

# From the Board

## Jeff King, 2015-16 TBA President Elect



My wife Leslie and I recently moved to another house in Duncanville, a whole 2.2 miles away. Just like our previous two houses that we owned, we planted a Shumard Red Oak tree when we moved in. For us, planting a tree seemed like the right thing to do to establish a home. The Shumard Red Oak is considered one of the biggest species of oak trees. When I drive by our previous houses, I find myself staring at how big and beautiful that these trees have become. I guess I am kind of a “tree guy”.

Outside the capital building in Sacramento, CA, there is a 40-acre park filled with gardens, including 1140 trees representing over 200 types of trees. Obviously, this is a pretty cool place to visit for a “tree guy”. It was here that I saw my first Sequoia tree. What an amazing tree. The metaphors one can draw from the Sequoia are too numerous to include in this article, but I would like to touch on one that relates to our profession.

The Sequoia tree is an extremely well balanced tree that relies on a complex intertwining of roots with other trees. They can survive in less than three feet of soil by spreading their roots far from the tree, up to 300 feet. Much like our profession, I cannot imagine my past, present or future without the help and support of so many people. My personal support system has come from students, parents, educators, colleagues, family, friends, administrators, and other musicians across Texas and the U.S. Early on in my career, I learned to ask questions and seek out the best people for information and guidance. The most successful band directors that I know are always willing to share their knowledge. Their knowledge came from other great teachers and people; so our “root” system is endless.

Just like the Sequoia’s root system, our Texas Music Education System has numerous “roots” that begin with our professional organizations such as UIL, TMEA, TMAA and TBA. Having attended many state

conventions across the U.S., I can tell you that Texas is the leader in music education and this is due in large part to these professional organizations. The support system and structure of these organizations provide us the opportunity and foundation to become the best teachers that we can be.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines support system as: *A network of personal or professional contacts available to a person for practical or emotional support.*

Even before I became a TBA board member, one of my favorite events to attend at TBA was the annual business luncheon. Not only did I get a free lunch, but I enjoyed listening to the Bandmaster of the Year speech. Hearing the TBA Bandmaster of the Year speak always inspired me and made me realize how many great band directors there are across the State of Texas that I did not know. In the past five years, I have also enjoyed attending the ceremony of band directors being inducted into the Phi Beta Mu Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame. <http://www.pbmalpha.org/pbmhalloffame.php> Getting to know the history of

some of the great band directors in our profession is both inspirational and essential for our continued growth. I encourage you all to attend these events and find out from these highly esteemed band directors what they know and find out more about their support system.

In addition to moving in August, I accepted a position as Director of Fine Arts & Enrichment for the Irving ISD. In this position, I am responsible for band, choir, orchestra, elementary music, mariachi, visual arts, theater arts, dance, cheerleading and physical education, grades K-12. Talk about a

big “root” system.

In the past four months, I have been involved with all of the above areas. I have had the opportunity to see

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great teachers teach to their strengths. Great teaching and creativity is the same no matter what area you are teaching. I challenge you to seek out the best teachers in your school or district and find out what works for these successful teachers. There may be an English, choir, math teacher or coach who teaches near you that has an effective way to communicate and inspire students. Find out what works for them and apply it to your situation. This network of quality teaching can only make us stronger.

As I write this article with less than one week to Thanksgiving, I am thankful for all of the people in my life that have and continue to make me a better person, educator and administrator. I feel honored and thankful to be serving on the TBA Board. I hope that you take some time for yourself and your family over the holidays and remember why we do what we do and be thankful for all the people who support you. I look forward to seeing you at the next convention—The Midwest Clinic, TMEA and/or TBA.