

Las Vegas Sun

Are you bringing the Vulcan ears?

Richard "Dick" McGee is taking his love of music - and a slightly geeky side - from the Philharmonic to Nevada Pops

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Our hat's off to Richard "Dick" McGee, who stepped down from the Las Vegas Philharmonic this month after spending more than a decade with the orchestra.

McGee served as associate conductor and educational coordinator of the Philharmonic, but is moving on to other responsibilities, namely his job as chairman of the fine arts department at CSN and as music director of Nevada Pops, now in its second season.

"I have nothing but love for the Philharmonic," McGee says. "I wish it nothing but the best. But the time comes when it's time to move on and that time is now."

It's hard to pin down our favorite memories of McGee because, well, there are so many: He composed original work for the Las Vegas Centennial, wore Vulcan ears while conducting the Philharmonic at the Star Trek Conventions, explained symphonic music to more than 100,000 students in a way they could understand and helped build an orchestra in a city that was still struggling to find its cultural self.

So what do you say to a guy who communicates symphonically, but also speaks a little Klingon?

How about, "Thanks"?

Thanks to the guy who quit his teaching gig in Colorado to follow the music and moved his wife, Joan, and their 10-month-old baby to Las Vegas in 1981, where he worked gigs at the old MGM Grand's Celebrity Room before moving over to *Folies Bergere* at the Tropicana to be its lead trombonist and assistant conductor.

Thanks to the guy who formed Nevada Symphony Wind Ensemble to give Strip musicians a chance to shine, then later worked alongside conductor Hal Weller to build an orchestra from the rubble of the now-defunct Nevada Symphony Orchestra.

Thanks to the guy who conducted the orchestra for the Youth Concerts every year.

To keep his Philharmonic legacy intact, the orchestra is starting a Richard McGee educational endowment, said Jeri Crawford, president of the Las Vegas Philharmonic Board.

"We want everyone to remember what he's done for the orchestra."

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