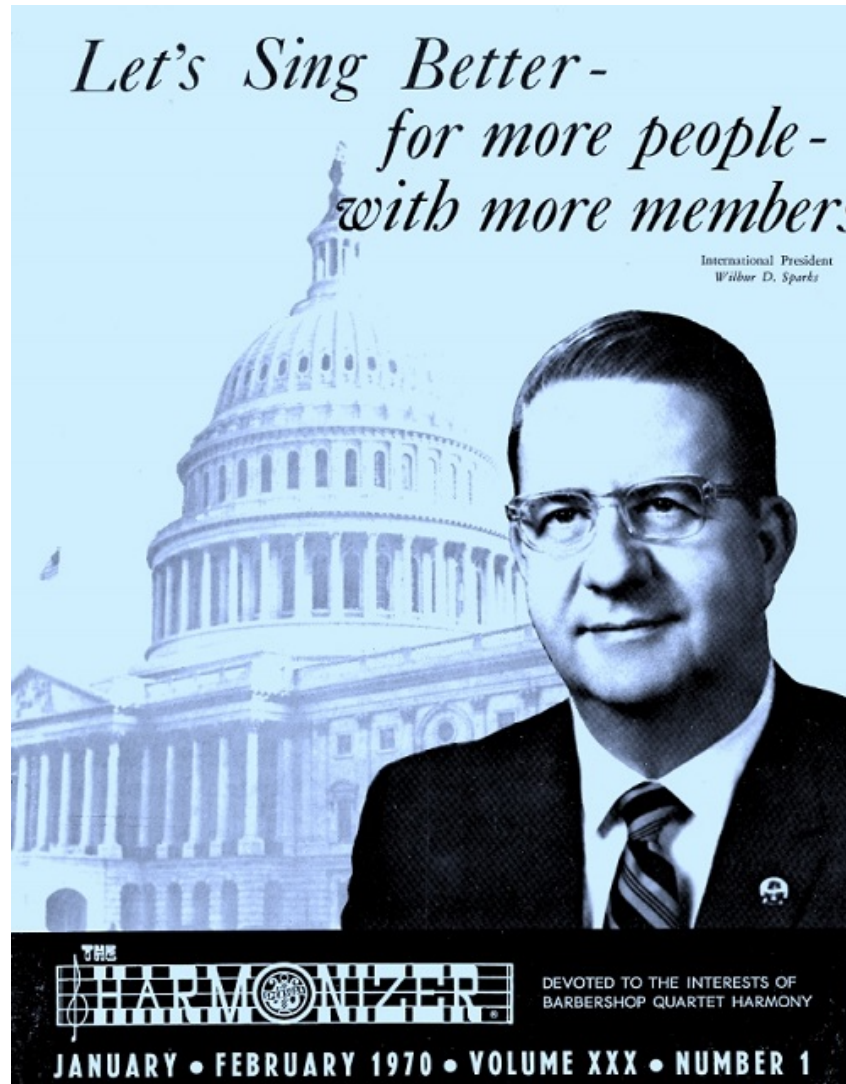


## Alexandria Harmonizers 70th Anniversary Throwback Thursdays

### No. 12 - 1970 Mr. President, Mr. Barbershopper

**Wilbur D. Sparks**



Member of the 2004 Inaugural Class of the Barbershop Harmony Society Hall of Fame, **Wilbur Sparks** was “Mr. Barbershopper” to many across the Society. Eminent arranger, editor, coach, historian, administrator, quartet singer, and judge, he became the 27th President of SPEBSQSA Inc, renamed the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS), in 1970. Wilbur was most noted as a leader with a brilliant mind, long-range vision, and far-reaching influence. He mentored many of the biggest names in barbershop and championed many major successful initiatives.

He served on the faculty of Chapter Officer Training Schools (COTS) and co-wrote the Society's manual for bulletin editors, *Better Bulletins for Better Chapters*, with Dee Paris. He was President of the Society's organization for Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors (PROBE) during 1963-64 and was inducted into the PROBE Hall of Fame. He shared his love for the preservation of barbershop history with **Dean Snyder** and was awarded the honorary titles of Parliamentarian Emeritus, Judge Emeritus, and Historian Emeritus by the Society.

Wilbur was Mid-Atlantic District President in 1966-67, a member of DELASUSQUEHUDMAC, and in the 1986 Inaugural Class of the District Hall of Honor.

Wilbur came to the D.C. area in 1941 to join the legal staff of U.S. Senator Harry S Truman. He joined the Alexandria Chapter in 1954 and was soon joining barbershop quartets like the **Professors of Harmony**, **Harmoni-Chords**, and **Mount Rushmore Four**. As "Dr. Put," he created the chapter's annual Put-Together Quartet Contest that would ultimately bear his name. Baritone Section Leader, Assistant Musical Director, and Judge of Voice Expression, Wilbur also wrote and produced numerous Harmonizer annual shows.

Wilbur was Chapter President in 1957-58. He was the consummate "Ye Ed" of *The Echo*, the bi-monthly chapter bulletin, for nearly 40 years. The dedication of his "first lady," **Ibbianne**, as publisher of *The Echo* is worthy of note. The Sparks' were the first recipients of the "Ibbianne and Wilbur Sparks Award" (1995), recognizing the important contribution of our "family" to the success and well-being of the chapter. Wilbur most probably cherished this honor above all others. **Wilbur Sparks** passed away at age 83 on September 3, 2002.

Harmonious Tagline:

On April 23, 2003, the Alexandria Historical Society presented a Special Award for the Alexandria Harmonizers' 50-year history, *Breathless Moments: The Alexandria Harmonizers, 1948-1998*, recognizing the chapter and editors **John Hanna**, **Gary Smith**, and **Wilbur Sparks**. Chapter President **Gary Bibens**, **Gary Smith**, and **Ibbianne Sparks** received the award from **Senator Patsy Ticer** at the Lyceum. **Bachelor Party** entertained the assembly (**Scipio Garling**, **Greg Tepe**, **Ken Rub**, **Terry Reynolds**). **Ibbianne Sparks** passed away at age 96 in 2016.