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It's 'all in the family' for Clark

BY JOHN HAUER
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Clark graduated from Piqua High School in 1992. He was in Student Council and was a class officer for three years. He

was undecided until I took a course in education, and it all fell into place. He earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1996. Later, he completed a master's degree in educational leadership and a principal's license from the University of Dayton.

"The OU experience was very helpful," he said. "I had a wide variety of observations from

class act



played basketball for legendary Piqua coach Dave Zeller. "I went to college at Ohio University," Clark said. "My major

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from rural schools, suburban schools, and an urban school." Clark landed his first job with Miami County Educational Services as an aide at an alternative school. "I worked at that position for one year. Next, I was hired as a full-time teacher at the school," he said. "After three years, I was promoted to teacher/supervisor and then supervisor."

In 2004, Clark applied to Piqua City Schools to become the principal at Wilder. "I didn't get the job, but Piqua superintendent Jerry Clark (no relation) told me that it wasn't a question of if I would get a job with PCS, but a question of when," Jeff said. "That was a big

boost to my attitude. And, sure enough, one month later I was hired to be the assistant principal of Piqua Junior High."

He worked with principal Ed McCord for five years until McCord retired. "Ed was my biggest influence as an administrator, and he gave me the best advice I ever got," Clark said. "He said run the building like it is a family. I've tried to maintain that philosophy and apply it to everyone at Piqua Junior High."

Clark moved into the principal's position and continued the family setting at the junior high. "We take pride in saying that if you come through Piqua Junior High, you are always part of the Piqua Junior High fam-

ily," he said. "We stress that at our 7th grade orientation."

"It was a bite strange returning to the junior high because I was working with staff who I had had as teachers when I was in junior high," Clark said. "Wendy Hastings, Kim Fashnor, Brenda Clement, Vickie Miller, Rick Krejci, and Don Hole were the quality teachers I had. And, I played junior high basketball for Dan Penrod."

Under Clark's reign, the junior high has seen new and expanded programs in many areas. The math offerings have developed to having the top seventh-graders take Algebra I and Geometry as eighth-graders. Top science students can now

take the high school Physical Science in 8th grade. PJHS pioneered a World Languages program using Rosetta Stone. "Our staff is 100 percent dedicated to our students," he said. "Teachers set high goals and make sure our students reach their potential."

In extra-curricular activities, Clark has encouraged the development of the Model United Nations program. Involvement in Science Olympiad has increased. "Our junior high team just placed at the Regionals and is going to the State competition in Columbus in April," Clark said. He and assistant Chad Albers started the 8th grade field trip to

Washington D.C.

Clark may be most proud of the resurgence of the Jazz Band. "They have grown to about 25 amazingly talented students who can really play Jazz," he said. "Band director Mitch Mahaney keeps asking for more money to buy more music for this energetic group."

Away from school, Clark enjoys spending time with his 'at home' family and playing a little golf at Echo Hills. He and his wife Lisa have been married 14 years. "Many of my students know my wife because she helps every summer at the Music Warehouse," Clark said. The couple has a son and a daughter. Gracie is a third-grader at High Street School,

and Evan is in a pre-School run by Edison Community College.

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