

TBA Bandmaster of the Year 2016

Bob Parsons

Bob Parsons retired in 2002 after a thirty-five year career as a Texas band director. He served most recently as the head director at West Ridge Middle School in the Eanes ISD in Austin. His career spans three decades of active involvement in music education in Texas, having taught in widely different types of schools: rural schools both small and large—New Diana and Jacksonville in East Texas, an urban private school—Bishop Dunne High School in Dallas. Bob was an assistant director at Richardson High School and a middle school director at West Ridge Middle School in the Eanes ISD in Austin.

After a year's study in linguistics in Germany, Bob accepted a last-minute appointment as director at the Class A New Diana High School in 1967. Bob had majored in history and German at the University of Texas and is grateful for the help he received from local directors and friends at Tatum Music Company to help him get started as a band director. His band made their first Sweepstakes in 1970.

He accepted an invitation to start a band at Bishop Dunne High School, where the band was a consistent First Division performer in the Texas Catholic Interscholastic League. Bishop Dunne players soon took a number of places in TMEA region bands and eventually the Texas All-State Bands and Orchestra. In 1977 the band won the National Tape Contest of the National Catholic Bandmasters Association. In November of 2012 the school board named the renovated band hall after him.

Bob broadened his experience in a larger program in a move to the Richardson district as Scott Taylor's assistant in 1978, and then back to East Texas to follow Val Rose in Jacksonville in 1979. In Jacksonville Mr. Parsons'



high school band was a state Honor Band finalist three times, and in 1986, his Jacksonville Band performed as the Texas Honor Band in Class AAAA at the annual convention of the Texas Music Educators Association. During his tenure the band was also selected as the outstanding band in its class at several music festivals in Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee, as well as Texas.

The West Ridge Middle School Symphonic Band fared extremely well in concert band events, placing in the top ten in three consecutive appearances in the Texas Honor Band competition. The West Ridge Symphonic Band earned numerous First Divisions in Texas' UIL competition, and his bands were named best-in-class at numerous spring festivals.

Mr. Parsons is active as a clinician and adjudicator and has conducted numerous region bands and honor groups. He has served in several offices of TMEA and has also served on special committees of the UIL. In May of 1991 he was named to the Legion of Honor by the John Philip Sousa Foundation. He is a member of Phi Beta Mu and is a charter member of the Texas Music Adjudicators Association. In 1993 he was elected to the TBA Board of Directors and served as President of the association in 1998.

At the 2005 meeting of the TBA in San Antonio, he received the Meritorious Achievement Award, and in 2006 he was elected a member of the American Bandmasters Association. In 2012 he was inducted into the Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame.

Bob is so grateful to the many, many friends, colleagues, and mentors who have helped him enjoy a wonderful career and life as a Texas band director. He is also proud of the many students who have maintained a love and interest in music as performers, teachers, and listeners.

Since his retirement in 2002 he has maintained an active schedule of clinics and judging in the spring and has taught private lessons in middle schools near his home. His wife Nell, known as *Funny* to family and friends, has remained a loving and loyal supporter for nearly fifty years. They are very proud of their three children—Emily, Susan and her fiancé Bryce Kearney, and John and daughter-in-law Brigitte, all of whom are enjoying successful career paths of their own.