



Iowa High School Music Association

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LEO H. GREYER

Leo H. Grether had a long and honored career in choral and instrumental music in secondary schools. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1934 and began graduate studies there, which were later continued at the U. of Cincinnati. His teaching career began in the Orange City Schools followed by Keokuk. After four years in Iowa, he left to become the Director of Choral Music at Withrow, the largest high school in Cincinnati, Ohio. He established the a cappella choir at Withrow and finished his graduate studies at the University of Cincinnati.

After 8 years in Ohio, Leo returned to Iowa and taught vocal and instrumental music for 12 years in his hometown of Elgin, where his concert band and chorus were consistently rated First Division. He moved to Manchester in 1958 where he directed the Concert Band and the large vocal groups.

Leo began his association with the Iowa All-State Music Festival when he was selected to represent Vocal Music on the Executive Committee of the Iowa High School Music Association in 1958 and was given the responsibility for All-State. After organizing the All-State Festival for eight years while continuing to direct choral music at Manchester, he was chosen as the first Executive Secretary to the Iowa High School Music Association in 1966. He moved his family to Boone where the IHSMA headquarters were located in order to fulfill the demands of a full-time Executive Secretary.

In his twelve years as Executive Secretary, Leo's tireless energy and exceptional organizational skills were evident to all the vocal and instrumental directors across the state. His musical creativity was evident in the innovations he brought to the rules and standards which characterize the various events. During a decade of generally declining school enrollment, student participation in Iowa high school music events grew by 30% to 40%. This growth standard stands as rewarding evidence of Leo's successful quest to develop musicianship and personal growth through musical experiences in schools. He retired in 1978 after 44 years in music education and lived in Manchester where he conducted the Chancel Choir of the Methodist Church until his death in 1993.

In 1971, the ICDA presented Leo the Robert McCowen Award for outstanding contribution to choral music in Iowa. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Iowa Music Educators Association upon his retirement in 1978.