hand, they moved to Republic, where Don accepted his first teaching assignment.

In 1956, the family moved to Yakima. Don spent five years teaching in the West Valley schools, six years in Naches and the last 15 years in Selah. He retired in 1982 after a 28-year teaching career.

Rose Marie also earned a teaching degree from Eastern, but put her career on hold to stay home and raise a family. Looking back, she says she has never regretted her decision.

"I am one of the fortunate ones. If I could live my life over, I would make all of the same major decisions and marry the same man," she said.

On June 10, 1956, the couple's first anniversary, Rose Marie donned a graduation gown to receive her degree. The following month, she gave birth to her first son.

"Lucky, that gown was loose enough to fit over my big belly," she said, laughing, she said.

Instead of taking a full-time job, Rose Marie chose to stay home and teach private trumpet lessons. Laughing, she said she got in the habit of rocking a buggy with her foot while she taught lessons.

"The boys grew up with it," she said.

The most important thing she has taught her students over the years haven't come out of music theory textbooks. "I learned the most about teaching from raising my own kids," she said. "They taught

me how to teach music from the right perspective."

Rose Marie describes herself as a strict music teacher. She sends practice cards home with her students and asks parents to see to it that their children practice daily.

The trumpet teacher put her three boys on her lesson schedule and had her own method of getting them to practice.

If the boys balked during practice time, she gave them a choice — practice their trumpet or wash the dishes.

"All I'd have to was start to take off my apron. You'd be surprised how fast they got to their horns," she recalled, laughing.

The three boys — Dave, Bob and Kevin — are now raised with children of their own and the Allgaiers are enjoying their five grandchildren.

Rose Marie has about 20 trumpet students and teaches lessons one or two days during the week and all day Saturday.

Don said he hasn't had any trouble filling his days since he retired. He enjoys doing odd jobs around the house, sings with the choir at Holy Family Church and repairs band instruments. Both he and Rose Marie are members of the Yakima Community Band.

Rose Marie plays trumpet at both the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses at Holy Family and also plays for all local military funerals.

But, their favorite pastime is riding bicycles. Because they have always been a one-car family, Rose Marie said she rode her bike wherever she had to go.

Now, the car is in the driveway, but she prefers to ride her bike. Everyday, the couple sets out for a 10-mile bike ride. They both have 10-speeds and bicycles suitable for riding on rougher terrain.

The couple rarely misses a day of riding. Rose Marie even rides during the winter months.

"Sometimes Don thinks I'm kind of stupid to set out on my bike, but I just have to go," she said. "My life is wound up in bicycles and trumpets."

In their years with the orchestra, the couple played under four conductors, Bill Herbst, Bill Druckenmiller, Bill Wood and Brooks Creswell.

Creswell, who has directed the orchestra since 1967, said people like Don and Rose Marie Allgaier



Special photo by Tom Toney

Don and Rose Marie Allgaier recently retired from the Yakima Symphony Orchestra after 40 years of playing with community orchestras.

are what make a community orchestra successful.

"They typify the kind of devotion that people had to display over the years to make orchestral music happen in this area," he said.

With six rehearsals required for every concert — plus practice time at home — being a member of a community orchestra is a commitment. But, the couple said the time invested is worthwhile.

Whether she's speaking of teaching trumpet lessons or playing with the symphony, Rose Marie said the thing she enjoys most are the friendships formed.

"There's a sense of excitement that comes from being on stage and a sense of satisfaction that comes from performing," she said. "But, what I enjoyed most were the wonderful people I met."

Originally published in the
Yakima Herald-Republic
on October 20, 1987