



# The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association

VOL. VIII NUMBER 1 OCTOBER, 2006

## A Word From the President



Greetings from the plains!

And so it was that the presidency returned to the little village on the plains... It seems somewhat surreal to be sitting here at midnight on a Tuesday evening in the middle of August, typing a note to the many men and women of the AKA that I have grown to admire

and respect so much throughout these many years. For days I have struggled to find the perfect words to describe the feelings of gratitude and honor that fill my heart as I embark on this two-year journey as your devoted servant and president. I've decided however, (due in part to a pressing publication date) that witty rhetoric isn't going to get me very far with guys like Means around to keep me honest. I simply thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I assure you I will do everything within my power to help preserve the great traditions of our organization, and I'm looking forward to meeting the many challenges I am certain will come my way.

If you were unable to attend the reunion this past July, you missed another incredible weekend of music and memories. A special thank you is in order to the management and staff of

the Marriott for the first class accommodations and hospitality they show us each year. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Craig, Judy, Sally, Ann, Shirley, Mimi, Martha, and Helen for their dedication to the organization, and their dependable assistance at the registration table. You all truly help to make the weekend a great success. Of course we all owe Charlie Higgins a great debt of gratitude for his relentless efforts and passionate desire to make each Knights reunion a pleasurable and memorable experience for all those in attendance.

As usual, all of the era bands were unique and incredible in their own special ways, and the current band gave another outstanding performance Saturday night. If you haven't heard these young cats in a few years you are really missing out. It seems each year the band attempts to outdo the previous year's performance in some way, and this reunion was no exception. A powerhouse of vocal jazz greeted listeners at Saturday night's performance. Eric Johnson brought down the house with an arrangement of "Rock This Town," made famous by The Brian Setzer Orchestra, and Dorsey Tippet's angelic voice melted all our hearts with her rendition of "Over the Rainbow." It is truly inspiring to know there is still great jazz being taught to and performed by such young individuals despite all the NOISE we hear on the radio!

Make plans NOW to join us next July 27th and 28th, 2007. I guarantee it will be a weekend you'll never forget!

Yours in music,

Mark A. Belfast, Jr., President

AKAA 🎵

## Get Happy!

The 1959-60 Auburn Knights "Happy" LP album, now in digitally remastered CD form, is available. This particular band, featuring players such as Dave Edwards, Teeny Mahaffey, Herb Edwards, Frank Butenschoen, Harold Alexander, Norm Boldin, Dale Mann, Bobby Boettcher, Bob Collins, Bob Mayfield, Bud Goodrick, Sonny Harris, Toni Tennille, was a 50s band that crossed the dateline on 1/1/60. The '59-'60 band was a continuation of the great 50s era which produced some of the best bands in the AK history, and this band was the band that brought together all the drive and training that had been developing throughout the mid- to late '50s.

If anyone would like to order or reorder, please contact Mary Kate Gach. The CD is \$15, plus \$2.50 shipping and handling, with all proceeds going to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Mary Kate's contact information is:

Mary Kate Gach  
P.O. Box 130242  
Birmingham, AL 35213

Note: Make checks payable to Mary Kate Gach. 🎵



## James A. Taylor

James A. "J. T." Taylor passed away on May 22, 2006. J.T. played trumpet with the Auburn Knights in the late 40's and early 50's, and is remembered as one of the band's great lead trumpet players.

When notable touring shows like those of Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra came to town, J.T. was often tapped as the lead trumpeter. He played principal trumpet for Albert Coleman's Atlanta Pops Orchestra. From 1953 to 1960 he was trumpeter with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, playing for such conductors as Igor Stravinsky and Sir John Barbirolli. He was on call when the Metropolitan Opera came to town and was a regular with the dance bands of Fred DeLand, a pianist for Tommy Dorsey.

A memorial scholarship fund has been set up in his name. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send donations to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805. Checks should be made out to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund. Be sure to designate on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of Jimmy Taylor.

## Betty Caldwell

Betty Caldwell, an associate member of the AKA and the mother of Kyle Caldwell Mann, passed away on May 4, 2006. She was a huge Auburn Knights fan, who attended reunions faithfully while Kyle was on the band, as well as throughout later years. While Kyle was on the band (1979-1983), Betty served as a hostess to all the guys, housing them and feeding them on numerous occasions when they had gigs in Birmingham. Anyone who was on the band during that time will remember her fondly. She had other friends in the Knights, as well. Prior to her passing, Betty had just turned 80. She grew up in the Big Band era and was a musician herself, so she truly loved and appreciated the music of the AKO.

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to the scholarship fund in her name, please send donations to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805. Checks should be made out to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund. Be sure to designate on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of Betty Caldwell.

## Henry Vaughan, Jr.

Henry Vaughan passed away on August 11, 2006. Henry attended Selma High School and the University of Alabama, where he graduated with a Master's Degree in Business Administration. At the University he played trumpet with the UA Marching Band and served as assistant Band Master. He also played with the Alabama Cavaliers Dance Band and the Auburn Knights. During World War II, Henry was a B-24 bomber pilot in the Army Air Force, stationed in England. After the war, he returned to Selma and became a partner with the accounting firm of Furniss-Vaughan and Company. He also served as President of the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants.

A memorial scholarship fund has been set up in his name. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send donations to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805. Checks should be made out to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund. Be sure to designate on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of Henry Vaughan.

## Dorothy Irvine

Dorothy Irvine, wife of Paul Irvine, passed away on July 31, 2006. Dorothy trained as a registered nurse in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, then went on to work as a nurse in hospitals in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York. She was a member of the staff that opened North Carolina Memorial Hospital at the University of North Carolina in 1952, and it was there that she met Paul. Most recently she worked at Carol Woods Retirement Community in Chapel Hill. Dorothy was an active and valuable volunteer at UNC Hospice for the past ten years. She spent her life caring for others.

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to the scholarship fund in her name, please send donations to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805. Checks should be made out to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund. Be sure to designate on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of Dorothy Irvine.



## Mary Earle Ogletree

Mary Earle Ogletree passed away on July 22, 2006. Mary Earle was the widow of French Ogletree, and sang with the Auburn Knights at a number of reunions past. She attended the University of Alabama and was a vocalist with the Alabama Cavaliers. She was also a recorded vocalist throughout the south and was inducted into the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame in 1994.

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to the scholarship fund in her name, please send donations to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805. Checks should be made out to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund. Be sure to designate on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of Mary Earle Ogletree.

## Celia Higgins

Celia Higgins, the wife of Charlie Higgins, passed away on July 23, 2006. For many years, Celia was a faithful “table lady,” volunteering her time at the registration table for reunions. She will be greatly missed.

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to the scholarship fund in her name, please send donations to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805. Checks should be made out to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund. Be sure to designate on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of Celia Higgins.

## A Note from Charlie Higgins

To Judy, Sally, Ann, Shirley, Mimi, Martha, Helen, Ernie, Barbara and Craig:

I regret that I could not spend more time with all of you at the registration desk – it was a difficult time for me.

Please know how grateful I am for **all** that you do at the reunion – we simply could not function without your help.

You are all a **great** group, and I (along with Celia) have certainly enjoyed working with you over many years, and I appreciate the words of kindness and sympathy extended to me.

The AKAAs owe you its profound **thanks** for your dedication, continued work and effort.

I deeply appreciate all that Craig did with you during the Reunion!

I look forward to resuming my partnership with all of you next year, and I am requesting that Lyle Johnson consider this note in the next issue of *The Bridge*, with a great **thanks** from the entire AKAAs organization. 🎵

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