

'JAMMIN' WITH THE STARS'



THEIR PICK

Tom Pickett's half-century in Columbus as a music instructor and shop owner was celebrated June 28 with "Jammin' With the Stars," a 3½-hour concert featuring several dozen of his former students.

Many of them, including professional musicians, had never met until that night but clicked on stage as if they had played together for years. The lessons at Tom Pickett's Music Center paid off.

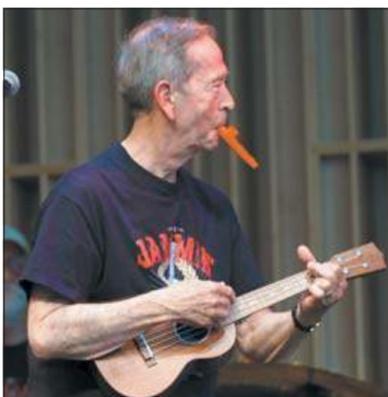
Musicians came together to honor the man who taught many of them to play. Among them were Gov. Mike Pence, the Columbus native and his daughter Charlotte, who both took lessons from Pickett. Pence customized the lyrics when performing the John Denver hit, "Take Me Home, Country Roads."

He and Charlotte sang: "Almost heaven, Indiana. Guitar lessons by the Flatrock River. Take me home, country road, to Tom Pickett's store,

where I belong. Indiana, cornfield mama. Take me home, country road."

About 700 tickets were sold, including strong walk-up demand requiring about 100 extra chairs to be set up.

"Everyone seemed to have a wonderful time," said Brigitte Halvorsen, general manager of the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic, which arranged the event. Proceeds will go toward children's programming offered by The Philharmonic.



Clockwise from top: Pickett stands and acknowledges a standing ovation at the "Jammin' With the Stars" event. Charlotte Pence and her dad, Gov. Mike Pence, perform during the concert. Pickett and his family enjoy the musicians' performances. Pickett plays a kazoo and ukulele. Liz Bohall performs the violin.

Photos by Carla Clark | For The Republic