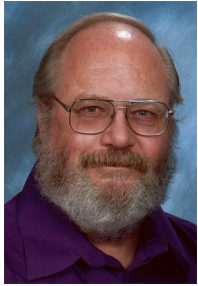


## ***Keith Eckhardt, Convention Honoree***



Keith was born in Portland, OR, where he developed a love for fishing and spent many of his days at the local creek. When he was ten his father's job took the family to San Jose, CA. During high school he delighted in amateur radio, amateur rocketry and other chemical (mis)adventures, explored old mines, and twice won the county teen driving contest.

He attended San Jose State College for a year where he concluded that college didn't meet his needs to feel productive and left to join IBM. He spent eight years working with customers as a software consultant and finally as a salesman where he qualified for the 100% Club. For the next 25 years at IBM he was a programmer or manager in various IBM development laboratories including 18 months in Boeblingen, Germany. In the 1980's he was part of the IBM PC organization as an application program architect and a software development manager. After 33 years with IBM he retired as a Sr. Programmer and joined a startup company as the Executive Vice President. In 2005 he retired to his other job, barbershop.

Keith and Lorraine have been married for 45 years and live in Pollock Pines, CA, near South Lake Tahoe. Their three children and two grandchildren live in Monterey County where they plan to move to in the near future.

Keith understands that he started his singing "career" at age three by singing a solo in Sunday School, but personal memory is lacking here. At fourteen his church choir director told him he was now singing in the choir and Keith said "No, I'm not", but the response of "OH YES YOU ARE!" left no option and Keith has been singing ever since. At twenty he joined an a cappella men's chorus called the Christian Collegians that performed widely in Northern California. This group sang one song from the SPEBSQSA publishing company and it took Keith another 25 years to discover it was a membership society.

In September 1993 Keith and Lorraine moved to Placerville, CA, where he submitted his membership application at his first barbershop chapter meeting. Over the next 16 years he has held many chapter jobs including President, Music and Performance VP, Marketing and PR VP, Librarian, and acting Membership VP. In 1999 he was the Placerville chapter BOTY and Placerville was the 2003 Chapter of the Year when he was president. Keith was in a series of chapter quartets, including one with their son Kirk. Keith's favorite quartet name was for a senior quartet called Out Of Warrantly. Keith considers Valentine's Day the best barbershop day of each year.

In 2001 Keith approached FWD Webmaster Tom McGorray to see if he could be an assistant webmaster. Tom agreed and a short time later Tom suggested that Keith take over as webmaster. Keith is extremely grateful to Tom for his initiative in creating the district website.

The webmaster job kindled Keith's interest in district activities. He was especially disappointed at district conventions to not be very involved in hallway singing. To support this he created the Yes, I'll Sing With You buttons that raised over \$2200 for YMIH. Twice he ran the IQ (I Quartet) sticker event that gets men singing. For his efforts Keith was given the 2002 FWD President's Award. In 2003 he presented a plan to the FWD board to add activities to the conventions. A few weeks later he was appointed as chairman of making it happen at the 2003 Fall Convention. Keith continues in these positions and also on the Long Range Planning Committee. Along the way Keith discovered the forgotten Bachelor Of Harmony award and created an online method to apply for it. Over 130 men have already earned this award for leadership.

When Westunes was reduced to four issues a year, Keith initiated the monthly online eNews newsletter that focuses on future events. Keith has also been the Harmony College West Webmaster and Administrator for several years. Last Spring he got approval to award trophies to the Division College Quartet champs and helped prepare a College Promotion Plan which was approved by the board. Recently he has been working with the society ebiz team to improve the ebiz website.

Keith plans to do some ocean fishing after their move. With two sons and a son-in-law that all sing well, you just might one day hear an Eckhardt Family Quartet.

The Far Western District is fortunate to have Keith among our members and it is our pleasure to honor him at the 2009 Spring Convention in Las Vegas.