



The Central States District of the
Barbershop Harmony Society

The Serenade

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2026 BHS International Champions!

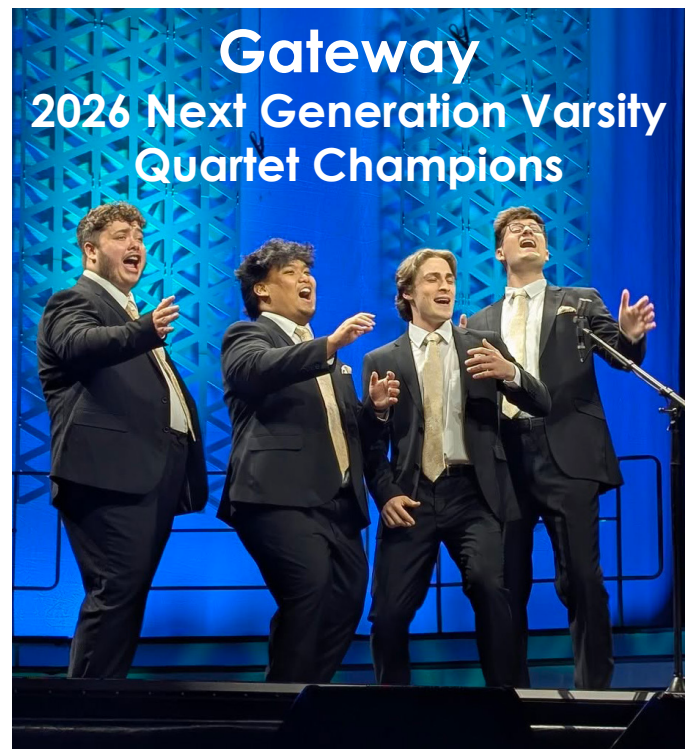


Ambassadors of Harmony
2026 Chorus Champions



GQ

2026 Quartet Champions
First female quartet champions in BHS history



Gateway

**2026 Next Generation Varsity
Quartet Champions**

Celebrating our Past, Investing in our Future



Brett Randolph

CSD President

Ozark Overtones, 2026 International NextGen Varsity Quartet Champions Gateway, and 2026 International Chorus Champions Ambassadors of Harmony. Reflecting on CSD's rich history while charting an exciting path forward, this milestone is not just a celebration of the past, but a launching pad for future growth and innovation within the CSD.

Since its inception, the Central States District has been dedicated to excellence and passion for barbershop singing. Over the years, numerous people have been privileged to witness countless performances at shows, community events, and conventions that have inspired participants and audiences alike. Members of CSD have consistently demonstrated the transformative power of music, fostering connections that transcend generations and geographic boundaries. The journey of these eight decades is adorned with numerous achievements, the fostering of talent, and the creation of memorable events that have become staples in our calendar. It is these accomplishments that have laid a solid foundation for future generations of CSD barbershoppers.

With those future barbershoppers in mind and to nurture the next generation of barbershop singers, I am proud to announce the creation of the CSD Youth Fund. This initiative aims to provide financial support and resources to young singers who aspire to excel in the art of barbershop harmony. By investing in our youth, we hope

There have been a lot of things to celebrate in 2026 for the Central States District. First and foremost, this year marks 80 years since the creation of the CSD. Additionally, of the six International Championships that were awarded in 2026, three were won by groups from the Central States District; 2026 International Seniors Chorus Champions

to ensure that the legacy of barbershop singing within the CSD continues to flourish for years to come. The CSD Youth Fund will offer financial support to youth choruses and quartets from the Central States District who qualify and compete at the Midwinter or International Conventions. It will also help provide support for chapter or district sponsored events designed to hone the skills of young singers. We believe that by empowering the youth, we are not only preserving the rich tradition of barbershop harmony but also invigorating it with fresh perspectives and innovative voices.

In addition to our focus on youth, I am excited to introduce the CSD Convention Sponsorship Program. This new initiative is designed to provide advertising space in The Serenade, the convention program, during the livestream of the convention, a post on CSD social media, non-competitor convention registrations, and a spot on the new sponsors page on the CSD website for choruses, quartets, individuals and businesses. This is a great opportunity to showcase your organization to the broader barbershop community. CSD social media posts alone are seen by thousands of people.

