

55. Robert E. Foster

(Raymondville, Texas, January 21, 1939)

President 1992



**Director of Bands
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas**

Robert E. Foster was born in Raymondville, Texas on January 21, 1939, the town where his father, Estill Goodwin Foster was the band director. As the son of a prominent high school band director in Texas, he grew up in the Texas band movement, enjoying early success as a cornet player. He was selected to membership in the Texas All-State Band seven consecutive years, from 1951-57. In 1956, Foster was selected solo cornet in the Music Educators National Conference Golden Jubilee National Concert Band in St. Louis, Missouri, performing under the batons of Raymond Dvorak, and guest conductors Harold Bachman and Henry Fillmore.

Foster attended the University of Texas, becoming the solo cornet or principal trumpet in all of the major ensembles, and performed for five seasons with the Austin Symphony under the baton of Ezra Rachlin. While at Texas he was elected president of both the Symphonic Band conducted by Frank Elsass, and the Longhorn Band under the direction of Vincent R. DiNino. Foster was also elected to membership in the elite men's honorary group, the Texas Cowboys. He studied band arranging with J. Clifton

Williams, and orchestration with Kent Kennan. In the summer of 1960 he studied trumpet with Armando Ghitalla in Boston.

Following graduation from Texas, he taught at O. Henry Jr. High School in Austin for one year, and then moved to Houston where he taught at Lamar Sr. High School, conducting the bands, orchestra, and

jazz program. While in Houston he received his master's degree from the University of Houston, and continued to play professionally, performing with the Houston Symphony and the Houston Grand Opera.

In 1963, Foster became the assistant director of bands and trumpet teacher at the University of Florida, working with Richard W. Bowles, director of bands, Reid Poole, chairman of the music department, and Harold B. Bachman, the director of bands emeritus. He was designated associate director of bands in the late 1960s, and in 1971 left Gainesville to move to Lawrence, Kansas, where he became director of bands at the University of Kansas. He held this position for 31 years, after which he became assistant chairman of the department of music and dance.

At the University of Kansas the band program grew from a marching band and one concert band to one of the most comprehensive band programs in the nation. Foster was the administrator of the entire band program which included three concert bands, the wind ensemble, three jazz ensembles, two basketball bands, nine combos, and the Marching Jayhawks, involving over 600 students. He served as the conductor of the top wind organizations, and was the chairman of the Division of bands which included the masters and doctoral programs in wind conducting.

In 2006 he was inducted into the National Band Association's Hall of Fame for Distinguished Band Conductors in Troy, Alabama.

Foster has served as president and chairman of the board of directors of the American Bandmasters Association, the National Band Association, as president of the Southwest Division of CBDNA, and of the Big 12 Conference Band Directors Association. He is vice-president of the John Philip Sousa Foundation, and has been on the Board of Directors for CBDNA, ABA, NBA, the John Philip Sousa Foundation, and the Kansas Bandmasters Association. He was selected Bandmaster of the Year by KBA, One of the Ten Music Educators honored by the School Musician magazine, and was awarded the Higher Education Service Award by the students of the University of Kansas. He is on the advisory board of the *Instrumentalist* magazine, and has served as the band advisor for the MENC Advisor column in their magazine, *Teaching Music*, beginning in 1995.

Foster is an active composer, arranger, conductor, and clinician, and has several hundred published compositions and arrangements. He is the editor of the "Authentic Fillmore Editions" and the "My First Arban" series of method books published by Carl Fischer. He has served as an educational consultant in the publications division of Wingert-Jones Music since 1980. Foster and his wife Becky have three children, Becky Egan, Rob Foster, Jr., and Randy. He and Becky continue to live in Lawrence, Kansas.