

I would like to pay tribute to Richard Holmes, conductor of the Young People's Symphonic Orchestra for 12 years. Mr. Holmes passed away in June. We all miss him terribly.

Rick Homes was a gifted conductor who studied conducting at Juilliard in the same class as Leonard Slatkin and Dennis Russell Davies. This was a gentleman, a well-respected professional timpanist of the St. Louis Symphony, and a very caring person who treasured his time with the young musicians of the YPSO. Rick Holmes' reputation is international and, yet, he was extremely committed to our students.

He frequently expressed to me that when the time came for him to retire from the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra he wanted to continue to conduct the YPSO. I believe that says a lot about the kind of person he was and his devotion to these students. He would have done anything to stand before his orchestra/his students and share music with them. Those of you who worked closely with him last year saw him do just that. Many may not know how taxing it was for him to continue rehearsals in his weakened condition and, yet, how much joy it gave him last year and all the previous ones.

A confident yet modest man, Mr. Holmes didn't command respect so much as set a respectful standard that inspired his students and his colleagues. Fellow orchestra colleague, John Kasica, called Rick Holmes an Ambassador of Beauty and a Champion of the Arts. He was committed to providing a professional experience for the students and brought high standards to the orchestra within a nurturing environment. Mr. Holmes has had an immeasurable impact on hundreds of students at the CMS and well beyond.

In an effort to honor his memory and contributions to the education of so many students, we created a shadowbox displaying his photo and his conductor's batons as a memorial to be hung in the CMS lobby. I invite you to view the memorial during intermission in the lobby.

I want to thank Rick's children, percussionist R.D. Holmes and new CMS parent Jenifer Ullery who are here with their mother and several other family members. Thank you all for sharing this evening with us.