

Seymour pays tribute to late Middle School Principal

By Patricia Villers
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SEYMOUR - Colleagues, former students, and members of the community fondly remembered the late Seymour Middle School Principal Paul Porter during a touching ceremony last week at the school.

The Board of Education held the ceremony to dedicate the school auditorium in Porter's memory. It is now the Paul C. Porter Memorial Auditorium.

Porter served as principal from 1988-2004, and died in October 2014 in South Carolina, where he and his wife, Susan, had relocated after retirement. She taught French for 35 years at Middletown High School.

Susan Porter said she and her husband had been "high school sweethearts." She was on hand for the ceremony as were their son, Ryan Porter, and daughter, Cassie McLaughlin, among other family and friends.

About 200 people attended.

Seymour Board of Education member Jay Hatfield called Porter "larger than life," and Superintendent of Schools Christine Syriac said "Paul was loved and could never be replaced."



Former Chatfield Elementary School Principal Ken Ewaskie said Porter was always thinking about other people.

The ceremony included the Seymour Middle School Glee Club singing "The Star Spangled Banner," and the Seymour Middle School band performing "Amazing Grace."

My friend Jean Falbo-Sosnovich, New Haven Register correspondent, was there to cover the event. I thank her for letting me know about it!

As an alumna of the Seymour school system Jean really enjoyed the ceremony.

I asked her to give me a comment, and this is what she said, "Seeing so many of my former school teachers was such a wonderful blast from the past..."

"I covered many stories at Seymour Middle School with Paul Porter at the helm, and whether he was sporting slicked back hair with cuffed jeans and dancing the stroll for a 1950s day or wearing a loud Hawaiian shirt and tossing beach balls around the school cafeteria, Paul certainly knew how to engage students and staff to make school fun."

I always enjoyed visiting Seymour Middle School to cover programs there for the New Haven Register.

Porter was someone who made a visitor immediately feel at ease, and I felt like I knew him for a long time right after I had met him. His students were certainly fortunate to have him as their principal.

