



Ron (Ronald) Pace	160
ROBS History Project	10 -10
Exit Interview	4.29.10

We interviewed Ron as he was still contemplating retirement. He began teaching at West Middle for his first five years then moved to East Middle for the next twenty years and to the 7th Grade Center for one year. North and South Middle Schools were his assignments up until eleven years ago, when he moved to the High School. There he created a Guitar Program and introduced Women’s Choir. Among his many contributions to the district were a Scholarship Program, Faculty Music Program and Student Composers Night. Ron served as Co-Chair of the Curriculum Committee for almost twenty years. His wife Susan continued to teach at South Middle School when he retired as a High School Music Teacher.

“My name is Ron Pace and I began teaching here in Brentwood in 1973. I started at West and spent about five years there and then went to East Middle School at the Junior High and was there for more than twenty years. I taught for part of my schedule at East and the Seventh Grade Center that was across the field from East. From there I went to the High School and I’ve been here for maybe ten or eleven years in the middle of my career and serving as a music teacher in both sides; Ross and Sonderling. When I left to come to the High School to start a women’s choir and guitar I was split for the first few years so I got to work at South and North Middle, so I’ve been in all the Middle Schools, In addition I’ve had a band and still have a part time little band and play music with Bob Dalphia and some other teachers. Now I play with Mr. Cannon; Frank Cannon and John Cleeman and one of my nephews so at one point it was very busy doing weddings and parties with a guitar as my instrument. I’ve been here for thirty-seven years and think it’s the right time. It doesn’t feel entirely right. I feel a bit reserved, because I love my job. I love working with the guitar kids, I love the Music Department here, and the program we have. I’ve been very involved in it. My wife Susan is also a Brentwood teacher and she’s at South. It’s been somewhat of a difficult decision to make. If she had been going out too it would have been very, very easy. She wants to keep going for a while. She’s been teaching for about twenty-one or twenty-two years. She just wants to move up a little bit in her 1.

retirement before she submits her papers. Although, when I'm at home it's going to make her feel a little funny. When I had the opportunities to change schools, you don't like to leave your friends but I always felt that that would renew my teaching and giving something to be excited about, teaching different levels, not get stale or remain that way. So there have been lots of good times. Middle School was good, Junior High times, and the High School kid's, I find them to be just loving."

"Certain groups I've had I've been very proud of; certain choirs although I can't remember the exact year; ie two or three times when we would get a Goldman Competition or whatever. The last two or three years I've been extremely proud of my guitar program when we performed in NYC for three years in the Long Island Guitar Festival at C.W. Post, by invitation so, we've had a strong guitar program that basically I started."

"I was also the Chairman of the Curriculum Committee, for I guess, maybe fifteen or twenty years. So, a lot of the things we do were initially my suggestions. We developed a scholarship program here where we do a faculty music concert and give out scholarships; that was one of the things I pushed for. I came up with the idea for a Student Composers Night".

"There were probably four or five things like that I developed with the Curriculum Committee, you know, that I brought up. Our current Department Chairman was very open and things that I wanted to do for a long time he made happen. So that was great."

"I have a few students presently that have informed me they intend to pursue music education. Also what I try to do – If they tell me about it early enough, I help them with advice as to what they might do right now to be ready for the year they go to college."

"What was the most satisfying part of your and job being here in Brentwood? Just the kids – being with them, looking at their faces and seeing how they react when you open that door for them or help them get through the door."

I'd be satisfied to simply be remembered as "a nice person." I think that with the guitar kids, I gave them something they'll probably use forever." 2.

“Yeah, I have kids that from thirty years ago, still call. We keep in touch. That’s a tough question but I think I’d say to someone stepping into my place at the High School now “Talk to the kids and listen to them. They have to be on your side, and you have to relate to them in a fair way. Some people like to bully and that’s never been me. I think when you talk to them and you listen to what they have to say, let them talk to you and you get a link. It makes for a good relationship. It sets them at ease and makes them feel comfortable. “And then you’re off and running.” Ron, thank you for sharing your time and experience with us. Thank you very much!”