

All the world a stage for 'Big Steve'

Whether it was manning the nose guard position for the football team on Plevyak Field, or taking to the auditorium floorboards to play the Cowardly Lion in the Knott Fine Arts Auditorium, Steven Alford took advantage of every chance he had to perform during his four years at Mount St. Joseph High School in Irvington.

He was front and center one last time on his senior project, a May 7 concert that served as a benefit for cancer research. A collaboration with Noah Dillow and J.T. Uhler, "Big Steve and Friends" drew approximately 300 to benefit a cause near to his heart, the disease that took his grandmother, Lorraine Edmonds, in 2011.

"She loved my singing, so I put on a concert for her," Alford said. "I hand-picked the best singers, brought in five or six girls from Mount de Sales. Most songs were Pop, R&B. My band closed."

That would be "Black at Heart," Dillow on drums, Jack Mansfield on bass, Peter Ogden and Jackson Polcaro on guitar - fellow members of the class of 2016 - all fronted by Alford, whose repertoire ranges from James Brown to Boys2Men to that furry guy in "The Wiz."

"Steven is an incredible singer, musician and arranger," said Susan Esserwein, a teacher in the Fine Arts Department."

He was to take his tenor to the Baltimore School for the Arts until athletics entered into his high school selection.

"It's more than just that I wanted to play football," Alford said. "I need it, for the exercise. I'm a big guy, and I've always been big."

The 6-foot, 330-pound interior lineman was selected to play in the 2015 Crab Bowl, an in-state all-star football game. Alford will play the sport at McDaniel College in Westminster, strengthen his considerable math skills, and seek out more musical platforms.

His father, Steven, is a caterer. His mother, Sirena, works at the Social Security

Administration headquarters in Woodlawn, as they shared a commute from the family home in Overlea.