Finally, I would like to share with you that CSD has partnered with Custom Quartet Stuff and have created a merchandise store with numerous items to help celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Central States District. These items are a great way to show your support of the Central States District and there are many to choose from!

As we celebrate this achievement, I invite all CSD barbershop enthusiasts to join us in commemorating 80 years by attending the fall convention on October 8-10, 2026 in Lawrence, Kansas. It will be a fantastic weekend of community, fellowship, and some of the best barbershop singing in the Barbershop Harmony Society! Together, we can honor the past, celebrate the present, and build a promising future for the Central States District. Stay tuned for more details on the CSD merchandise store and how you can get involved in supporting the CSD Youth Fund and CSD Convention Sponsorship Program. Let's continue to harmonize, inspire, and create memories that will resonate for another eighty years and beyond.

CSD Quartet Spotlight



Habitat 4 Harmony

The foursome of Habitat 4 Harmony have been spreading barbershop harmony since 1992 (with a three-year hiatus from 2007-2010).

1992



(left to right) Kirby Wilson, lead; Gary Weddle, tenor; Marv Spellman, baritone; and Fran Wilson, bass

As Habitat 4 Harmony this quartet began singing on barbershop shows and entertaining at various functions such as the state fair, county fairs,

celebrations and parties (mostly in Nebraska) but also in Kansas, Iowa, South Dakota, Missouri and Colorado. Many remembered Marv (who earlier sang with Fran in the Elkhorns and Shamrocks) with his version of "I'm a Little Teapot" and the quartet singing "Parent's Lament" ("I've got to potty, Dad."). These were both nearly always requested at afterglows when the

quartet would make the rounds at receptions. Marv was also a furniture salesman & repair guy for Nelson's Furniture and received acclaim for being one of the top 3 recruiters for the BHS, having received more than 100 Man of Note awards. Fran has been the director (often with help from Gary Drown as co-director and others) for the Kearney Area Barbershoppers 1733 Chorus. (1733 is the approximate miles from Boston and San Francisco.) As you can tell from the list of tenors, it must be dangerous to sing tenor with us!

2017



(left to right) Clyde Mickelsen, tenor; Kirby Wilson, lead; Fran Wilson, bass; Mark Berke, baritone

All four members of the next version of Habitat 4 Harmony live in Kearney, and two of them actually work there also. Craig sang Tenor and is retired. He and his wife, Janice, have retired and are taking it easy. Kirby sang Lead, and he and his wife, Amy own and run their own company, ASK Supply Company, LLC, a business solutions and supplies company, and also New Hope Creations, a creative arts company. Mark, our Baritone, is married to Chris and worked at Spelts-Schultz Millshop as the Countertop Templator. Fran is married to Jan, sings Bass, is retired from teaching, but works occasionally as a carpenter and cabinet builder.

They sang "Good Ol' Barbershop," comedy, parodies, country westerns, show tunes, spirituals and patriotic selections. The remainder of their repertoire had no identifiable category but was simply fun to sing. If you've heard some of their songs before, please refrain from singing along—they're embarrassed when you remember them better than they do.



(left to right) Craig Knispel, tenor; Kirby Wilson, lead; Fran Wilson, bass; Mark Berke, baritone

All four members of this quartet are from here in Kearney and they too have performed in several states and at county and state fairs here in Nebraska. Clyde Mickelsen sang tenor and spent a lifetime in the airline service industry. Kirby Wilson, lead, runs his own company, Ask Supply (with the help of his wife, Amy). Baritone, Mark Berke worked at Spelts-Schultz Cabinet Shop here in Kearney and Fran Wilson again sang bass and doesn't work at much of anything. He has also directed the Chancel Choir at Faith United Methodist Church for more than 60 years.

