

Fall 2017

Keystone Quarterly



Remembering Howard Crawford

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

The PSGMA hopes that you've had an exciting summer! Here we are again in our Fall Issue of The Keystone Quarterly and it feels like we were just here! Time seems to be going by so quickly. It sure does make me think about what I may be overlooking in life and reminds me that I should be making the best of every moment.

Now, I want to take a moment to pass along some very sad news. As you've already seen on the front cover, Howard Crawford of the Fellowship Quartet, went home to be with the Lord over the summer. You'll see that we have dedicated this issue to him and hope that you will take the time to read about him and his life's work for the Lord. Please keep his family and friends in your prayers.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who are members of the PSGMA; we appreciate your continued support. If you are reading this and you are not a member, take a look at the back cover and sign up today!

Have a safe and blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,

John Lythgoe

John Lythgoe, PSGMA President

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The Masters

***The Masters welcome Regina Smith back to the group!
New group picture coming soon!***

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ON THE NARROW ROAD

with Uncle Brian Rosenbaum



Finding sure steps

There are many things that I love about southern gospel music, but one of the things at the top of the list has got to be the way the brothers and sisters live out their faith. In scripture, GOD says that we're supposed to 'esteem others higher than ourselves'. In Southern Gospel music in central Pennsylvania, THIS VERSE IS

TRUE!

Since I don't travel and sing (at least not for a while), I've had the opportunity to go to concerts where brothers and sisters that are precious to me hold High the name of Jesus Christ. I've had the privilege of sitting in the congregation and listening to those beautiful hymns, old and new, AND in the southern gospel style that I love. I go to the concerts because:

1. I love the one that this music represents;
2. I love the ones singing it, and...
3. I love the style of music that they sing!

It does not matter if I'm teasing Randy Simpson at the Jacobs Brothers' barn or if I'm teasing him at a March Forth anniversary concert (I'm noticing a pattern here!). But that's my case in point; I love Randy Simpson as a brother! We've sung on stages together; we've done ministry together of different types and I praise God for him and Jane. I've prayed for them and they've prayed for me. We are family. And I'll pick on Randy any chance I get! I do the same with Doug Koch, Dave Theis, Kevin Good and Randy Pensinger; why, I even remember when I teased Momma Pearl at the PSGMA Day at Knoeble's Grove Amusement Park. (I told her that I could sing their books of the Bible song BACKWARDS. When she told me from the audience to do it, I turned around and stood backwards as I started to sing the song). Yup, I'm an equal opportunity picker-on-er!

Mike Jacobs was right, "I love my family"! So, the 'take away' for this issue is simple: Do what you can to do your best in singing, as well as doing your best to lift those around you. A wise person once said, "a rising tide lifts all boats!"

May GOD bless you richly as you press on towards the mark of GOD'S HIGH CALLING!

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Remembering Howard Crawford

Howard was taken suddenly to be with his Lord in July of 2017

by Ken Rhodes

Howard Crawford's life was a Journey following Jesus. The journey started in church, singing with his aunt Lula Crawford when Howard was just nine years old. His Aunt Lula was a music teacher and helped Howard develop his voice, as well as his Christian character. Howard's singing included barbershop style harmony with the Harmony Hill singers, solos in church and of course, southern gospel music.

In 1958, Howard married the love of his life, Orpha, and they had four children and eight grandchildren. Howard and Orpha had just celebrated 59 years of marriage in June of this year. He had a very successful career in insurance sales, because of his integrity, honesty, and Christian character; he was loved and trusted by everyone who ever met him. Howard also enjoyed the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Pirates and the Penguins and also driving his black and gold golf cart through Friendship Village.

Howard loved Southern Gospel music and especially good harmony. One of his favorite songs to sing was "Glory Road". Howard truly walked the "Glory Road" on his journey. The words of the song will echo in the hearts of many who had heard his beautiful presentation of this song. The following is the first verse: "Is this road you're traveling, dark deserted and dim, is there hope for tomorrow, put your trust in Him, on this glory road I'm traveling, many times I stumble on my way, but praise the

Lord I will soon be leaving, to that land of perfect peace and endless day".

Howard's journey on the "Glory Road" eventually led him to Friendship Village to sing with the Fellowship Quartet.

