



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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'Celebration of Life' service scheduled

Nonprofit creates 'Art Wagner memorial & scholarship fund'

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GILBERT, Ariz. – A "Celebration of Life" service to honor and remember Art Wagner, Higley Unified School District's Executive Director of Support Services, is scheduled for Monday, May 20, at 6 p.m. at the Higley Center for the Performing Arts, 4132 E. Pecos Road, Gilbert.

Mr. Wagner passed away Wednesday, May 15. He was 43 years old, and was a renowned and well-loved educator in the Higley community and in the state of Arizona.

Born on Jan. 10, 1970, Mr. Wagner grew up in Odessa, Texas, with a passion for sports, and above all, football. In high school, he became recognized nationally as a star defensive tackle for the Permian High Panthers team featured in the nonfiction book, *Friday Night Lights*.

In his 20 years as an educator and athletics director, Mr. Wagner earned several honors and awards. He served as Executive Board President for the Arizona Interscholastic Association, a statewide organization which oversees high school athletics, and recently was honored as an outstanding educator by the Arizona School Administrators, which represents school administrators statewide.

Mr. Wagner joined Higley Unified School District in 2009 and was dedicated to serving students. He forged new partnerships with parents and business leaders while overseeing community education, transportation, facilities, and district athletics. An athlete at heart, he had recently earned a master's level national certification for athletic directors from the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. Mr. Wagner is one of only 11 Arizonans to have achieved this certification.

He is survived by his wife Kat Hughes, principal of Higley Elementary and Middle School, and by his mother Nancy Wagner, his brother Francis R. Wagner, and his sister Charlotte Wagner.

In Mr. Wagner's honor, the educational nonprofit group, the James Megellas Foundation, has established the "Art Wagner Memorial and Scholarship Fund." To contribute, checks should be written to the "James Megellas Foundation, care of Higley Unified School District" with the memo, "The Art Wagner Memorial and Scholarship Fund." Checks may be mailed or dropped off at the Higley District Office, 2935 S. Recker Road, Gilbert, AZ, 85295. With the exception of Memorial Day, the District Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. through May 31.

Details regarding directions and parking for the memorial service will be posted online at www.husd.org

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About Higley

Higley Unified School District is a community of schools in southeast Gilbert that share a common commitment to education and achievement for our youth and a sense of well-being for all. We focus on providing continuity from preschool to high school and offer a well-rounded education with academics, music, arts, languages, athletics, physical education, technology, and character education. Our performance meets and exceeds state standards in academics, and our students are champions both on and off the field. We are tenaciously focused on each student's learning, and we take the guesswork out of education with data-driven instruction and accountability. Learn more at www.husd.org.