

Pioneer Legends of the Permian Basin

Randy Storie

Jeff Whitaker, Director of Bands at Monahans High School, and I had a wonderful time last summer putting together a clinic honoring the great band directors of West Texas. Due to the quantity of teachers from the Permian Basin, we limited our clinic to directors who were in the Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame. Our clinic, "Pioneer Legends of the Permian Basin" was a very rewarding experience for all involved.



Bill Dean, left and right

We asked Bill J. Dean, J.R. McEntyre, and Dan Gibbs to share their experiences teaching and living in the Permian Basin during the fifties through the eighties.

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to know and watch these gifted gentlemen in action during my career. I grew up in Odessa during the 1960's and was a member of Bill J. Dean's high school band.

Bill Dean

Mr. Dean was born in Sapulpa, Oklahoma. He graduated from Tulsa Central High School in 1942. He went to college at Baylor

University but then left to join the Army in 1943. After World War II, he went back to Baylor and became the band director at Haskell High School in 1950. Mr. Dean came to Odessa in 1953 to become the first assistant band director in West Texas at Odessa High School. He went to Bowie Junior High in 1956 and was



named the band director at Odessa High School in 1959. Bill Dean was a wonderful person and a gifted teacher. In my opinion, he was the finest motivator of young people that has ever existed. His Odessa High School Bands were among the very best anywhere. His bands at OHS marched in 7 nationally televised halftime performances for the Dallas Cowboys in the Cotton Bowl and one for the Dallas

Cowboys when they were the home team in New Orleans against the Saints. His bands won many national festivals: Tri State Music Festival, Six Flags Over Texas, Georgia,



Bill Dean conducts Bowie Jr. High Band

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and St. Louis, and the Mountain States Music Festival in Phoenix. Mr. Dean had the ability to make kids love being in band. He really cared about kids. As band members we truly loved him and were loyal and devoted to him. He directed the OHS Band until 1981 when he became the Director of the Symphonic Band at Texas A&M University. He taught there until he retired in 1988. In retirement Mr. Dean was an active adjudicator, worked with many high school bands and continues to love and be involved with the Texas A&M University Bands. A more extensive biography of his career can be found on the TMEA website. He and his wife Marjorie live in College Station.



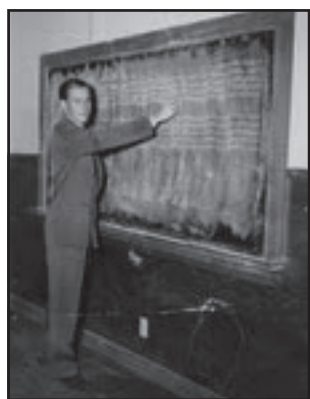
J.R. Entyre



J.R. Entyre as a Drum Major, Odessa HS Band

J.R. McEntyre

Across town at Permian High School, J.R. McEntyre was busy developing the finest band program in the nation. He was born and spent his early years in Sweetwater, Texas. When his family moved to Odessa, Mr. McEntyre played French horn in the OHS Band and was also the Drum Major. After high school he joined the Marines where he served as a paratrooper in World War II. Following the war he attended Texas Tech University. Mr. McEntyre's first position was in the valley of Texas at San Benito where he



J.R. Entyre teaching

worked with Nelson Patrick. In 1950 he moved back to Odessa and opened the new Bowie Junior High School, as well as Bonham Junior High School in 1956, and Permian High School in 1959. The standards of excellence that he developed at Permian created a tradition that has

been unequalled anywhere. He cared so much about his students. In 1962, the Permian band was named as one of the very first Texas Honor Bands and his 1966 band performed in a nationally televised halftime performance for the Los Angeles Rams.

His bands and orchestras won the outstanding award many times at the Buccaneer Music Festival and the Tri State Music Festival. Mr. McEntyre became the Director of Music for the Ector County ISD in 1972 and continued in that position until he retired in 1986. Mr. McEntyre continues to work with bands and teach band directors of all ages how to make music. He is an amazing person. A more extensive biography of his career can be found through the TMEA web site. He and his wife Evelyn reside in Odessa.

Those two gentlemen set goals for themselves and their students that turned Odessa into the greatest band town in America. They were both gifted and master teachers. Their awards and nationally televised performances are too numerous to list. Many of their students have become successful band directors. Even in my own graduating class future band directors included Marcia McEntyre, Dick Clardy, Walter Reneau, Ed Handley, Fred Handley, Rick Miller and me. J.R. McEntyre and Bill J. Dean were fanatics about

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excellence. The pride, dignity, and perfection that they developed through their bands turned their students into outstanding people and citizens.

Building the foundation for Bill Dean and J.R. McEntyre were Wesley C. May and Robert L. Maddox. Wesley C. May grew up in Alpine, TX and went to college at Sul Ross State University. While there, he played trombone and started a dance band. However, Mr. May majored in math because there were no degrees offered in music. Upon graduation, he became a math teacher in Valentine, Texas. Later, he started and developed an outstanding band at Pecos High School in the 1930's. I remember Mr. May telling me how he went to the

Texas Music Teachers Convention in 1935 where he observed William D. Revelli direct a demonstration band performing "Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral." Mr. May went back to Pecos and performed it with the Pecos High School Band. In 1941, Mr. May and his family moved to Odessa at the invitation of Superintendent Murray H. Fly to become the band director at Odessa High School. In Odessa, Wes May developed an outstanding band program. He had some famous students, including J.R. McEntyre. When he left Odessa High School, Mr. May started the first music store between Fort Worth and El Paso. His stores provided a great service to the bands and orchestras of West Texas. It was often at his store that he took many band directors under his tutelage and taught us how to be great teachers. His influence on the band programs in all of Texas lives on today.

