



## Far Western District

### Convention Honoree

### Elliot "El" Wirt - 1999 FWD Fall Convention Honoree



Elliot "El" Wirt has been a barbershopper for nearly 50 years. A Berkeley, California, native, El has resided in cities stretching from Oregon to Virginia and has been a member of numerous chapters and quartets. In 1950, following his first assignment the U.S. Navy, El remained in the San Francisco area, joined the Berkeley Chapter and began his legend of barbershop history. El became a member of the Mellow Bellow Four and earned a fifth place quartet medal in the District contest in 1951. Upon the outbreak of the Korean conflict, he re-enlisted in the Navy and was stationed in Virginia where he joined the Alexandria Chapter and Confederate Notes quartet. During his affiliation with the Chapter, they were "invited" to the first Society Chorus contest in Detroit in 1953. Return to Berkeley in 1954, he joined the Uncalled Four and promptly earned a District third place medal in 1954 and a fifth place medal in 1955. In 1956, the Berkeley Chorus competed in the Society Chorus contest in Minneapolis where El reverently sang with Society Founder, O.C. Cash.

Shortly thereafter, El moved to San Jose where he became a teacher at San Jose Junior College (San Jose City College), joined the San Jose Chapter and fervently instituted his tenure as a tireless and giving barbershopper. In 1957 he returned to the Berkeley

Chapter for a brief time, went to the International Chorus contest in Los Angeles and came home with a first-place chorus GOLD medal. He became the San Jose Chapter Historian in 1963 and joined the Old Time Harmony Four quartet in 1964. Quartet singing was clearly "in his Blood," as he sang with the quartet for 10 years! In 1967 and 1971, he was a Chapter Board member, then served as Chapter President in 1975, and was named Chapter Delegate to the District in 1976. His busy schedule prevailed, so he "bowed out" of quartetting until 1981 when he joined the Fancy Dans (who toured New Zealand for one month), with whom he sang for three years. Subsequent to his previous quartets, El sang with the Kitchen Table Four and the Fault Finders.

Some of his innumerable honors include: Chapter Bulletin Editor of the San Jose "Pitch" (1987-1989); being selected the District Bulletin Editor of the Year in 1988; Barbershopper of the Year (1989); and being inducted into the San Jose Chapter "Hall of Fame" (1993). District level citations include District Historian from 1990 to 1999 and the Far Western District President's Award in 1997. El's hobby of being an amateur Ham Radio operator has also prevailed in his barbershop hobby by being incorporated for the use in dispatching vans during the San Jose contest in 1989. This hobby also helped him pioneer the use of a "special event" station at the 1990 International contest in San Francisco.

El's passion for barbershop singing is certainly indisputable. His sovereign dedication to the Society, District, and Chapter will always be valued and his achievements will always be treasured.