2026



(left to right) Marshall Goodenberger, tenor; Kirby Wilson, lead; Fran Wilson, bass; Mark Berke, baritone

Three of these singers, Kirby, Mark, & Fran all live in or near Kearney and our new Tenor, Marshall, a retired Veterinarian lives in Elwood with his wife, Ellen. He

sang in high school in a quartet called "The Kids." Then, even though he's actually a baritone, sang tenor with 4 To Go, then continued with Habitat 4 Harmony as their tenor. Kirby usually sings lead and with his wife, Amy owns and runs Ask Supply Company, LLC, a business solutions supply company. Mark, recently retired from Spelts-Schulz Millshop (now called Edge and Stone) is married to Chris, sings Baritone (most of the time) and enjoys travelling with his wife whenever he can. Fran is married to Jan, is retired from teaching and sings Bass.

Make plans to attend the 2026 Fall Convention!

October 8-11, 2026
Lawrence, Kan.

Headquarters Hotel: The DoubleTree

Contest Venue: Lied Center, KU Campus

LIVE NOW:

Convention Registration

Contest Registration

Hotel Reservation

Learn more at
singcsd.com/upcoming-convention

Does your director have the tools they need?



J.P. Marshall

*CSD Chorus Director
Development*

As we look around the district, we see lots of great chapters of all sizes doing wonderful work in lots of different ways. Chapters are out in their communities performing in all sorts of places for different audiences. Chapters are competing both locally at district level conventions as well as at an international level. We have chapters that have multiple choruses and VLQs that perform different functions in their communities and the district. With all this wonderful engagement, we need to be making sure that the directors of all these different styles of chapters have the tools that they need to best support the chapters they are serving. We have directors with all sorts of different backgrounds throughout the district; some are classically trained and have gone to school for a coral directing degree, some have significant barbershop backgrounds, some have spent decades directing different choral groups, and some are just getting started. With all that range of training and experience, it's very difficult for the district to know how best to support each individual director.

That is where you come in.

What would be the most helpful for your director to lead your chorus in the right direction?

- One-on-one training with an experienced barbershop director
- Group master class watching a director get some coaching
- Roundtable discussions with other directors to talk about what they have seen to be successful
- Help with music selection
- Administrative help organizing the chorus

- Or any other things we have not thought of

We have wonderful directors in this district and we want to make sure that we are supporting them in the best possible way so that they can lead your chorus and help it grow and succeed.

Please reach out to me and let me know how we can best serve your chapter and director.

Fall Convention returning to Lawrence, Kan. in October



Doug Brott

CSD Director of Events

The 2026 Fall Convention is next up in October. Once again in Lawrence KS, October 8-11. Links for Convention Registration, Contest Registration and Hotel Reservation should be available by July 25, 2026 on the CSD Website. The DoubleTree will

again be the Headquarters Hotel and the Lied Center on the KU Campus will host the Contests. Chorus and Quartet Coaching will be available along with a Harmony Platoon opportunity. And of course numerous opportunities to sing with your fellow CSD members and families. We are expecting a good turnout so get your rooms and reservations early. All the information you need is on the CSD Website, singcsd.com

S.D. Chapters Stay Busy Sharing Harmony Across the State



Cliff Huot

South Dakota State VP

and community celebrations, sharing the unique sound of four-part harmony with audiences of all ages. These performances not only entertain but also strengthen the connection between barbershop singers and the communities they serve.

Among the highlights of the season were appearances at Tornado Days in Centerville, South Dakota, where singers helped celebrate one of the community's signature annual events, and Sounds of Summer in Viborg, South Dakota, where audiences enjoyed an evening of music and summertime fun. Both events provided wonderful opportunities to introduce barbershop harmony to new listeners while reconnecting with longtime supporters.

In addition to chapter performances, South Dakota quartets have also maintained an active performance schedule. One standout has

Barbershop harmony has been alive and well across South Dakota this season, as local chapters and quartets continue to bring music, fellowship, and entertainment to communities throughout the state.

Members have enjoyed a full schedule of performances at churches, civic events,



been The All Nighters Quartet, which recently performed for DakotAbilities in Sioux Falls. The quartet was honored to share music with participants, staff, and families, bringing smiles, laughter, and the timeless appeal of barbershop harmony to the gathering.

