



2022 Hall of Fame

Joe Pappas

The MBA Hall of Fame Award was established to recognize individuals who have made a lasting or enduring positive impact on the stature of instrumental music education in the state of Missouri. The list of recipients, dating back to 1971, is a list of legendary band directors who were consummate professionals, outstanding in their craft, actively served in professional organizations, and provided mentorship that has inspired others to fulfill our mission of building better bands in our state. This evening, we will add another legend to this list.

And now, It is my honor and privilege to introduce the 2022 recipient of the Missouri Bandmasters Association Hall of Fame. He is truly a talented educator who humbly has expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to work with so many fine students, musicians, and directors from around the world. Now, we have the opportunity to thank him for all he has done to teach, mentor, and inspire our students and fellow band directors.

Our recipient has a wide variety of interests and talents which has undoubtedly helped provide balance and added longevity to his career. He was an athlete in high school, and even coached Jr. High football and high school baseball and became a MSHSAA official for baseball, volleyball, and basketball. He was a licensed taxidermist, and had his own taxidermy shop. Fishing, especially deep sea fishing, is one of his passions. He even loves participating in trivia shows from his recliner!

He was raised in Festus, where he was active in the band and choral programs. At age 13, he started playing with an adult combo and continued playing Motown and soul music well into college. He attended Southeast Missouri State University, student teaching at Jackson High School with Nick Leist and earning both his Bachelor and Masters of Music Education degrees.

Through his teaching career, he covered band, choral, strings, general music, theory, and class guitar. He taught in Bell City from 1972-1976, Scott City from 1976-1979, Mexico Public Schools from 1979-1990, and Eureka High School from 1990 - 1999. After retirement from public school teaching, he spent another 22 years directing the wind ensemble and teaching just about everything imaginable at Jefferson College. He is still going strong as the director of the Missouri Big Band, a swing band he started in 2013.

Throughout his career, his bands were top notch and won countless awards. He personally earned Teacher of the Year awards at EVERY school district he taught. He has the golden touch, and it certainly was not limited to outstanding performances and accolades of just his bands. His career was also decorated with service to professional organizations including MBA, Phi Beta Mu, MMEA, and MSHSAA. He composed music that would reach out and inspire musicians of all ages. He started up camps and honor bands, presented clinics, published articles and blogs - he has truly been everywhere and done everything to help build musicianship and enthusiasm for band!

The true measure of his impact on bands in Missouri can be found in the sentiments by students he taught and teachers he mentored.

Chris Auchly shared

Throughout his career, he has always strived for the MBA motto, to BUILD BETTER BANDS. Joe has been an anchor and friend for many directors and programs for fifty years. Joe's career as a band director has stretched across four communities, but he has helped countless students and colleagues learn about music and bands.

From Brad Heckman:

His love for people, respect for the art of music, and the joy of teaching are evident in his fifty years of service to music education in the state of Missouri and beyond. Joe's music through JPM Publications continues to teach the art of music through quality, enduring pieces.

From Kim Whitehead:

I still have vivid memories of Joe Pappas helping me choose a band instrument to play when I was in elementary school. As a high school student my love for band grew to a whole new level thanks to Mr. Pappas. Let me be clear – I am a band director because Joe Pappas was an amazing teacher. I am still a band director because he is an amazing mentor.

Doug Smelser shared:

I was a young director at the time having taught for 7 years. At this point in time, I was really considering leaving the profession. Through my contact with Joe and the many long talks we had about being a director and what it takes to be successful, I can honestly say that he changed the course of my career.

From Jordan Summers

I survived my first year of teaching and learned numerous tricks and tools to be a successful music educator because of the guidance of Joe Pappas. Now I am much further away than I would like to be, but he is just a phone call away and I still make those phone calls often!

The ripple effect this man has had on our profession is immeasurable. He has literally been everywhere and done everything to build better bands in Missouri since he started his first job in tiny Bell City in 1972. One of his former students, Steve Greene summed it up best: Mr. Pappas has been a crescendo of inspiration for students and educators throughout his lifetime. There is no one more deserving of this award.

This evening, he joins the list of legendary band directors who inspire us today and will continue to for years to come.

These last few months have undoubtedly been heartbreaking for Joe and his family, but we are happy his son Darren could be here to celebrate with him. His wife Cheryl was overjoyed and proud when she learned her husband was receiving this honor and contributed so much to this presentation.

It is my distinct pleasure to present the 2022 MBA Hall of Fame inductee, Mr. Joseph Pappas