Robert L. Maddox came to Odessa in 1946, also being hired by Superintendent Murray Fly. Charles Nail, who was in Mr. Maddox's Odessa High School Band, remembers that the players in that band were

unbelievably outstanding. This is because the students of J.R. McEntyre, Ralph Mills, Bill J. Dean, Ralph Smith, and Gene Smith fed into the Odessa High School Band. Mr. Maddox was a strict disciplinarian.

He was a gentleman and a leader, helping to develop our present University Interscholastic League, Texas Bandmasters Association and Texas Music Educators Association. He directed the OHS Band from 1946 to 1959 and was Music Supervisor in Odessa from 1959 until his retirement in 1972.

The standards of excellence that these men developed in Odessa spread to the area towns, such as Pecos, Kermit, Midland, Fort Stockton, Wink, Big Spring, Monahans, and others.

These bands rose to excellence, making West Texas a haven for outstanding bands in the United States.

**Want to learn
about other legends
in Texas music
education? Make
plans to attend this
summer's convention
and the clinic
"Pioneer Legends of
South Texas"**

Dan Gibbs

Dan Gibbs came to Monahans for his first job in 1958. Pulling into town with his wife, he thought he was only going to stay for one year. Dan and Shirley Gibbs have now been in Monahans for 53 years. Staying in Monahans to develop and maintain a great band program is the key to their success. Under his direction, the Monahans Band was selected as the TMEA Honor Band in 1972 and 1976. His



Monahans Band - Dan Gibbs, Director

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band marched several nationally televised Dallas Cowboys halftime performances and was the first band to march at Texas Stadium in October 1972, with President Lyndon Johnson, Lady Bird, and Mamie Eisenhower in attendance. Mr. Gibbs is now retired from teaching, though he continues to judge and help bands throughout Texas, and owns and operates the Dan Gibbs Insurance Agency.

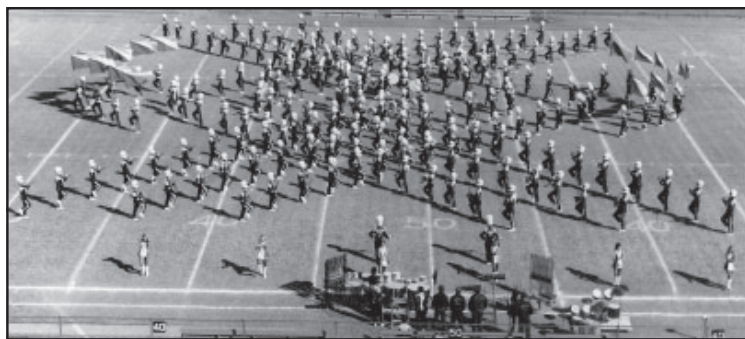


Monahans Band - Dan Gibbs, Director

He also directs the music for the First Baptist Church in Monahans. A more extensive biography of Dan's career can be found on the TMEA web site.

These "Pioneer Legends" of the Permian Basin were committed to staying with their programs for years to develop excellence in their bands. Inspired by their example, Don Hanna (Fort Stockton), G.T. Gilligan (Kermit), Bill Carrico (Pecos), Gene Smith,

W.A. Tony Anderson (Midland), Doug Wiehe (Big Spring), and many others took what was happening in Odessa and developed wonderful band programs throughout the Permian Basin. We are fortunate to have had trail blazers like J.R. McEntyre, Bill Dean, and Dan Gibbs to guide the way, as well as set a standard to forever strive for in Texas.



Monahans Band - Dan Gibbs, Director

Randy Storie is currently in his 31st year as the Director of Bands at Robert E. Lee High School in Midland, Texas. He has taught in Texas public schools for 40 years. Mr. Storie graduated from Odessa High School. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from West Texas State University. He has done post graduate work at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. Mr. Storie has taught in Plano, Fort Stockton, and Midland.

While at Lee, Mr. Storie's bands have set the pace for high school bands in West Texas. The Lee band has been awarded first division ratings in every contest they have participated under Mr. Storie's leadership. The bands have performed at the Mid-West Clinic in Chicago, Carnegie Hall, the Tournament of Roses Parade, Hawaii and many other places throughout the country. The Lee Band has been awarded the John Phillip Sousa Sudler Flag of Honor in 1992 and has performed at three Presidential Inaugural Parades including those for Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush. In January of 1995 and 1999 the band performed in the Texas Gubernatorial Inaugural Parade.

During Mr. Storie's tenure at Lee High School, 219 of his students have been named to the Texas All-State Band and Orchestra. A large number of his students have gone into music careers.

Mr. Storie has served as vice president of the band division of TMEA, was inaugurated a member of Phi Beta Mu and American Bandmaster's Association and awarded the Bandworld's Legion of Honor. At the Western International Band Clinic in Seattle, Mr. Storie was presented the National Band Association's Citation of Excellence Award. The Lee High School Band and Randy Storie were selected TBA's "Texas Exemplary Band Program for 2007."