

Alexandria Harmonizers 70th Anniversary Throwback Thursdays

No. 26 - 1995 Supreme Charms

Supreme Court Performances

In late May 1989, the Harmonizers performed for the first time before the Historical Society of the Supreme Court of the United States at a banquet held in the Great Hall of the Supreme Court building. The audience included **Chief Justice Rehnquist** and **Justices Scalia, Brennan, and Kennedy** along with 300 lawyers, judges, and scholars. They gave us a thrilling reception by listening attentively, applauding, standing, and (believe it or not) singing along with us.

The chorus was the only non-military group to entertain at this dinner during its 14-year history. Before we started singing, the wife of the dinner chairman leaned over to a tablemate and whispered, "I don't know why we go with these people instead of the military singing groups we've had for years." The Harmonizers hit about five chords, and she looked across the table, saying, "Now I know why!"

By the end of our performance we had received two standing ovations—the first time that even a single lawyer had gotten to his feet to cheer the entertainment. The success of our initial appearances resulted in a total of nine invitations to perform for the Historical Society dinners!

The logistics of our appearance at this banquet were both different and challenging. It started with all members submitting their Social Security numbers for clearance by the Court's security staff. The chorus had been warned that it would be singing on straight risers without any room to move; the risers were so crowded each man had to turn slightly so that his shoulders overlapped those of the men next to him. The space was further limited by having dinner tables only a few feet from our front row of singers. However, the unprecedented response of the audience was more than compensation for these challenges.

We sang in June 1995 (see below) and recalled that the first time we sang for this event was in the 1989 contest year. The Harmonizers are not generally superstitious, but we nonetheless took this as a good omen. In June 1998 we sang again for the dinner and recalled that two previous appearances had occurred in years when the chapter won a gold medal in international

competition. Although the members did not know it at the time, they were about to stretch this string of coincidences (Supreme “Charms”) to three!



Harmonious Tagline:

The Alexandria Harmonizers' four Gold Medal Years: 1986, 1989, 1995, and 1998. And our nine Historical Society of the Supreme Court dinner performance years: 1989, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2009, and 2011.