

## John H. Pearson (1929 - 2019)



PEARSON, John H. John H. Pearson 1929-2019 We do so seldom take the time to say, Simple words of gratitude and admiration each day, A great wisdom and life you lived, as a legacy it has been given if we dare; We can only thank you for this

day that we've enjoyed (the many lessons!) That we can cherish and employ. Thank you for your love, your life and your past- That on this great rock, may we our lives cast! May the best of worlds find you, as our world at its best bids you sweetly adieu (baby grey-blues/Hullabaloo!). John Pearson's deep love and passion for music was always an important part of his life. He played cornet and as a 5th grader began marching in his high school band. After high school, John joined the Air Force and continued his music in the military service. For the next seven years, he was stationed overseas, in Washington D.C., and in Hawaii, as part of the "Air Force Band of the West", while stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. During his time in the service, he was a member of the concert and marching band, the "Singing Sergeants", the "Tune Pilots Jazz Ensemble," and the "Symphony in Blue". Upon being discharged, John attended St. Mary's University in San Antonio on a full scholarship. When he graduated, he was appointed head band director at MacArthur High School in San Antonio, Texas, a position that he held for 17 years. During this time, he also earned a Masters of Music Degree from The [University of Texas](#) at Austin and an Administrator's Certificate from Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. John was appointed to the position of Coordinator of Instrumental Music for the Austin public schools (AISD) in 1973. John met with the superintendent, Jack Davison, and asked, "How good a music program do you want?" Mr. Davidson replied, "The best you can build." Jack Davison gave John the authority and responsibility to hire all music teachers in the district. In his second year at AISD, the schools desegregated, and, with the help of a dedicated staff, John was able to build a program of which all music students were proud. The All-City Junior and Senior High School program for bands, choirs and orchestras, and the All-City High School Jazz Ensemble (which he directed for 15 years) were initiated. The All-City Festivals contributed immensely to the improvement of each individual school music group. For many years, Austin had more band, choir, and orchestra

students than any other school district in the area. Mr. Pearson credited the outstanding students and faculty at AISD. John served his profession and colleagues in other capacities as well: President of the National Association of Jazz Educators (Texas Unit), Southwest Coordinator for the National Association of Jazz Educators, President of Texas Music Administrators Conference, President of the Austin Area of Retired Teachers Association, Retired Teachers Association Benefits Committee, Texas Music Adjudicators Association Committee on Standards of Adjudication and Performance Practices, two terms as chairman of UIL Region XII, Co-Author of TEA Stage Band Guide, and Chairman of the Austin Middle School Research Committee. John and his lovely wife, Mrs. Blanche Pearson (an accomplished keyboardist and vocalist), also performed with several professional music groups over the years. The "Professors of Dixieland" performed for two Texas governors on several occasions, Austin's mayor, the Austin city council, and several legislative bodies. John also directed the 18-piece jazz ensemble "Swingtime". John is survived by his beloved wife Mrs. Blanche Pearson of 53 years; his cherished children: Sherry, Deborah, Karen, Rebecca, John Jr, and Jennifer, and preceded in death by his son Bernie. A proud grandfather of John, April, Amber, Katherine, Tiffany, Blaine, Casey, Carley, Corey, Kendall, Lauren, Alexandra, Connor, Jordan, Colby, and Sivon. Continued in his legacy are 13 great grandchildren (one on the way!). He loved his Swedish heritage and was the only child of eight who was not born on Swedish soil. He was also the last remaining sibling of the eight children, with close family ties in both the States and Sweden who share in his loss. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the "Texas Retired Teacher's Foundation Scholarship" (TRTF) which rewards college students who wish to teach professionally. Website: <https://trtf.org/initiatives/beginning-teacher-scholarships/> Physical Address for TRTF: 313 E. 12th street Suite 200, Austin Texas 78701.

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