

Fine Arts

Mr. Paul Runyan (1972)

Paul Runyan is a 1972 graduate of Beresford High School. Mr. Runyan's high school activities included four years of band, chorus, and basketball. Paul played football for two years, cross country for one year, track for three years, and he was in a musical and the senior class play production. In 1971 he was a delegate to Boys State. Paul was in the South Dakota All-State band for three years, sitting first chair in his final year. During Mr. Runyan's senior year, he was selected for All-State Chorus and received the John Philip Sousa Award.



In 1971, the McDonald's All-American Marching Band selection committee chose Paul to be a member of the McDonald's All-American Marching Band. Each state was allotted two members, plus one was chosen from Washington, D.C. The 101-member McDonald's All-American Band marched in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. The televised parade occurred in cold drizzly weather on November 25, 1971. On New Year's Day, 1972, Paul and the rest of the McDonald's sponsored band marched in the beautiful Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California. While people in Beresford watched their television sets in 10-degree weather, Paul enjoyed the warm climate and everything else that goes with California. Bobby Vinton, a popular music entertainer, performed with the band in California, and Betty White was the guest Parade Hostess. The band also toured Sunset Strip, Beverly Hills, and other sights in the Golden State.

Mr. Runyan graduated cum laude from Augustana College in 1976 after four years as principal tuba in Concert Band, Brass Choir, and Brass Quintet. In the summer of 1974, Paul worked at Interlochen Music Camp in Michigan, connecting him with professional musicians, including tuba lessons from Rex Conner.

Paul became a junior and senior high school band director in Wessington Springs, South Dakota, from 1976 – 1980. During his tenure, the jazz band finished second at the Augustana Jazz Festival in Sioux Falls for two consecutive years. A typical year included 30 entries in the high school solo and ensemble contest and 90 in the junior high and elementary contest. Each year, roughly 60% to 70 % received superior ratings. In 1978, Wessington Springs placed four members in All-State Band for the first time.

Mr. Runyan enlisted as a musician in the United States Air Force (USAF) in July 1980, and he was stationed at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska until 1995. In 1995, he transferred to the USAF Band of the Pacific-Asia, near Tokyo, Japan. As Director of Operations for the USAF band of the Pacific-Asia, he arranged performances throughout the pacific. In 2000, Paul joined the USAF Band of the Golden West at Travis Air Force Base in California as the Band Superintendent. His assistance in planning the first new stateside facility built specifically for the band was instrumental in completing the \$5.3 million project.

In 2005, upon achieving the rank of Chief Master Sergeant, he became the Command Band Manager for the USAF Band of Mid-America located at Scott Air Force Base near St Louis, Missouri. Mr. Runyan spearheaded the overseas deployment of three musical teams and a separate leadership team. His foresight and leadership led to the formation of a brass quintet with rhythm instruments and a vocalist. This versatile group's highly successful mission to support our deployed troops became a model for the career field.

During Paul's military career, he traveled to 35 states, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia, performing on tuba in support of the Air Force and Department of Defense community relations initiatives. He had the pleasure of working with guest artists Jamie Farr, Wilford Brimley, John Denver, Tony Bennett, Jon Faddis, and Steve Smith.

Paul retired from the USAF in 2010. He contributed numerous hours assisting his wife in her duties as music director at Faith Lutheran Church. Paul initiated and maintains the Faith Concert Series, which presents four concerts a year to the local community. Mr. Runyan was a Habitat for Humanity volunteer whenever possible. Paul directs a brass group for church, rehearsing weekly and performing in church each month for the last ten years.

Beresford music educators Milo Winter, Neil Jacobson, David Mitchell, Dennis Hegg, Grace Kennedy, and Diane Hofer greatly impacted Paul's music career. Basketball coaches Darrell Weiland and Jim Sorenson taught valuable skills such as teamwork and perseverance to Mr. Runyan. Furthermore, all of Paul's Beresford educators taught him many skills utilized throughout his career.

Paul and his wife Robyn have two sons, Jeffrey and Jonathan, who both play the trombone. Jeffrey and his wife Brooke have two daughters, Chantelle and Savannah, who also enjoy playing trombones and piano.

Paul Runyan comes from a family tradition of representing Beresford in the South Dakota All-State Band with brothers George (tuba – three years), Dan (clarinet – two years), Robert (tuba – three years), Paul (tuba – three years), and Mark (bassoon – three years) totaling 14 years in All-State Band.

Congratulations to our Watchdog Hall of Fame Fine Arts inductee, Mr. Paul Runyan!

