



Missouri Bandmasters Association

## HALL OF FAME 2023

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### Cathy Coonis

For those new to our organization, the 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.

It is my honor and privilege to introduce the 2023 recipient of the Missouri Bandmasters Association Hall of Fame. If this individual could be described in one word, that word would be DEVOTED. Her whole life has been an inspirational storybook of how she took her love of music, nurtured it, and devoted her life to sharing it with others.

This year's Hall of Fame recipient, in the 41 years she taught, has made an incredible impact on BUILDING BETTER BANDS in Missouri. For every band director in this room, but especially our young students who are just starting out on this journey, this amazing band director has been and will continue to be the model of how we should measure our success.

From her youngest years, she developed her passion for music and performance, and continued to practice and hone her musical talent. Her teaching career is filled with students who gleaned this talent and were motivated in a loving and caring way to give her their very best. This approach resulted in countless outstanding performances in the schools that she served. She never let up her guard, consistently attending professional development opportunities to hone her craft and find other ways to help her students learn and grow. Even though she is now retired, you will still see her being attentive and taking notes in clinics at this very convention. She was always willing to help fellow band teachers through mentorship and traveling out to other schools to clinic their bands in an encouraging and supportive way.

She was raised in Republic, where she was active in the band and choir programs. After graduating from Republic High School, she went on to study music education and Spanish at School of the Ozarks. Her career began in 1980 as a choir teacher in the Crawford County R-2 School District in Cuba, Missouri. For the next fourteen years, she taught band in Marshfield. She then spent a year at Pershing Middle School and Glendale High School before spending the next twenty years as the band director at Seymour.

In the spring of 2006, she welcomed a student teacher to her band room. Andrew Marriage stated: “I had no idea where Seymour even was. When I arrived on my first day, she welcomed me with the biggest smile. At this time, I wasn’t even sure that I wanted to actually be a teacher anymore, but I was far enough in my degree, I needed to finish it. I learned so much from Cathy, and her love of music and teaching started rubbing off on me. I saw the joy that it gave her and knew that was something I wanted to be a part of.” Knowing retirement was looming and wanting the success of the band program at Seymour to continue, she selflessly “retired” from her position so this inspired young man could be hired and carry the torch. As indicator of how much they loved her at Seymour, the administration allowed her to stay on staff on as a part time band teacher and part time Spanish teacher so she could continue to help the program thrive and mentor this talented young teacher. She did eventually officially retire in 2016, but came back after one year off to spend five more years teaching band at New Covenant Academy.

During those years, she spent over 30 years as the Secretary/Treasurer for the South Central district of MMEA. She spent over 25 years as the Treasurer and All State Jazz Chaperone for the Missouri Association for Jazz Education. She was the state Tri-M Music Honor Society for 11 years while serving on Missouri Music Educators Association’s Executive Board. She was also stayed extremely active in the Missouri Bandmasters Association and Phi Beta Mu while continuing an active schedule as a performer, clinician, and adjudicator.

The true measure of her impact on bands in Missouri can be found in the sentiments by people who surrounded her during her wonderful, extensive career.

Lori Hutton said:

“I have witnessed as both being a former student and a colleague her devotion, kindness, passion, and dedication to music education. She has touched so many lives through her teaching in the band world. Her love for music is evident and she is devoted to her students.”

Julie Ritter, a Seymour band parent stated:

“The most important thing about her is that she listens to these kids. She watches and helps them grow into young adults. She treats them like they matter and in this day and age that means a lot to the kids.”

From Robert Altman:

“Her knowledge and love of teaching music, band specifically, has gone unnoticed and unappreciated by most of us. She is definitely a master teacher and leads by example, always helping where help is needed. Whether it is a student or fellow band director wanting help or advice, she’s always there for you!”

Mark Lawley, Choir director at New Covertant Academy Stated:

“Many of Miss Coonis’ students have been so inspired by her teaching that they, too, became music teachers. The ripple effect of her teaching will go on and on.”

Martha Stitzel may have summed it up best:

“She’s all about music and music education, leaving a trail of enthusiasm, acceptance, and love wherever she lands.”

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There is no doubt that bands in Missouri would not be what they are today without Cathy's love of band and her devotion to the profession. Through her forty one years of teaching, she has been a quiet, stalwart leader in her own band room and throughout the state.

Lori Hutton added that "She is one of the most giving people I know and expects nothing in return." She most likely was not expecting this, but tonight, we are delighted to add her to the list of band directors who inspire us today and will continue to for years to come.

It is my distinct pleasure to present the 2023 MBA Hall of Fame inductee, Ms. Cathy Coonis