



Dr. John K. Colbert, 1921 - 2014

John Colbert was born in Omaha, NE on August 5, 1921 and graduated from Scotts Bluff High School in 1939. As a student he earned First Division ratings at both State and National Cornet Contests with the later resulting in an invitation from Dr. Frank Simon to attend the Cincinnati Conservatory.

In 1942 Colbert earned the B.S. in Music Education and Diploma in Trumpet from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the University of Cincinnati. From 1942-46 he was first trumpet in the Headquarters Band, Fort Knox, KY while also playing in several dance bands. In 1948 while a student at Juilliard, he attended auditions in Carnegie Hall for Fabien Sevitzky for an opening with the Indianapolis Symphony. He was accepted and while playing with the ISO he also taught trumpet at Jordan Conservatory of Music in downtown Indianapolis.

It was at Jordan Conservatory that he met his wife Ruth, a fine pianist. Seeking better pay, Colbert became band director at Knightstown, IN high school from 1951-54. In 1954 the Colbert's returned to New York City where he did graduate work at Columbia University Teachers College resulting in an M.A. and Doctor of Education in Music and Music Education with a major in Conducting. Additional performance credits include the National Orchestral Association Orchestra in New York City, and the Jimmy James Band. He has served as trumpet clinician for the Selmer Company and has performed with the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony and the Cincinnati Opera.

Following graduation from Columbia Colbert became Director of Concert and Marching Bands at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN. In 1957 Dr. Colbert was invited by Nilo Hovey to take over the Concert Band at Butler University. During his tenure at Butler, the Symphony Band performed at three CBDNA North Central Conventions. The Wind Ensemble performed at the MENC North Central Division in Columbus, OH. For seven years the Symphonic Band performed the "new music reading sessions" as well as conducting clinics for the IMEA State Conventions. Both the Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble toured annually throughout the North Central States.

Dr. Colbert has served as President of the Indiana Bandmasters Association and as President and Secretary-Treasurer of Gamma Chapter, Phi Beta Mu. He is the recipient of the "Outstanding Bandmaster" (1981) and "Hall of Fame" (1987) from Phi Beta Mu. Colbert was awarded "Friend of the Arts" by Sigma Alpha Iota. He has served as State Chairman of the CBDNA, the Indiana Chapter of the Society of Teacher Education in Music, and as a member of the National Research and Education Committee.

Dr. Colbert served for two summers as guest conductor of the Tokyo College of Music Symphonic Wind Ensemble. While in Japan he conducted High School Wind Ensembles and the Yamaha Band. He has been a guest conductor of the Irish Guards Band in London and has twice conducted the Indiana All-State Band. Dr. Colbert is a life member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the American Bandmasters Association, Pi Kappa Lambda, and an honorary member of Kappa Kappa Psi. John and Ruth are parents of two children, John Jr. and Nanette. He passed away January 28, 2014.