These performances reflect the mission of the Barbershop Harmony Society—to enrich lives through singing. Whether performing in churches, community festivals, senior living centers, or nonprofit organizations, South Dakota barbershoppers continue to demonstrate that music has the power to unite people and create lasting memories.

As the year continues, South Dakota chapters look forward to the SD Barbershop Festival on Aug 1, with Matt Webber as our guest clinician.

Through every performance, South Dakota's barbershoppers continue to uphold a proud tradition of service, fellowship, and musical excellence—one song at a time.



CSD Shines on International Stage in Own Backyard



Carter Combs

CSD Contest & Judging

I think it's safe to say CSD had a very good week in St Louis! Hosting the International Convention in our own (Kevin Keller's) backyard was certainly convenient, and our CSD competitors went out of their way to make it memorable as well.

For starters, all our quartets posted their highest-ever

competition scores. In the NextGen contest... to set the pace, our reigning district champs Gateway (Rob Abbott, Stephen Reynolds, Cole Williamson, Johnny Padigos) won the Varsity gold medal! All three of our other quartets acquitted themselves quite respectably in this youth contest that gets stronger every year. The Figment Five (Matthew Pointer, Michael Flannery, Parker Miller, Josh Neighbors), Vitality (Brayden Heath, Michael Abrams, Charlie Hill, Kobe DeChurch), and SmorgasChords (Dashall Meyer, Henry Helget, Lucas Smith, Jordan Webber) finished 14th, 17th, & 18th, respectively.

Not to be outdone, Ephraim Steven (Steve Azevedo, Chaz McPeck, Dave Carlisle, Stephen Day) came within 1 point(!) of qualifying for the open contest quarterfinals during the new Sing-In Contest. That left our three previously qualified quartets to carry on. In their first International appearances, our two wildcard entries Fully Vetted (Austin Veteto, Chris Pingel, Stephen Vandenberg, Adam Veteto) took 23rd, while Fountain City Four (Brayden Heath, Arlen Burroughs, Dan Rasmussen, Jon Kready) landed 33rd.

Notice that Heath also competed in the NextGen contest in Vitality! And 12th place Fleet Street (Matt Suellentrop, Aaron Zart, Keegan Eich, Michael Bass) continues their steady climb, improving both their score and rank in each of the last 4 years. We look forward to seeing them in the top-10!

Last, and far from least, our fine field of choruses. In a few prior years, three districts (CSD, MAD, & JAD) have sent as many as 5 choruses to International. This year, CSD is the first district ever to send 6 choruses! In their first ever appearance, Vox Infinitus (dir. Nate Green) placed 27th, with a stalwart 15 on-stage, performing two original Jonathan Fortino charts. SmorgasChorus (dir. Matt Webber) is back on the rise, placing 24th performing their hometown tribute "Wichita Lineman." The Recruits (dirs. Keegan Eich, Eric Dalbey) likewise moved up the ranks to 16th, using one chart by co-director Eich. Visions of Harmony (dir. Erin Odell) made a big leap to 11th place in just their third trip to International. Central Standard (dir. Rob Mance) had a nice jump in score, but held steady in 6th place against a very strong medalist field.

And of course, Ambassadors of Harmony thrilled the crowd, capturing their sixth gold medal, this time in their own hometown! AOH is now under the talented leadership of Jonny Moroni, following the retirement last year of Dr Jim Henry, after 35 years at the helm.

Except for the songs noted above, all the other chorus arrangements were penned by the venerable David Wright, which means all 12 charts were by our own growing pool of talented CSD arrangers. I'm pretty sure no other district can claim that distinction.

So yes, all in all, I think it's safe to say CSD had a very good week in St Louis!

Membership Impact



Don Fuson

CSD Membership

positive impact in their life.

That comment is from one of the several articles that float through my inbox, and it came this time from "Leadership First," which shares stories and thoughts about developing other team members.

