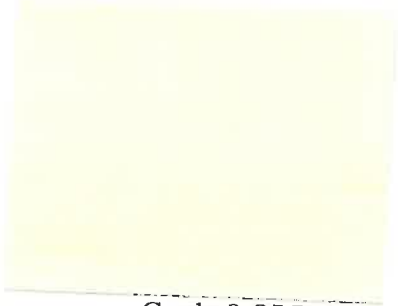


“D” stands for dedication, determination, doughnuts, and Dr. D. My orchestra conductor, Dr. Allan Dennis, whom I see almost every Saturday, has influenced my life in countless ways. I admire him greatly and strive to live up to his expectations. He displays respect, compassion, and represents the epitome of someone with a well-built character who wants to bring out the best in the next generation.

After he posts seating audition results, Dr. D always says that he does not care whether we are in the last or first chair. No matter where we sit, he expects our absolute best. As we are all equal as human beings and musicians, we should not let how we play for one audition affect how we think about ourselves. We have a responsibility to the entire group to learn our parts, and he respects us by always being prepared for rehearsal.

Although Dr. D cares about our musical development, he is not concerned if we become professional musicians. He cares more that we continue to grow into good people. Before Thanksgiving, he told us about how he wished he would have thanked his parents more, and we should never take the gift of our parents’ love for granted. We should be thankful for all we have.

One story Dr. D tells every year involves a rehearsal when the bass section’s rhythm was off. The players did not seem to care. Before the concert, one player slipped on ice and was hit by a bus. He died. During the performance, the bass section played the piece flawlessly, in tears by the end. Dr. D says that night he learned that we should always do our best because we never know if we will get another opportunity. Dr. D hopes by sharing his stories, we can learn without experiencing the pain he did. With his dedication and cheerful determination, Dr. D helps us



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make beautiful music. Yet, much more happens in my orchestra rehearsals than Beethoven or Brahms. On those early Saturday morning rehearsals, he will probably also mention doughnuts.

Yes, Dr. D does love doughnuts!