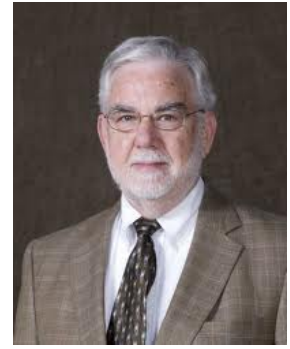


Thoughts and Personal Experiences with Jerry Warren
by David Spencer, June, 2010



Dr. Jerry Warren came to Nashville the same year I began my teaching career in the Metro-Nashville Public Schools – 1969. Jerry came from Shorter College to Belmont; and I came from Trevecca Nazarene College to Nashville Central High School. He was the choral director at Shorter; I taught voice at Trevecca. It was in these two capacities, conductor & singer, that Jerry & I would be associated over the next 40 years.

Not long after coming to Nashville, Jerry founded the Belmont Chorale, and that choir is still the premier choral ensemble at Belmont University today. Jerry also reached out to the area high schools with an annual Invitational Chamber Choir Festival. Each year, some of Tennessee's finest high school choirs came together to sing for each other, and be critiqued by a nationally known choral clinician. Under Jerry's leadership, Belmont also hosted the meetings and festivals of the Middle Tennessee Vocal Association for many years. At times, Jerry himself would serve as an adjudicator and clinician

I also got to know Jerry Warren as a singer. For about three years, Jerry and I were among the 8 paid soloists in the choir at First Presbyterian Church, Nashville. Under Organist-Choirmaster, Henry Fusner, in addition to regular services, we performed 2 major works each year. One year, Henry chose the Medieval drama, **The Play of Daniel**, and I still remember how splendid Jerry was in the principal role of Daniel.

At this point, I had known Jerry as a mentor & fellow soloist, but, now I was to know Jerry as a choir dad. In my 2nd year at John Overton High School, I found on my choir roster a young man by the name of John Warren. At first, I did not realize that John was Jerry's youngest son. Needless to say, it was a pleasure to have Jerry's son in my Overton choir for 3 years. I know Jerry had to be proud that in John's senior year he was the baritone soloist in our performance of the Faure **Requiem**. (Now, John is the Director of Choral Activities at Syracuse University.)

I became a life member of ACDA in 1975, and Jerry was one of the leaders of the Tennessee chapter. In 1981, he was elected president of TN ACDA, and in 1983 he hosted the National ACDA convention in Nashville. Nashville turned out to be so popular as a convention site that 3 years later they asked Jerry to host the ACDA Southern Division convention. It became apparent to me that Jerry possessed exceptional organizational skills. Both conventions were extremely successful. In 2004, Jerry once again served the Southern Division by chairing the division convention that was held in Nashville.

Jerry continued to play an important leadership role in ACDA at both the Division and National levels. From 2001 to 2007, he served the 6 year cycle of Southern Div. Leadership as Pres.-Elect, President, and Vice President. Immediately after that, Jerry was tapped to serve as the ACDA Interim National Executive Dir. (2007-08). There could not have been a more perfect choice for one to lead ACDA during the search for a permanent replacement for long-time Dir. Gene Brooks, who had recently passed away. How proud we were in Tennessee that our own Jerry Warren was to lead our beloved ACDA through a tough period. We KNEW ACDA was in good hands.

In 1997, Jerry founded a new Semi-Professional choral ensemble that he named Bella Voci, which would be in residence at Belmont. From 2003-06, I sang several concerts with Belle Voce. This is one relationship I had never had with Jerry. He was now **my** choir director. Singing with Belle Voce was a blast. Jerry was so good with this group of very excellent singers. There was detailed score preparation,

attention to detail, and a wonderful sense of musicality that I really appreciated.

Jerry has impacted my life in so many ways. As mentor, choir dad, fellow singer, conducting colleague, choral educator, ACDA leader, my choir director, encourager, and supporter, and, most importantly, personal friend, I have been blessed to have had the privilege of knowing Jerry Warren.

For years and years, at any & every occasion that ACDA met, Jerry Warren was always there. You could count on it, and you could count on him. In fact, it occurs to me that that is what ACDA loves about Jerry Warren, and one reason TN ACDA is presenting him with our Lifetime Achievement Award today.....**You can count on him!**

Thank you, Jerry, for everything.