

First Chorus Uniform - 1950

Wearing their first uniform, white coat with red and yellow trim, the Alexandria chorus posed for a formal picture at the Cameron Street Recreation Center. In early 1951 the uniform was updated to short coats trimmed in scarlet and gold.



BARBER SHOP CHORUS – Members of the Alexandria Harmonizers, the city's 30-voice barber shop chorus (above), will participate in the Mid-Atlantic States Barber Shop Quartet Contest here Saturday night. The Harmonizers are part of the city's chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. Pictured in the first row, left to right, are C. M. Brown, Ray Kelly, Frank Mann, A. J. Vanderberg, Paul Doyle, Joe Lamm, Henry Brown, and Recreation Director Gene Barnwell. In the second row are Bill Bennett, "Bud" Frost, Jim Hudson, "Pres" Bergin, George Bartlett, "Socks" Howard, Dick McFadden, and "Senator" Porterfield. Third row, William Shoemaker, Ed Poole, Wilbur Schmidt, Alexandria chapter president, William Sinn, Myles Golbransen, Gilbert Baylis, and Harold Schultz. (Photo by Bell Alexandria Gazette 11/1950)

In 1948, the Alexandria Chapter was well-organized enough to field seven quartets for charter night and grow an international champion chorus. It had a talented musician, Eugene Barnwell, as its first director, and had wholehearted support from Alexandria's city officials who provided a meeting place and other accommodations.

City employees at the Cameron Street Recreation Center (today called the Dr. Oswald Durant Arts Center, the chapter's headquarters from 1948 to 1969 and 1983 to 2018) and the Chinquapin Recreation Center (the chapter's home from 1970 to 1983) were among its most helpful boosters. In return, the chapter provided recreation center improvements and was quick to respond to requests from city officials for barbershop entertainment at many Alexandria civic events.

When the new chapter finally assembled enough voices so that Alexandria newspapers ceased calling the chorus “the Alexandria Quartet,” the demand for its music increased. One of the earliest performances took place at the Alexandria YMCA where a news reporter called the chorus the “Alexandria harmonizers (sic).”

“Remember my NAME...FAME!...I’m gonna live forever...I’m gonna learn how to fly...FAME!...Baby, remember my NAME...FAME!”