

In Memoriam

Marty Hurley

June 6, 1946 – September 12, 2011

By Lauren Vogel Weiss

Rudimental percussionist Martin E. (Marty) Hurley died on Sept. 12, 2011 at his home in New Orleans, Louisiana. He had suffered a stroke on Aug. 14 and spent several weeks at Tulane Medical Center.

Born on June 6, 1946 in Neptune, New Jersey, Marty Hurley followed in the footsteps of his father, an Army drummer during World War II. At the age of seven, Hurley joined the O'Brien Major Police Cadets. Other corps he was involved with were the Neptune Shoreliners, Asbury Park Hurricanes, St. Joseph Modernaires, Jersey Cyclones, the Blessed Sacrament Golden Knights (he aged out in 1967) and Hawthorne Caballeros (1968).

After graduating from Neptune High School, he attended Wilkes College (now Wilkes University) in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, earning a music education degree. He also played in community orchestras in Wilkes-Barre and nearby Scranton. Following graduation, he joined the Air Force Band and was stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi for four years.

Hurley began his teaching career in 1971 when he assisted Dick Filkens with the Stardusters Drum Corps from Arabi, Louisiana. In 1972, many of the members of the Stardusters joined the new Metairie, Louisiana-based Bleu Raeders drum corps, where Hurley served as the drum instructor for two years. In 1973, he joined the staff of the Black Knights from Belleville, Illinois, while continuing to teach the Bleu Raeders. He remained with the Black Knights until 1975.

In 1976, Hurley joined the staff of the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps from Rockford, Illinois. Some of his classic solos for the Regiment include "Flight of the Bumblebee" and Grieg's "March of the Dwarfs."

During his affiliation with the corps, the Phantom Regiment placed second in 1977, 1978, and 1979. He was also an integral part of the creative staff for the first two productions of the Khachaturian ballet "Spartacus" in 1981 and 1982. Hurley continued teaching the Regiment until 1983 before taking a few years off. He returned to the Rockford-based corps in 1987 and remained on their staff until 1992. In 2004, Hurley was inducted into the World Drum Corps Hall of Fame.

Hurley was also involved in the design of Ludwig's High Volume (HV) snare drum, which the Regiment drum line used beginning in 1981. Similar to a regular marching snare drum, it had two inches cut from the middle of the shell, leaving the top half and bottom half joined by the tension casings. "The HV drum came from trying to get a drum that would have a little more projection power—a little more clarity for a snare drum," he said in a *Modern Percussionist* interview.

In 1974, Hurley took a job that he would have for the rest of his life: band director at Brother Martin High School in New Orleans. He started as the assistant to longtime director Arthur Hardy, working with the marching band, stage band, and second concert band, before he took over as head director in 1989.

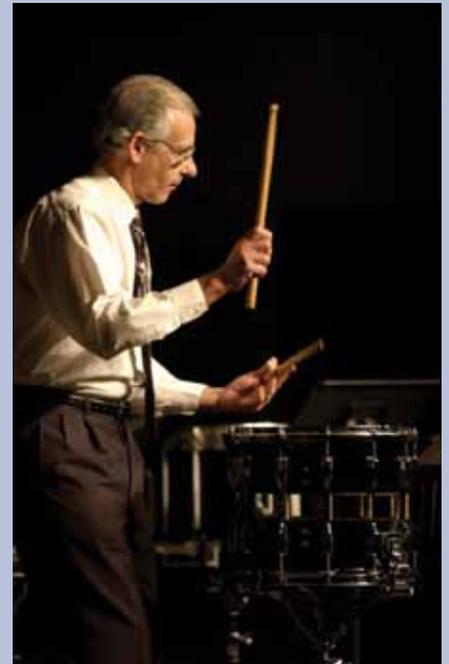
During his time at Brother Martin, Hurley's ensembles consistently received superior ratings at local and regional contests and festivals. His bands performed for the Pope, two U.S. Presidents, two Louisiana governors, countless Mardi Gras parades and even the first-ever playoff game for his beloved New Orleans Saints football team.

Hurley was inducted into the Louisiana Music Educators Association (LMEA) Hall of Fame in 2010. During his time at Brother Martin High School, he had about 80 percussion students earn spots in one of the Louisiana All State ensembles.

Hurley also served as the percussion instructor at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana for several years in the 1980s. He judged the finals of the Marching Bands of America National Championship twice and also adjudicated the PAS Marching Forum (now the Marching Percussion Festival) four times, in 1982, 1988, 1994, and 1996.

As a percussion clinician, Hurley gave seminars at regional and national meetings of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), the National Catholic Band Association (NCBA) Conference, the LMEA Conference, the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) Convention, and PASIC.

Hurley gave two clinics at PASIC with the Phantom Regiment drum line, in 1981 (Indianapolis) and in 1988 (San Antonio). At PASIC '92 in New Orleans, he served as Coordinator for the Marching Forum. At PASIC 2001 in Nashville, he taught a marching master class with John Pratt and Mitch Markovich. And at the Drummer's Heritage Concert



Marty Hurley playing at the Drummer's Heritage Concert at PASIC 2002. Photo by Bryan Stone.

held at PASIC 2002 in Columbus, Hurley was one of the featured snare drum soloists.

In addition to the drum corps and marching band music that he wrote, Hurley composed numerous snare drum solos and drum cadences that were originally published by Rudimental Percussion Publications—the company he founded with John Wooton—and currently by Row-Loff Productions. He also taught marching percussion camps all across the country, including one sponsored by the Phantom Regiment in Rockford and one at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Dozens of Hurley's former students, from both Brother Martin High School and the Phantom Regiment, as well as the other corps he taught over the years, have gone on to pursue careers in music. These men and women serve as college percussion instructors, high school and middle school band directors, private lesson teachers, and drum corps instructors.

Arthur Hardy contributed to this tribute. A longer version of this article is posted on the PAS website at <http://www.pas.org/news/InMemoriam.aspx>