I think the statement is probably one of the hidden gems in career and self-development. It is a giving

What is the absolute summit of human achievement and the single greatest compliment you can ever receive from another person? The definitive answer does not lie in the accumulation of titles, personal or corporate wealth, or industry accolades; it is the profound, soul-stirring realization that you made a lasting,

back, being altruistic, desiring to see success in others, and a variety of other events that reflect well on your own leadership, your attitude, and your eventual altitude.

Now the challenge: How can I put most of this "support" into the minds of each of our members?

Start with discussing the member view of where you want the chapter and performing groups to go in the future. What are the new opportunities? What are the (perceived) barriers? Who might have outside experience in taking "step one" to pass thru the barrier? How can every chapter member contribute to the plan in some small way? Can the board follow-up to measure and report on the "all member involvement?"

Since none of us are qualified to do our jobs in perpetuity, then let's work on getting others involved, insure everyone is doing something, and plan for what great things we can undertake and accomplish during the remainder of 2026 and into 2027 and beyond. (You can rewrite the "Behind" tag and sing it as "BEYOND" now.

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Prepping for Remainder of the Year



Don Fuson

CSD Membership

- Seeking suggestions on how to improve each member's experience
- Doing some "detective" work to find out who is capable and interested to do your job in 2027 (and other roles, too)
- Recognizing the chapter members who lead "off of the risers" to create the growth mindset for the chapter
- Training and exposing every member on the points of welcome to guests and mentoring any new members (perhaps some older ones, too)
- Updating the chapter former member list to have valid emails to use when you next have a performance
- Recognizing chapter members who are doing other community outreach events, and are members/leaders in other community arts groups (and perhaps inviting them for some stage time at your next show, and expanding that potential ticket list)
- Celebrating and "Wahoo-ing" each member at the time of their renewals (did you miss someone and need help from HQ?)
- Double "Wahoo-ing" any chapter member who reaches the 50-year milestone with BHS
- Looking down the road 3-5 years and seeing how to develop those members to lead the chapter

Are the members planning to participate in the CSD Fall

About this time of the year, active chapter leaders (especially those important Membership/Development VPs) may start to think about taking some strong actions during the remainder of 2026.

Those actions do, and should, include:

- Seeking each member's thoughts about what is "fun" for that member

Convention in Lawrence KS on October 8-11, 2026? That is the best place to sing for an appreciative audience, and also get a new perspective during feedback from a judge that simply wants to help the chorus improve. They will talk about singing techniques, but we also know that the planning elements of the chapter have to be in place well ahead of any performance. If your chorus beats their previous scores and comes away with some new learning points for singing, that is a win=win for the members and the district, too. Likewise, ongoing planning and "what if" discussions by your boards will help the support structure grow for your chapters.

Plans are underway for our next Leadership Academy for 2027 chapter leaders. Final dates and details to come. What specific Leadership elements would you want those sessions to include? What leadership principles have worked well for you in your current role that you could share?

Your CSD State VPs and other district leaders are always welcome to answer questions so reach out to them (<https://singcsd.com/district-leadership/>).

Thanks in advance for what each of you do.

