

# Phi Beta Mu

## International Bandmasters Fraternity

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The history of Phi Beta Mu is significant to its present and its future. The founders' ideals of honoring superior achievement are timeless, their values of moral uprightness are never out of style, and their purpose of promoting the international development of bands will reward the world far beyond our Fraternity's membership. May we honor those who have gone before us by honoring personal and professional excellence in our time and upholding the standards that are the very foundation of Phi Beta Mu.

Phi Beta Mu was established as a result of the respect and appreciation our founder, Colonel Earl D. Irons, had for his professional associates, school band directors. Col. Irons was Bandmaster and Chairman of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Arlington, then known as North Texas Agricultural College. He envisioned an organization that would honor outstanding band directors whose dedication and devotion to their profession was paramount, but whose admirable traits and services were not necessarily known nationally. Col. Irons sought to honor deserving individuals on a state level similar to the manner in which the American

Bandmasters Association had honored him in 1936.

During the summer of 1937, Col. Irons was serving as guest conductor and cornet teacher at the Texas Tech Summer Band Camp in Lubbock, Texas. In the course of that summer's camp, he had discussions with Dr. D.O. Wiley, Director of the Tech Band Camp, about his plan for founding a very special organization. These two men decided that the time

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was right to begin such an honorary association, and "Prof." Wiley assembled a group of prominent band directors at the camp for a meeting with Col. Irons.

With advice from Dr. Cothburn O'Neal, Col. Irons began working out details of the Fraternity's organizational structure. Dr. O'Neal was a former student of Col. Irons from 1925 and had become a colleague on the faculty of North Texas Agricultural College, serving as an English professor. Together, they selected Phi Beta Mu with the subtitle National Bandmasters Fraternity, as the name of the organization. Phi Beta Mu was interpreted to

mean Life, Love, and Music. The colors chosen to represent the Fraternity were blue and white.

The original member recognition pin bore the five lines and four spaces of the music staff in a vertical position, closed at each end, with the Greek letters for Phi Beta Mu inset across the center.

Col. Irons and Dr. O'Neal, with ideas gleaned from the earlier meetings at Texas Tech, wrote a proposed constitution and oath, both of which were approved by the twelve charter members in the summer of 1938. The first official meeting was held at the

Rice Hotel in Houston, Texas in February, 1939. By 1946, three chapters had been chartered.

With most of its members serving in the military during World War II, the Fraternity's official credentials and the minutes of those early prewar meetings were lost. When the Fraternity was reactivated, the members' recognition pin was changed to its current form.

With the continuous existence of three chapters for several years, the need became apparent for a fully operative national structure. It was decided that there should be a President, Vice-President, and Executive Secretary, with six

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national board members. In addition to agreeing to proceed with the international organization, recognition pins were established to honor the members of the International Executive Committee and Chapter Past-Presidents. In 1955, a national election was held. The Fraternity grew to include additional state chapters and began expanding into foreign countries. The Fraternity established chapters in Graz, Austria and Alberta, Canada in 1975, and Japan in 1978. The current president is Richard C. Crain.

In December of 1988, Phi Beta Mu celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding. To commemorate this occasion, two works were commissioned and dedicated to Phi Beta Mu. Breckenridge Overture by James Barnes and A Celebration Fanfare by Alfred Reed were performed by the Lake Highlands High School Band at the Friday evening concert of the 1988 Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois. Brother Malcolm Helm, director of the Lake Highlands High School Band in Richardson, Texas, was presented a plaque expressing the appreciation of the Fraternity for his thoughtfulness in programming these works to further promote the Fraternity.

Membership shall be restricted to band directors who are, at the time of their initiation, members in good standing of the State Band Directors Association or the State Music Educators Association recognized by the Fraternity. A prospective member must have been a band director for at least five years. To be elected to membership, an active member in good standing, who shall be held responsible for the prospective member, providing he/she is accepted for membership in the Fraternity, must sponsor a prospective member. In the event that a member should be expelled from the Fraternity, it shall be the duty of the sponsoring member to inform said member of his/her expulsion. The International

Executive Committee may bestow honorary membership on an individual outside the Fraternity by a majority vote of International Board Members present.

Any chapter may bestow honorary membership upon an individual outside the Fraternity by a unanimous vote of the chapter's membership at any regular chapter meeting. This membership shall be considered international in scope and shall be listed in the International Membership Roster.

The Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Mu holds its Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony each year during the TBA Convention/Clinic. This year, the ceremony will be held on Sunday, July 25 at 3:30 pm at the Marriott Riverwalk, Alamo Ballrooms A-C.

In the spirit of "encouraging the building of better bands and the development of better musicians in schools throughout the world"\*, Phi Beta Mu sponsors well-known clinicians and an outstanding concert at the TBA Convention/Clinic. This year, Phi Beta Mu is proud to showcase Don Haynes and Barbara Lambrecht. Mr. Haynes will present *Pitfalls are the Pits! The Most Common Mistakes by Band Directors* on Saturday, July 24 at 8:15 am. Mrs. Lambrecht will speak on the timely subject *With So Many Elective Being Offered, How Do I Get my Beginners to Stay in Band?* on Saturday, July 24 at 5:30 pm.

The Phi Beta Mu Directors' Band will perform on Sunday, July 25 at 10:45 am in the Convention Center, Room 217. The conductors this year will be the renowned Richard Crain, Paula Crider, and Robert Floyd. The band is organized for the TBA Convention/Clinic by Paul Worosello, Alpha Chapter President. This year's program will include selections from the New Concert Band Music publications.

\*This phrase was taken from the Phi Beta Mu Constitution and By-laws. Information for this article was taken from the Phi Beta Mu web site [www.phibetamu.org](http://www.phibetamu.org).