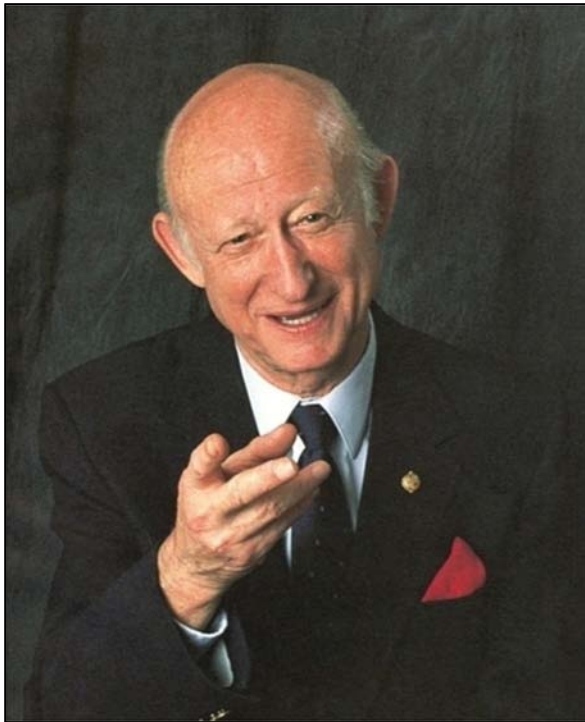


In Memory of a Legend

Dr. William Francis McBeth

March 9, 1933 – January 6, 2012



Although born in Ropesville, Texas in 1933, a man who developed a love for cowboys, cattle, cars and music, Dr. McBeth was nonetheless a true Arkansas diamond. McBeth attended Hardin-Simmons University and played in the Cowboy Band in Abilene, Texas where he was presented the Presley Award for outstanding bandsman at Hardin-Simmons. He served in the military from 1954 to 1956 with the 101st Airborne Band and 98th Army Band. His works led to many appearances as a guest conductor, where he often directed premiere performances of his compositions. Dr. McBeth's conducting activities have taken him to forty-nine states, three Canadian provinces, Japan, and Australia. His "Double Pyramid Balance System" is a widely used pedagogical tool in the concert band world. Dr. William Clark from New Mexico State University said, "I learned the tone of the wind band is developable, you can change it, you can make it better. He gave me and thousands of others the tools to make the band sound much more palatable, much more flexible, artistic."

Dr. McBeth served as Professor of Music and Resident Composer at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas from 1957 to 1996. The most outstanding of his awards have been the Presley Award at Hardin-Simmons University, the Howard Hanson Prize at the Eastman School of Music for his *THIRD SYMPHONY*, recipient of an ASCAP Special Award each consecutive year from 1965 to the present, the American School Band Directors Association's Edwin Franko Goldman Award, elected Fellow of the American Wind and Percussion Artists by the National Band Association, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia's American Man of Music in 1988, Kappa Kappa Psi's National Service to Music Award, Mid-West International Band and Orchestra Clinic's Medal of Honor in 1993, and Past President of the American Bandmasters Association. Dr. McBeth was music director of the Arkansas Symphony in Little Rock, and in 1975, he was appointed Composer Laureate of the State of Arkansas by the Governor. His greatest treasures, however, were his dear wife Mary, son Matt, and daughter Laura. Then came the in-laws and grandchildren – he loved them all!

Dr. McBeth established himself as one of the preeminent composers in the field of music for wind band, producing a body of work which is internationally recognized as among the finest of its kind. And...we had him right here with us, as a regular guy at Arkansas music events. President Bill Clinton played tenor saxophone in the 1962 Arkansas All-State Band which McBeth conducted. ASBOA commissioned McBeth to write 'Grace Praeludium' to honor the many years of faithful, selfless service of Raymond and Ruth Brandon. That piece was premiered at the 1982 Arkansas All-State Band Concert under his direction. So many students fondly remember the 1994 All-State experience with Dr. McBeth which also included a second concert in June at the national ASBDA Convention that was held in Hot Springs.

We will continue to be able to play, conduct and listen to his amazing music. We will remember the incredible times we were able to share with him. One minute telling us about exciting and beautiful music or how to improve the sound of our bands – the next telling a funny story. Everyone was his friend – he genuinely loved people! The world lost an extraordinary musician – Arkansas lost a friend. How blessed we were to have crossed paths. Heaven is a little richer now.