

NCMEA HS CHORAL SECTION  
Ann L. Huff, HS Choral Section Chair

In his book, *Everyday Greatness*, Stephen Covey tells the old tale of a Japanese samurai warrior and his three sons. The samurai takes out three arrows, hands one to each son and asks each son to break his arrow; they do so easily. Then he takes out three arrows, bound together, and asks if his sons can break them. No one can. "That is your lesson," the samurai tells them. "If you three stick together, you will never be defeated." And that, my friends and colleagues, exemplifies the spirit of teamwork that made the 2007 NCMEA In-Service Conference the resounding success that it was!

There are a number of persons whose work on our behalf deserves public recognition. Thank you to our Conference Chair, Barbara Geer for overseeing the NCMEA Conference with calm and grace, and to our Executive Director, Reta Phifer and our State Executive Officers, Connie McCoy, Jerry Cribbs and Maribeth Yoder-White for their leadership and service.

As teachers, we all revel in the success of our students- and what an inspiring week-end we enjoyed watching and learning from Dr. Axel Theimer from St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict in Minnesota as he worked with the singers in the 2007 NCMEA High School Honors Chorus. As always, enough cannot be said about the incredible job Carol Riggs does coordinating the North Carolina High School Honors Chorus. This event would not be possible without her careful planning and genuine love, care for and dedication to our young people. Also, I want to acknowledge the teachers who helped with the walk-through and our very talented pianist, Gwen Hall. We look forward to having Dr. Jerry Blackstone from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor as our 2008 North Carolina High School Honors Chorus Conductor.

The NCMEA High School Choral Section could not function without the astute leadership of its Executive Board. Please join me in thanking the following for their service: Ken Brooks, Past Chair, Mary Beth Shumate, Secretary, Patti Fulk, Public Relations Chair and Chair Elect, Carol Riggs, Honors Chorus Coordinator, Beverly Alt, All-State Coordinator, Ed Yasick, Choral Activities Chair, Susan Powers, Grievances Chair, Jacqueline Robinson, Teacher of the Year Chair, Diane Covington for her work with new teachers, Ron Vannoy for revising and updating the state contest list, Amy Daw, ACDA All-State Chair and Coalition Chair and to Marshall Butler for serving as Sight-Reading Chair.

A personal highlight for me is witnessing the accomplishments of distinguished colleagues, and the 2007 Conference saw its share of outstanding performances. Thanks to conductors Ron Vannoy and Bernadette Watts and the Alexander Central High School Choir and to Susan Powers and the James B. Hunt High School Choir for sharing their talents and gifts of music. We applaud you and wish you continued success!

Of special note, Laura Sam, music educator and choral conductor at Walter Williams High School in Burlington, North Carolina, was named 2007 Teacher of the Year! Congratulations Laura; we wish you continued success in the years to come.

Sandy Beam, whose legacy as teacher, mentor and friend has impacted so many NC choral musicians over the years, was awarded Honorary Life Membership. Sandy, folks across the state thank you for the ways in which you have enriched their lives and warmly wish you the best in your future projects and endeavors.

We are grateful to Andy Beck and Alfred Publishing Company for leading us in song and dance in his session on “The Well-Rounded Choir: Something for Everyone!” Thanks also to Diane Covington and Ed Yasick for helping our new choral directors become acclimated to NCMEA and to Dr. Dan Huff from UNC-Chapel Hill for his session on “If We Know It Works So Well, Why Is It So Hard To Sell?” Finally, thanks to Mrs. Gunilla Luboff from Walton Music whose presentation of many varied selections of music at the final reading session on Tuesday morning provided us with the perfect way to end the conference- in song!

Teachers, as always, it’s a privilege and pleasure to work with you in our collective pursuit for excellence in music education. Thank you for the many jobs you took on at conference, for the positive, genuine and heartfelt way you went about your business, for taking initiative when you saw things were needed, for being the kind of people you are and so much more. Coming together at conference is truly an inspirational and rejuvenating time. Most importantly, thank you for helping me be a better teacher for my students when I returned home.

Humanity cannot forget its dreamers; it cannot let their ideals fade and die; it lives in them; it knows them as the *realities* which it shall one day see and know. Composer, sculptor, painter, poet, prophet, sage these are the makers of the afterworld, the architects of heaven. The world is beautiful because they have lived; without them, laboring humanity would perish... the greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg; and in the highest vision of the soul a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities...in all human affairs there are *efforts*, and there are *results*, and the strength of the effort is the measure of the result. Chance is not. “Gifts,” powers, material, intellectual, and spiritual possessions are the fruits of effort; they are thoughts complete, objects accomplished, visions realized. The Vision that you glorify in your mind, the Ideal that you enthrone in your heart— this you will build your life by, this you will become. –James Allen, As A Man Thinketh

Teachers, it is YOU who give your students the capacity to learn, to grow, to make music and that greatest of all gifts, a dream. Know, my fellow colleagues, that you are valued and appreciated. My warmest and best wishes for a successful and productive year.

As I look forward to serving another year as High School Choral Section Chair, please accept my gratitude for your offers of help, words of positive encouragement, sage advice and expertise. If you have questions, concerns, comments, suggestions and/or advice, please feel free to contact me at my home phone 919-493-4877, school phone 919-856-7918 or email at [ahuff@wcpss.net](mailto:ahuff@wcpss.net).