



Paul Silke

Paul W. Silke was born on July 27, 1921 in Elberfeld, Indiana to William & Florence McSwane Silke. He was an outstanding athlete and musician in high school but chose a career in music education. He received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Evansville and Master's Degrees from Indiana State University and Indiana University. Paul returned to Elberfeld after graduating from U of E and became band director, choral director, general music teacher and taught a class in typing in addition to all the music classes. He remained at his former high school for only one year before leaving there to become the band director at Tell City High School in Tell City, Indiana.

Paul soon developed a championship program at Tell City as his bands became known for their excellent musicality and precision. The band grew in size and in reputation as they excelled in all aspects of the music program. The Tell City band was one of the, if not the first band from Indiana to travel out of state to a bowl game as they were the featured band at the Blue-Gray Game in Montgomery, Alabama in the mid 1950's. They also performed at the National Jaycee Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and marched in the John F. Kennedy Inaugural Parade in Washington, D.C. His concert band was a featured band at the Indiana Music Educators Association conference in Indianapolis and twice was the opening concert band for the Indiana State Teachers Association convention. He was band director at Tell City from 1945 until 1967. During all those years his bands never received anything but 1st Division or Superior Rating in all contests they entered - and many times they were the recipient of a perfect score from all the judges. Paul left Tell City to become an associate director with the Ben Davis High School band in Indianapolis, Indiana. Here he traveled with the band to Canada and to Europe where they competed in the World Music Festival in Kierkrade, Holland and presented concerts throughout Europe.

Paul was recognized and held in high esteem by his peers from high school, college and the university ranks. He was an outstanding judge both in concert and marching band contests and did so in Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois. Twice he was a judge at the Kentucky State Fair Marching Band Contest. He was a member of the Indiana State Music Association, American School Band Directors Association, Indiana Bandmasters Association and was a past president of this outstanding group. He helped formulate the idea and was on the initial committee to organize the Indiana All-State Band Concert. He was a member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and the International Bandmasters fraternity, Phi Beta Mu. In 1995, he was inducted into the Phi Beta Mu Hall of Fame. His students adored him and for fine reason as led them to greater things and achievements. He was very firm in his demand and expectations but always fair in his treatment of his band students and his fellow man.

Paul W. Silke passed away at the age of 90 on January 31, 2012.