He was an immediate blessing for the campers and residents! His tenor lead vocals on "I Know a Man", "Oh What a Savior", "He's All I Need", and "Hide Thou Me" soon became fan favorites. His humble stage presentation seemed to endear him even more to those who heard him sing.

Howard also had a great sense of humor, and although he seemed quite reserved, he loved playing a good practical joke. His practical jokes caused the Fellowship Quartet to be renamed "Howdy and the Friendship Singers" at some venues, even to the current day. He also caused quite a stir when one of his friends at Friendship Village came back from Florida and found their campsite and camper had 'For Sale' signs posted everywhere... Howard was Mister Nice Guy; so, no one would have ever thought it was 'Howdy' who posted the signs!

When he and Orpha decided to move from Manns Choice, PA to Friendship Village in Bedford, PA, they embraced the community and joined Friendship Missional Church. Howard served on the finance committee, and also helped to lead worship. Howard's life served as a scriptural example to the younger men.



Howard will certainly be missed, but never forgotten. His life and Christian character have been passed down to his children and grandchildren. His music will live in the hearts of those who had the privilege to hear him sing. His voice will live on the recorded music. Any future Fellowship Quartet tenor

may sing Howard's part on his favorite songs, but he will never be replaced or duplicated.

'Howdy', we will hear you sing again someday in glory, but only if each of us follow that same "Glory Road" that you followed, for it will lead each of us to Jesus.

Joe Chioda's thoughts about his good friend – Howard Crawford

In 1991, I was asked to sing the lead part in a group called Spiritual Witness (a trio), by both members, Howard Crawford and Barry Eshelman. Sadly, in 1994, Barry Eshelman was tragically and suddenly killed in a car wreck. Little did I know that in time, I was going to eventually own the group named Spiritual Witness.

I spent many long and overnight hours with Howard Crawford traveling between churches where we sang. He was always a soft spoken, kind hearted, Christian man with the best of intentions for all. I've never seen him get upset at anyone. If someone rubbed him the wrong way, he just spoke gently back to them and acted like nothing had happened! He never walked at a fast pace; it was always slow and methodical. I can still picture him just strolling along like he always did. That was Howard!

Howard was what the word Christianity meant. As the old saying goes, 'He talked the talk, but he also walked the walk'. His voice to me was compared to the best of singers I've ever heard. Each time he sang as I stood beside him, I'd compare his singing to Glenn Payne of The Cathedrals. He simply could do it all! Howard was known to sing all parts: Lead, Baritone and especially hitting those very high notes when he sang Tenor. At times, he would even sing the bass part, when needed! I could still see him shaking his head from side to side when he hit those notes. It was his way of getting a song across to those in the audience.

When we traveled together on the road, I knew he had diabetes and he had to give himself insulin shots. Each time he'd do that, I'd look over to him and he would actually give himself the shot, right through his shirt and his clothing, or whatever he was wearing that day.

He'd look at me and would smile. I looked back at him and always said, "I can't believe you do that"!

When he handed the ownership of Spiritual Witness over to me, he gave me his blessing to continue on without him. He thought he had retired from singing in a group. The Lord had other plans... In years to come, I connected him with Ken Rhoades (owner of Friendship Village in Bedford, PA) to sing in Ken's group, The Fellowship Quartet, and Ken took him on immediately!

Howard could talk with compassion, sing like no other, and would always conduct himself in a good Christian-like manner, and he meant it too! I'll always remember my good friend and fellow singing partner in Spiritual Witness, Howard Crawford.



SPIRITUAL WITNESS

Joe Chioda / Streets of Gold

"Think About It"

Duane Nicholson

The Couriers wrote a book about our 58 years of making Jesus music. The book's title was chosen because when we wrote it, we knew we were in the final years of our existence as full time singers. Therefore, the book was entitled, 'Our Final Quarter'. Football has 4 quarters. We knew we were in that final quarter and jokingly, I told audiences when sharing the book, that we were actually in the Red Zone of the final quarter. If you are a football fan, you know that the Red Zone is when a team is on the last 20 yards, which is usually the hardest to complete for the touchdown. The only hard part about our Red Zone was that the travel time was wearing us down and standing up for over an hour and singing our lungs out was taxing. We did make it across the goal line and are now living with a lifetime of memories. I could write for hours about experience after experience.

