

## **Tennessee ACDA Honors David Spencer with Lifetime Achievement Award**

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July 26, 2008

Anyone who heard a David Spencer choir knows his effectiveness as a musician and conductor. In some 30+ years of teaching HS his choirs received local, regional, state and national honors. They performed at numerous conferences and special events, and always upheld the highest standards. His students were always very successful in All State and Governor's School auditions. Some have gone on to become successful musicians teachers in their own right. It is no wonder that he was selected as a state evaluator of music teachers in the career ladder development program.

In addition to his success in the classroom and concert stage and as a church musician, David served the greater music community through professional and community organizations. An Active TMEA and ACDA member, he has frequently served in leadership service positions with these organizations. Knowing of his long service as state treasurer for TNACDA, I asked David to take on that role with MTVA. With his help, that organization went from shaky financial circumstances to record growth and solid financials. He has chaired numerous events, not the least of which is the founding of the state choral festival, which he continues to help guide.

On a personal level, let me speak to David as mentor and model. When I first heard David's groups at Overton early in my career, my emotion could best be described as jealous. They sang quality literature, were always impeccable in their tuning, and basically everything I wanted my groups to be, but were not. Then as I gradually got to know him and observed his program more closely, I realized it was not a matter of superior talent in his students or incredible support by his school, but his absolute commitment to excellence. He displayed a passion for the music that taught his students that just "good enough" was NOT good enough. My groups became better when we applied the standards of technique and attention to detail that David did in his rehearsals. David taught me to be more selective in the quality of literature we sang, which directly affected our musicality. He raised the standard for all of us in choral music and made us better.

In his "retirement" David has remained a force for the advancement of the choral art. He is that rare commodity that all teachers need, and seldom find - a friend that will tell you the truth. David comes not only to my rehearsals, but to many other schools on a voluntary basis and provides the invaluable service of critiquing and acting as a clinician to our choirs. It's easy to find people who tell you nice things about your ensembles. David, is willing to encourage, always praising the good, but also sharing his ideas on ways that it can be better. His candor has benefited my students, and helped me grow professionally. He has coached many young (and some not so young) directors in how to be more effective as conductors and teachers of singing.

It is my distinct honor to present to David the first Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Tennessee-ACDA.

Robert King  
Fine Arts Director  
David Lipscomb Campus School