

## Second International Chorus Gold - 1989

1989 International Champion Chorus 51st Annual International Convention and Contests, SPEBSQSA, Kansas City MO, July 2-9, 1989

Musical Director Scott Werner Associate Director Mike Wallen Chapter President Bede Bender Stage Presence Advisor Geri Geis 125 men awarded First Place Gold Medal "Oh, How I Miss You Tonight" (John Hohl, Arranger) and "Nobody's Sweetheart" (Tom Gentry, Arranger)



In Kansas City in July, the Harmonizers were looking forward to the opportunity to successfully defend their first chorus championship—only two choruses had previously accomplished that feat: Dapper Dans of Harmony (Livingston NJ) in 1967 and 1970 and the Dukes of Harmony (Scarborough ON) in 1977 and 1980.

Every morning in Kansas City, each Harmonizer found a present left by the Harmonettes. The front row and "end men" had daily rehearsals before the chorus met. Our coaches, Darryl Flinn and Jim Casey, visited on Thursday and Friday. All too soon it was time for each man to get dressed and ready to go to the contest site at the Kemper Arena.

Geri and Bill Cody called on us to close our eyes and think of the ballad and the scenario, then together chant the lyrics, and to "be that person!" We were moved to the "ready room" where we had our customary pre-contest prayer, and it was time for 125 men to go on stage. With virtually no delay, the voice of the MC, Fred King, came through, announcing that the next chorus would be "from Alexandria, Virginia, under the direction of Scott Werner, the Harmonizers," and the curtain rapidly moved upward as the crowd roared.

"...And the new champion...Alexandria!" The Alexandria section was a shambles. Men were crying, women were adding screams to tears, some were dancing, and some were sitting in silence. As they exited the auditorium, friends, and even strangers who recognized the pink flower on the white tuxedos grasped their outstretched hands. Many were still in shock. When the score sheets came out they showed that consistency

across all the categories had won the contest— although the Harmonizers did not have the highest score in any of the three categories, they won the only category that counted: total points.

Harmonious Tagline. Geri Geis – Artistic Director and Choreographer during the Gold Medal chorus era. She developed many popular showstoppers and is responsible for the Harmonizers being best known for our Broadway-style performances. Indeed, for 19 years Geri was responsible for the presentation and choreography of each and every Harmonizers performance including the Kennedy Center Honors and Wolf Trap.