



Far Western District

Convention Honoree

Gene Clements – 2014 FWD Spring Convention Honoree

Just the facts, in the words of Gene Clements: (ed.)

1967: Charter member of a new Mid-Atlantic District (MAD) chapter in Frederick, MD. Chorus: CATOCTONES...this was the start of my love of barbershop. Subsequently, I became Assistant Musical Director, then Director for 5 years. Served on the Board of Directors (BOD) as Vice President, then President and received the Barbershopper of the Year award (BOTY) for that. Held various other responsibilities such as show chairman. The 1976 Bi-centennial show was my "pride."

1970: Became interim director for a newly chartered Sweet Adelines International (SAI) chapter in Frederick. Chorus: Heart of Maryland. Served as "interim" director for 10 years, Region 14, I believe, and won the small chorus championship.



In November 1980 I moved back to Mission Viejo, California. Joined the then Santa Ana GOLDEN CITY CHORUS and became its Musical Director for 5 years in 1981, succeeding Bill Harper. Proud that Brett Littlefield joined the chapter / chorus while I was directing and "taught him everything he knows" (grin). NOTE: The Santa Ana Chapter folded in the early nineties and was relocated and renamed the WESTMINSTER CHAPTER / CHORUS, a very small group that was later latched onto by a bunch of young guys who ultimately brought it International recognition.

Circa 1983, I became the Musical Director of the SAI Garden Grove chapter, "Cities of Harmony" for 3 years or so and placed 6th in Region 21, circa 1985. Proud that Pam Pieson, Lead of PANACHE / Director of HARBORLITES, joined while I was directing. It was also in 1983 that my wife and soul mate, Wanda, was singing with the Mission Viejo SAI chapter and won an International third place chorus medal in Phoenix; our family's first chorus medal.

In November 1987, desperately wanting a more broad and more meaningful singing experience, I attended the first rehearsal / gathering of the then Foothills Cities Chapter under the direction of DR. GREG LYNE. I joined the MASTERS OF HARMONY (MOH) in December 1987 and we won the FWD chorus competition in October 1988 (In 1971, at the New Orleans International, I vowed to my family that I would one day sing on the International stage and I knew it would now happen.). The MOH went to its first International in Kansas City in 1989 and placed 4th. A medal! Wow! Now, I proudly own eight (8) International Chorus gold medals. Who wudda ever thought!

I've been with MOH for 25 wonderful years. In that span, I've served the chapter in various capacities such as Employment Manager, Business Agent, mentor to new men, awards committee member, nomination committee member and Instructor in vocal techniques for Masters University. Though asked to serve on the MOH BOD several times, I declined. I just wanted to sing. I didn't want to be "tied up" in chapter administrative activities. However, during those years, I did serve as Musical Director and coach for the then Saddleback chapter, California Promise Chorus, during a reorganization period and had also coached choruses and quartets.

Circa 1994, I was asked, and accepted, to become an Area Counselor and was awarded Area Counselor of the year in 1996. I became more active in the Chapter Support and Leadership Training program and was again honored by the FWD as Chapter Counselor of the Year in 2003.

Several years ago, I was contacted by both Lloyd Steinkamp and John Krizek to become a FWD BOD member. I declined, as I just wanted to sing and not be "tied up" in FWD administrative activities. They contacted me again the following year and being "pressured in a friendly way" by Unka Lloyd, I agreed to serve my district and was elected to the BOD as a Division Vice-President for (now) the Southeast Division. I served in that capacity for four years, declining to serve my fifth year for family reasons. I also served on the FWD's Nomination Committee. During my Vice-Presidency, and after, I had the pleasure of installing officers for many, many chapters and providing guidance on sensitive chapter and membership challenges when asked or deemed necessary.

I've truly had a wonderful barbershopping life.

Gene