

The Sarah Betz Scholar Award

In May, 2005, Mr. and Mrs. George Betz established the Sarah Betz Scholar Award in memory of their daughter Sarah Elizabeth Betz, a Mighty Mustang Band Alumna. This one-year non-renewable merit scholarship is available to a sophomore or junior student from the Wind Ensemble who has a record of academic excellence, musical achievement, and exemplary citizenship. The student will be selected by the band director in consultation with the principal. The award consists of one academic year of private music lessons, recognition during the concert season, and the student's name engraved on a perpetual plaque in the Band Hall.



Mr. and Mrs. Betz presented the first Sarah Betz Scholar Award to sophomore horn player Everett Burns at the Mighty Mustang Band Banquet on Friday, May 13, 2005. All those in attendance that night were inspired and moved to learn of Sarah's remarkable life, her outstanding accomplishments, and her drive for excellence in music and academics. Mrs. Betz told us:

"Sarah Elizabeth Betz was born November 17, 1979, in Dallas. She was a precocious and quiet child, always eager to learn and to do her best at everything. Sarah learned to play the piano early and in the fourth grade began the clarinet...keeping that coveted first chair and its responsibilities for the next eight years...winning numerous awards at city, district and regional competitions. One of her greatest accomplishments, which filled her with pride, was representing Pearce at All State Band her junior and senior years.

In 1998, Sarah graduated as a National Merit Scholar, fourth in her class and a member of several organizations. But it was the band that brought some of her fondest and happiest experiences. Sarah's claim to fame with the band, in her mind, was being concert mistress when the Mighty Mustangs played their first concert at Carnegie Hall in 1997. She captured and touched the hearts of many forever as her nimble fingers touched the clarinet keys in "Molly on the Shore" and with the mournful wail heard in "Blue Shades."

In the following years, she graduated from Rice University with an undergraduate (2002) and a masters degree (2003) in electrical engineering and worked for Wylie & Associates in Houston as an electrical engineer. December 17, 2004, while sleeping, her life of 25 years was brought to an abrupt halt from a genetic heart condition. From that moment, our lives have been profoundly changed and saddened.

Sarah will always be remembered for her quiet, gentle nature, her wry sense of humor, as a leader with integrity, and for her drive for excellence in music and academics. It is these qualities which will live through the Sarah Betz Scholar Award."

For more information on the Sarah Betz Scholar Award, please contact Head Band Director, Greg Hames, at 469-593-5124, or via email at greg.hames@risd.org.