CSD Member Spotlight



Fran Wilson

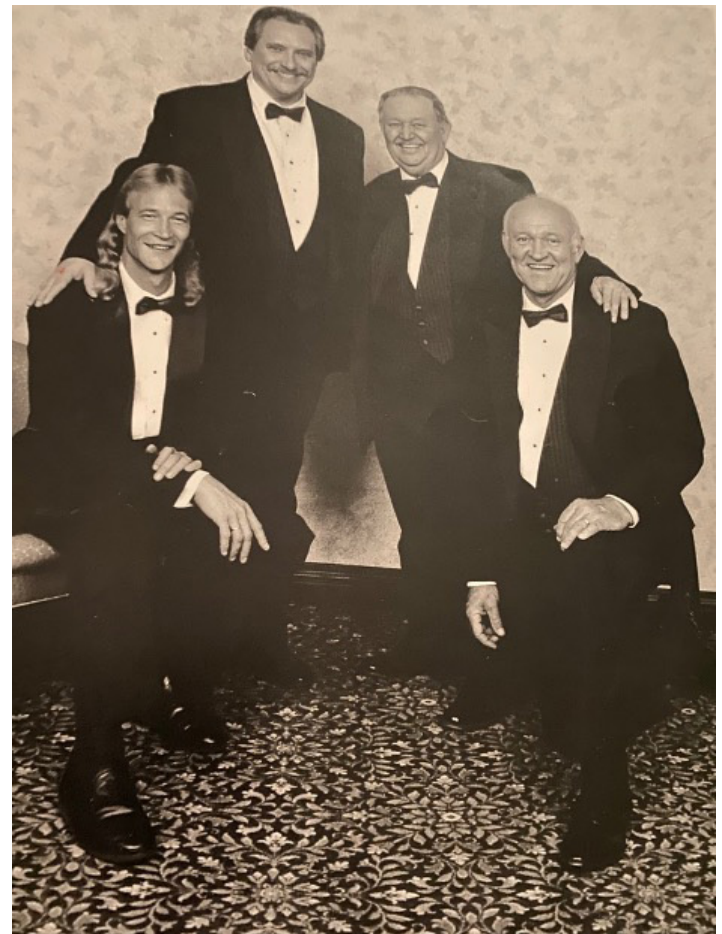
I was born on a wheat, corn and alfalfa farm 11.5 miles northeast of Leoti, Kan. in 1937. I had 2 older sisters and 1 younger sister. I milked cows (first by hand for several years then we got a Surge Milking Machine), fed hogs, sheep, cattle, horses, goats, chickens, turkeys, and we had a dog and cats. We irrigated our alfalfa with a sprinkler system from our creek that we had to move by hand whenever it had put enough water where we started it. I attended a one-room country school one-half mile from our house from 1st through 8th grade. Our mailbox was near the road just east of the school and our church (Pleasant Valley Methodist) was a bit west of the school-house. We had an outhouse at home and 2 for both the church and the school. I referred to them as Summer Houses (some were for boys and the other for girls). We had no electricity at first, then put up a wind-charger which powered batteries in our cellar so we had a 32 volt system, a wall telephone and a radio.



I then attended high school in Leoti where our mascot was "The Leoti Indians." I played football, basketball and went out for track. I was also in band, choir, madrigals, and school plays. I sang in a boys trio during elementary school and later in a boys quartet. My family all sang or played violins, trumpets, clarinets, accordions, pianos or other instruments. My

dad sang in a men's quartet at church and also sang duets with my mother. My grandmother ran a racket (variety) store in town and gave voice lessons and my grandfather ran a threshing crew (with horses).

After high school graduation and not having enough money to begin college, my dad took me to Garden City where I was planning to join the Navy (my birthday was on Navy Day), but the sign on the door there said, "I'll be back in 2 hours" so we went to the Army recruitment center where they said I could choose any branch I wanted so I joined the Army Security Agency. After basic training in Camp Carson,





Left to right: Clyde Mickelsen, Kirby Wilson, Fran Wilson, Mark Berke Colo. I went back home for a few days and my friends all asked, "What did you do?" They said men in a black car and black suits were all over the county asking about me. They were from the FBI and checking to see if I was able to have a top secret security clearance. I then went to Ft. Devens, Mass. for several months and became a high-speed Morse Intercept Operator. While there, I was in a male chorus and also a male quartet. When our quartet was singing in Boston at an Officers Club, I asked the others, "Why does this egg-nog taste funny?" They said, "You dummy; it's been spiked and has booze in it."

Given my choice of Alaska, Hawaii, and Germany, I chose Germany and spent the next nearly three years in Bad Aibling (which had previously been a base for German troops under Hitler). I sang in a Chapel Choir there and got a bus driver's license so we could travel to nearby cities and sing for them. While on leave from there I visited other parts of Germany including Munich (about 55 kilometers northwest of Bad Aibling) and also Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, England, Denmark and Sweden. I also became a bit fluent in German by taking a class offered by the University of Maryland which was taught by a German instructor.

