

VINCENT SUPPAN

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 20, 2007

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the leaders of the arts in my district, and someone who has dedicated his life to bringing the gift of music to countless others. Vincent Suppan was born in 1920 and grew up in West Catasauqua, Pennsylvania. He is a part of a proud family who has tirelessly led the Catasauqua Band for 100 years. Vincent's cousins conducted the band from 1907 to 1947, when he took over as conductor. This "passing of the baton" has ensured that a dedicated conductor has led

the Catasauqua Band for 100 years, a feat that reflects on the Suppan family's passion for music and love of their community.

Today, Vince is a retired associate professor of speech pathology at West Chester University. He still resides near the University, faithfully commuting over 100 miles on Wednesdays to lead rehearsals in Catasauqua. He has never lost his love of leading the Band in "run-throughs" of music from the Band's extensive library. He often regales the Band with fascinating stories from his long career. The combination of challenging sight-reading and great tales makes rehearsals a delight for all the Band members. Among the many local musicians who played with the Catasauqua Band is Ronald Demkee, now conductor of the Allentown Band. Mr. Demkee still recalls the first time he was paid

to play tuba under Vince, receiving the going rate of \$2, which was good money for a high school student at the time. Vince provided Mr. Demkee with his first opportunity to play a solo with a professional band, which is just one example of the numerous lives Mr. Suppan has touched.

The Catasauqua Band continues to this day due to the passion of one man: Vincent Suppan. Leading this band for 60 years is a testament to the dedication and hard work of Vincent, and a reflection of the passion he brings to every performance. I know all my colleagues join me today in congratulating Vincent Suppan for his tireless leadership of the treasured Catasauqua Band, and for all the great work he has and continues to do for all those who love music.