

Police escort held for departing Blackhawk High School athletic director

By Emily Kohlman emkohlman@timesonline.com Jun 30, 2016

(Video package available at timesonline.com)

CHIPPEWA TWP. -- Crowds gathered outside of Blackhawk High School Thursday afternoon for a commemorative escort for the final day of longtime athletic director Jack Fullen.

Fullen is leaving to serve as the assistant to the executive director of WPIAL after 42 years of service to the Blackhawk school community. His contract had not been renewed for next year by the school board.

To show their support for Fullen's service, family, friends and former students lined up along Blackhawk Road in Chippewa Township for a police escort for Fullen from Blackhawk High School to the Chippewa Township Volunteer Fire Department.

"He's just unbelievable," Chippewa police Chief Robert Berchtold, a former school board member, said of Fullen. "He's one of the first ones to work and one of the last ones to leave. He's done so much for Blackhawk."

Berchtold, who's also a former student of Fullen's, organized the parade. He said he wanted Fullen to be surprised by supportive fans on his last day as Blackhawk High School's athletic director.

"You guys are too much," Fullen said to friends as he walked out of the office for the last time, carrying his belongings with him. "Thank you."

When Fullen started as the athletic director in 1974, Rhonda Ficca, currently a teacher in the New Brighton Area School District, was a freshman at Blackhawk High School. She said Fullen was not only a motivated athletic director, but an incredible person.

"We are proud of the tremendous work of excellence by Jack Fullen," Ficca said. "His integrity, his character, his dedication to the school district -- he went above and beyond."

Fullen starts July 1 in his new WPIAL position.