In retirement, I have been privileged to attend many Gospel concerts, both in Florida, where my wife and I spend two months of the winter, and here in concert-rich Central Pennsylvania. Having sung with most of the groups except the younger ones, I will often sit back stage and we will talk about times together and the ups and downs and funny times and various aspects of those golden days. The younger singers sit with us and listen to us talk about the past. Our stories somewhat differ with even the somewhat older groups in Gospel Music. Most live in the South, where the majority of the groups live. The Couriers took a different course. We decided to open up new territories for our music in the Northeast and Canada. It was not easy. Conservative Northerners were not used to the somewhat flamboyant way of singing, especially in staid old mainline churches and the very conservative Brethren and Mennonite churches that sometimes did not even have pianos in them and sang acapella style.

Applause was unheard of, and volume was always a problem. Ancient pianos were another problem. Many churches did not have tuned pianos, so Neil would bring his tuning equipment with him and take the front off of those old upright pianos and spend a few minutes trying to get the piano in tune.

We began to get larger crowds in close proximity of Harrisburg, PA, our home city, by having a Sunday morning radio gospel show from 8:30 to 9 AM. When we began to broaden our outreach, we depended on our various denominations' churches for support. When that church would advertise our coming concert, people from other denominations would attend and perhaps ask us to come to their church. With the final addition of television, our crowds grew incredibly fast. It was then that we started to promote other groups that were visiting in our area from the South. These concerts grew to thousands at the Farm Show Arena and the Hershey Sports arena. But these were not the usual concerts. Many times we sang to 200 people or less. Every group likes to talk about the big crowds, and forget the little ones.

Having said all of the above about successes and large crowds, let me just give a few of the lesser crowds... We were asked to go to New York City to the Wendell Wilkie auditorium. When we arrived in our bus on that crowded street, we had to trundle our equipment up a set of steep stairs. As we came close to starting time, there were less than 20 people there. The promoter was anxious and was talking to our manager, Dave Kyllonen, about the poor attendance. Dave said to him, and was

joking, that we don't sing unless there are at least 50 people. The promoter took him serious and went down to the street and was literally begging passersby to come in to the concert; we had to tell him that we would sing regardless of the amount of people. To top it off, when the offering was taken, Neil felt sorry for the promoter and put \$40.00 into the

offering!!! When we got on the road back home, Dave asked me, the treasurer of the group, what the promoter paid us. I believe it was \$50.00. When Neil heard that he said, "Hey, I put \$40.00 in that offering and I want my money back". We were roaring with laughter and I gave Neil back his money!! Another time, we were with two other groups in Fargo, North Dakota and the promoter had rented the huge hockey ice arena. When we arrived, the people who ran the concessions was making popcorn and getting the various areas of food up and running. We set up our equipment and as time went by, the arena, which seated probably 3,000 people, had about 100 people! I really don't know what arrangement the promoter had, but he had us take down our equipment and go to a local church for the actual concert.. We had about 200 people, so we named that concert, "The Fargo Farce".

I found out at some of those back stage remembrance times I talked about earlier in this article, that others had similar experiences. The best I heard was from the famous bass singer J.D. Sumner. The famous Stamps Quartet that he sang bass for, had a contract with a Native American Indian reservation somewhere in the Southwest. These reservations each have an auditorium where they hold larger meetings. The Stamps arrived and set up their equipment. When it was time to start, there was only two Native Americans there. One was the manager of the building and one attendee. J. D. went to the manager and said that they might sing one song for this attendee and tear down and leave. The manager said, "No, your contract says that you will sing your program or you don't get paid!" So, the Stamps decided to practice some new songs and sang for a solid hour. After 30 minutes, the attendee got up and left. So they sang for 30 minutes to no one, because the manager stayed in his office! The guys took down their equipment and J.D. went into the manager's office and the manager gave him a check for \$2,500. Needless to say, I could not top that one...

All in all, it was a great life. Golden years of planting the seeds of the gospel and sometime harvesting the seed by people accepting Christ as their Savior.

I have passed the goal line in the history of The Couriers, but the ultimate goal lies ahead, the only one that really matters. The goal line is in sight now and I hope that you, the readers, are reaching towards that final heavenly goal. I want to see you there and we can sing and share for eternity



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