

If It's Worth Doing It, It's Worth Doing Right

In remembrance of Colonel Truman Crawford

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

It was one of those sticky, muggy, humid nights in Whitewater, Wisconsin. Several band directors had traveled from afar to watch the Bands of America (then Marching Bands of America) final championship event. One great band after another brought the crowd to its feet with incredible musicianship coupled with precise marching artistically woven into an incomparable production. There were groups from all over the nation and each performance raised the bar for the next competitor as the evening continued to crescendo. The final band (a spectacular high school ensemble boasting 300+ members) capped the event with a remarkable show that was absolutely beyond words. The thunderous applause acknowledging the young performers lasted several minutes...and we all agreed, NOTHING COULD TOP IT!

The announcer's voice boomed, "While the final scores are being tallied, we will be entertained by THE COMMANDANT'S OWN – The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps." On the far side of the field a small

contingent of 52 horns and drums stood motionless. 52? Only 52?! Shouldn't they have scheduled them first before all the BIG BANDS with flags, rifles, sabers, etc., had dazzled the people in the stands? Only 52?

The Marine Drum Major barked a solid command, the drums kicked-in and for the next fifteen minutes a jam-packed stadium was held spellbound by a level of excellence that served as a bold reminder of the well-known adage, **"It's not WHAT you do, but it's the WAY you do WHAT you do that makes the difference."**

From the angle of the horns to the razor crease in their blinding white uniform pants, everything was perfectly aligned. As they played (with such confidence and feeling) every articulation was buffed and polished with a sense of meaning, purpose, reason. The fortes were deafening and the pianissimos made the listener stretch to hear. The visual and aural dynamics pushed the envelope-of-possibility to the very edge, but always with sophisticated taste and a meticulous exactness. At the conclusion of the show the corps left little time for the crowd

to respond, but immediately broke into the familiar "Marine's Hymn" as they quickly exited the stadium...while the crowd accompanied by singing and clapping with a sense of genuine red-white-and-blue patriotism. It was one of those moments that marks our lives for an eternity.

With tears streaming down my face I crawled over my comrades and headed out the gate to find-the-Marines. The sound of the drum click served as the tracking beam, and within a few minutes I was in their shadow as they made marched briskly back to the buses. What happened next served as a new definition of PRIDE; not the kind of egotistical pride that comes from winning a competition, boasting of a personal victory, or waving the flag of bragging rights, but the kind of PRIDE that defines the human as a creature of compassion and sensitivity. The 52 members marched in a circle and one-by-one (in perfect synchronization) put their instruments down, and then snapped to a signature statuesque attention. Then (in unison) they clasped hands and bowed their heads...the stillness

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was breathtaking...and, again, as if they were all thinking out of one mind, the hands unlocked, the heads snapped erect and there was not a hint of movement. The director (then Captain Truman Crawford) walked into the center of the circle, rotated slowly looking each member in the eye, and quietly stated, "Ladies and gentleman, tonight you can be PROUD to call yourself a Marine." There was an extended silence, finally in a perfect ripple, each person leaned over and picked up his/her instrument and re-postured in the classic Marine stance. The Drum Major gave the command, "Corps, dismissed," and the members efficiently began packing for the trip back to their headquarters in Washington DC. DISCIPLINED RESPONSIBILITY was clearly the foundation of everything the group did.

I patiently waited until Captain Crawford was by himself, then walked to him, introduced myself and told him what a compelling statement they made both on-and-off the field of performance. He was gracious and appreciative, and then he asked, "Is there anything I can do for you?" After a long deep breath I said, "As a matter of fact there is: If my students could experience a small percentage of what your corps members do, I know they would enjoy benefits beyond measure. Would you be kind enough to share your advice concerning what-it-takes to develop this kind of quality with any group of people?" He put his arm around my shoulder, we

locked eye-to-eye and he said, "Tell your students, IF IT'S WORTH DOING IT, IT'S WORTH DOING IT RIGHT, and make that a cornerstone of your own personal and professional values."

It sounds so simple, so trite, so overused, and yet when it is integrated into everything we do, the payoff lifts us to new realms of creative possibilities. If posture is important in developing musical skills, it's worth **doing it right**. If scales are fundamental to mastering the art of music making, it's worth **doing them right**. If proper behavior is a requisite of efficient and effective rehearsals, it's worth **doing it right**. And so it is with every aspect of our year ahead: IF IT'S WORTH DOING IT, IT'S WORTH DOING IT RIGHT.

After many years and countless promotions Colonel Crawford became a much-respected colleague and a close personal friend. Our last time together (prior to his passing) I remember telling him what a profound impact that evening in Whitewater, Wisconsin had on my life and the lives of many of my students, and how thankful I was he had taken the time to spend a few moments with some no-name stranger on a muggy Saturday evening. In his predictable humble style, he quickly deflected the compliment and said, "Tim, don't give it a second thought; I just did what was RIGHT."

"Semper Fi, Colonel Crawford, Semper Fi."

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser is a well-known name in the music education world as a teacher, clinician, author, composer, consultant, adjudicator, and above all, a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence. His own career involves ten years of successful college band directing at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University. Following three years in the music industry, he created Attitude Concepts for Today, an organization that manages workshops, seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the pathway-to-excellence. Tim presently holds the Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer position at Ball State University. Tim is the Executive Director of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc., and he serves as the national spokesperson for MENC's "Make a Difference with Music" program. His books The Art of Successful Teaching, The Joy of Inspired Teaching, Music Advocacy and Student Leadership, and Everyday Wisdom for Inspired Teaching are best sellers. He is co-author of Hal Leonard's popular band method Essential Elements - 2000.