

Alexandria Harmonizers 70th Anniversary Throwback Thursdays

No. 5 – First Barbershop Craft

An inaugural member of the Barbershop Hall of Fame, Harold W. “Bud” Arberg exerted great musical influence both in the Society and as a musician of national fame. Director, composer, arranger, teacher, and expert pianist, Bud’s excellent craft-building sessions in the 1950s as the Alexandria Harmonizers’ Musical Director became the foundation for the Society’s music teaching programs and materials, a legacy that continues today. Outside the Society, he was best known as a music professor who once headed the music area for the U.S. Army, where he made “The Army Goes Rolling Along” the service’s official song, including his own introductory verse.

A charter member of the Society’s College of Arrangers, Bud’s output of barbershop arrangements (done for the Harmonizers and the Armed Services Song Folios) reached the astounding total of nearly 300. From 1953 to 1962 all Harmonizer chorus contest numbers were Arberg arrangements, including Gee But It’s Great to Meet A Friend (From Your Home Town) and Piano Roll Blues. Bud Arberg’s background as a music educator led him to invent “Barbershop Craft,” a term and concept unknown in the Society at the time.

To the great regret of every member of the “Bud Arberg Chapter” he resigned in 1962 with “...a letter I hoped never to write...*Not to be active as musical director of the Alexandria Harmonizers after more than a decade of chord-busting, pipe-blowing and arm-waving among you is a new situation which I will have to get used to. And it won’t be easy.*”

Bud remained a valued friend of the Alexandria Chapter and joined the chorus on stage at our 50th (1998) and 60th (2008) anniversary shows. Major Harold Walton Arberg, Sr, US Army passed away in 2009 at age 90 and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

