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1 B DAYTON DAILY NEWS 5/6/95 Saturday

Butler 'kids' principal' dies at 53

By Mickey Davis
DAYTON DAILY NEWS

John Beckley, a friend of the students he served and principal of Butler High School in Vandalia for 12 years, died Friday, apparently of a heart attack. He was 53.

Mr. Beckley, hailed by Vandalia-Butler School Superintendent Norman Burkhardt as "a kids' principal — the kids loved John Beckley," had spent almost 30 years in education, including 25 in the Vandalia-Butler system.

Mr. Beckley is the second area school administrator within eight days to die. Dianne Sherman, superintendent of schools in West Carrollton, died April 27 of a heart attack. She was 50.

A fixture at extracurricular and athletic events, Mr. Beckley had planned to attend Butler's prom and after-prom activities tonight. The prom in the school's Student Activity Center will go on.

He worked out regularly in the school weight room and shared a



Beckley:
Butler principal was a friend to students; he spent 25 years in district.

special rapport with students. "I can have a good talk with a kid in the weight room and get to him a lot better than if he's sitting across from me in my office," Mr. Beckley said in January.

"One of John's greatest traits was his ability to talk with kids in need," Burkhardt said. "If it were up to him, he would have had the building open 24 hours a day so the kids could play ball and participate in other activities."

"The kids, the school, the community, have lost a very close

friend in John Beckley," said George Pavlakos, a Butler assistant principal.

A native of Jackson, Ohio, Mr. Beckley, a 1965 graduate of Morehead State University, began his teaching career at Miami Trace High School in Washington Court House. He joined the Vandalia-Butler schools in 1970 as a science instructor at Morton Middle School.

He is survived by his wife, Karen, a secretary at Smith School; son Scott of Chapel Hill, N.C.; and daughter Angela of Worthington.

Visitation will be 2-7 p.m. Sunday at the Morton & Whetstone Funeral Home, 139 S. Dixie Drive. The funeral will be 10:30 a.m. Monday at First Baptist Church of Vandalia, 140 Elva Court.

Steven Martin, director of human resources for the school district, said all Vandalia-Butler schools will be closed Monday so that people can attend the funeral.