After my stint in the Army I went back to Kansas where I attended Ft. Hays State College (now Ft. Hays State University) as a music student. I was in Concert Choir, The Impromptuos (similar to a swing choir) and again sang in a male quartet. I received both my bachelor's and master's degrees in 1958 then took a job as a Choral Director in Belleville, Kan. While there I was asked to direct the local barbershop chorus (which no longer belonged to the BHS, but they still had music books) and enjoyed that experience a lot.



PATENT PENDING

Moving to Kearney in 1964 I became the Choral Director of 7th grade through high school, then junior high through high school, then just high school. I began singing in The Elkhorns, then The Shamrocks and also the Men's Chorus directed by Carl Easterbrook. We started the Kearney Chorus which licensed in 1971 with me as the director, and chartered in 1972 as the 1733 Chorus. Then I also

**Shamrocks**

sang in a quartet with Phil Holmgren, Rod Krueger and Lloyd High, and with Director's Choice with Dick Terwilliger, Marv Spellman and Don Ostendorf, then with the Accutones with Paul Liebfarth, Marv Spellman and Kent Smallcomb. When the Mid-Winter International Barbershop Convention was in Pasadena, I sang baritone in a senior's quartet called Metamusical Brothers with Dan Clark, Gary Drown and Kent Smallcomb where we placed 14th in the world. Later (beginning in 1993) with Habitat 4 Harmony with Gary Weddel, Kirby Wilson and Marv Spellman, then with Randy Shackelton replacing Gary Weddel before also being replaced by Clyde Mickelsen. Then while still singing with Habitat 4 Harmony I sang with Patent Pending with Craig Knispel, Gary Drown and Kent Smallcomb which after Gary's passing became Craig Knispel, Gary Davis, Kent Smallcomb and myself. At one point I also sang with Advance Warning! (and as the Transylvania Quartet) with Craig Knispel, Mark Berke and Neil Berke. After Kent's passing, Habitat 4 Harmony included Clyde Mickelsen, Kirby Wilson, Mark Berke and myself. Since Clyde's passing Habitat 4 Harmony then included Craig Knispel, Kirby Wilson and Mark Berke who, surprisingly enough, sang with me through 2025. When Craig said he could no longer perform with us we invited Marshall Goodenberger to sing tenor.

As the 1733 Chorus Director I have had as Assistant Directors: Carl Easterbrook, Dan Naumann, Jerry Idt, Lynn Miller, Dick Terwilliger, Gary Weddel, Tom Woodrum, Myron Haines, Gary Drown, Monty McCollough, Randy Warner, Robert Roth, John Moore, Jeremy Hemphill, and Ramon Johnson.

In the past I have been the clinician for several high school honor choirs and music festivals. I am a life member of ACDA (the American Choral Directors Association), was the president of the Nebraska Choral Directors Association three different times and was also their Newsletter Editor and received the honor of being their Outstanding Choral Director. I was also elected to the Hall of Fame in the NMEA (Nebraska Music Educators Association).

I have composed and arranged several published songs for SATB and both men's and women's barbershop groups. I use Finale (an old, no longer current music writing program which I still use.

At this time I have been the Chancel Choir director



at Faith United Methodist Church in Kearney for more than 60 years, and the 1733 Chorus director continuously since 1971. I also sing a couple times a year with the Platte River Singers and have annually been a judge for Galaxy of Stars since its beginning and have judged at Miss Nebraska and Miss U.S.A. pageants several times, and often judge at District Music Contests in Nebraska and District and State Music Contests in Kansas.

I help organize, set up and work at the Barbershoppers Booth at the State Fair each year where we have been honored to receive the first place ribbon for Outstanding Indoor Booth more than once. We now share some of our space with various Nebraska Concert Association groups. We sponsor a Nebraskappella! Day! each year where various a cappella groups perform on an outdoor stage. The barbershop choruses from Kearney, Hastings and Papillion are all planning to perform this year. I also sing the National Anthem for various state fair shows, and nearly every day at 10:00 in the Pinnacle Bank Arena.

I take great pleasure in singing with my son, Kirby, and I'm extremely thankful to still be married to my wonderful wife, Jan—now for more than 51 years.



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