

# Marketplace Changes



PHOTOS: J. ADRIAN WYLLIE

## Julie's Music opens on East Stadium

*King's spins off a sheet music store*

Julie King doesn't own a piano. This in itself is unremarkable—except when you consider that Julie is the daughter of Dick King, founder of **King's Keyboard House**, and that she grew up with the business. "I was actually one of the few of my brothers and sisters who took piano lessons," she explains, "but after being around pianos all day, and hearing pianos

helped around the store as a kid and then left to study dance at Western Michigan University. Tendinitis ended her hopes of a dancing career and sent her back to Ann Arbor. One of her father's employees, Sue Kurgin, trained her in the sheet music department. Kurgin went on to work at the venerable Carty's Music in Ypsilanti, but when Carty's closed, she came back to the King family. Today she works for Julie, overseeing the band and instrumental music section Julie bought from Carty's after it went out of business.

Julie's focus is on classical sheet music, but the store also stocks more than twenty different piano teaching methods and a large selection of jazz music as well as opera, band music, Broadway scores, and a fair amount of popular music. There's also a gift department with fun stuff for

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*tuned all day, the last thing I wanted to do when I came home was play the piano. I didn't even want to hear music!"*

These days, Julie is thinking about starting to play again. That's because Dick, age eighty-two, has retired, she and her brother Jim have taken over the business, and she has spun the store's sheet music department into a separate shop down the street called **Julie's Music**. Here, amid walls of sheet music, composition books, piano-teaching manuals, and metronomes, Julie is beginning to feel the itch to take up the piano again. "When you're surrounded by great musicians, you don't feel like you can just sit down and play for enjoyment," she says. "Now I understand that it can be like reading a book: you just sit down and read for fun."

Dick founded King's Keyboard House in 1961 on East Liberty where Afternoon Delight is now. The store moved to Main Street for a decade or so and then back to the 100 block of East Liberty. In 1996 the family moved the store to its current location on East Stadium.

The sixth of seven children, Julie

*With Dick King's retirement, son Jim (left) has taken over King's Keyboard House, while daughter Julie has launched Julie's Music.*

musicians: pins in the shape of eighth notes, mugs and note cards with time signatures and staves, busts of classical composers, sheet music scarves and ties, and coffee mugs.

Julie moved her inventory from King's Keyboard into her new space at the end of April and planned to open the store in early May, but her customers had other ideas. "People kept coming in and I didn't want to turn them away, so we found a box and put some cash in it to use as a register, and we had to write people's credit card numbers on scratch paper because we didn't have a machine," she laughs. "It was a crazy day."

Jim oversees King's Keyboard now, with occasional assistance from brother Rob, who tunes pianos part time. Dick, who is recovering from a recent stroke, doesn't come into the shop right now, but his presence is still very much felt, and he's still got a phone extension on the voice mail prompt.

*Julie's Music, 2361 East Stadium Boulevard, 623-1607. Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Closed Sun.*

*King's Keyboard House, 2333 East Stadium Boulevard, 663-3381. Mon., Tues., Thurs., & Fri. 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.; Wed. 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.*