

# A LIFETIME OF COMMITMENT

## Retirement can't keep Covingtons away from school

By Peggy Vlerebome  
American-Statesman Staff

**R**etirement for Weldon and Verna Covington means having plenty of time to devote to children and school.

The Covingtons, for whom Covington Middle School in Southwest Austin is named, are visible and active — eating lunch at the Covington cafeteria, donating money to its library and band, cheering on whatever boys or girls team is in season, judging school contests and attending orchestra concerts, school plays and PTA meetings.

They're in all the class group pictures. At back-to-school nights, they receive a standing ovation.

At Covington, Austin High and other schools, they help students prepare for state music contests, and they are in the stands at Austin High football games and events at other schools. They're in the Longhorn Alumni Band, too.

"It keeps you close to the children, and that keeps you young," said Verna Covington, 77, who was echoed by her 84-year-old husband: "You don't get old if you're around kids."

The school named for them opened in 1986.

The Covingtons met at school. He was the new music teacher at Austin High School, fresh out of college, and she was a student.

"I was a senior, and all the girls in the glee club were after him," Verna Covington says, her eyes twinkling. They waited until she graduated before they started dating, and they celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary in August.

Together they blazed musical trails in the Austin Independent School District and built award-winning bands. In addition to school band directing, Weldon Covington was director of the Austin Municipal Band — whose paid musicians were University of Texas teachers — for 26 summers and was director of the 143rd Infantry band of the National Guard.

Verna Covington was the first woman band director in the Austin Independent

Covingtons strike up the bands at local schools. **Page 2**



Photo by Kevin Virobik-Adams

Retired teachers Weldon and Verna Covington are visible and active around the school named

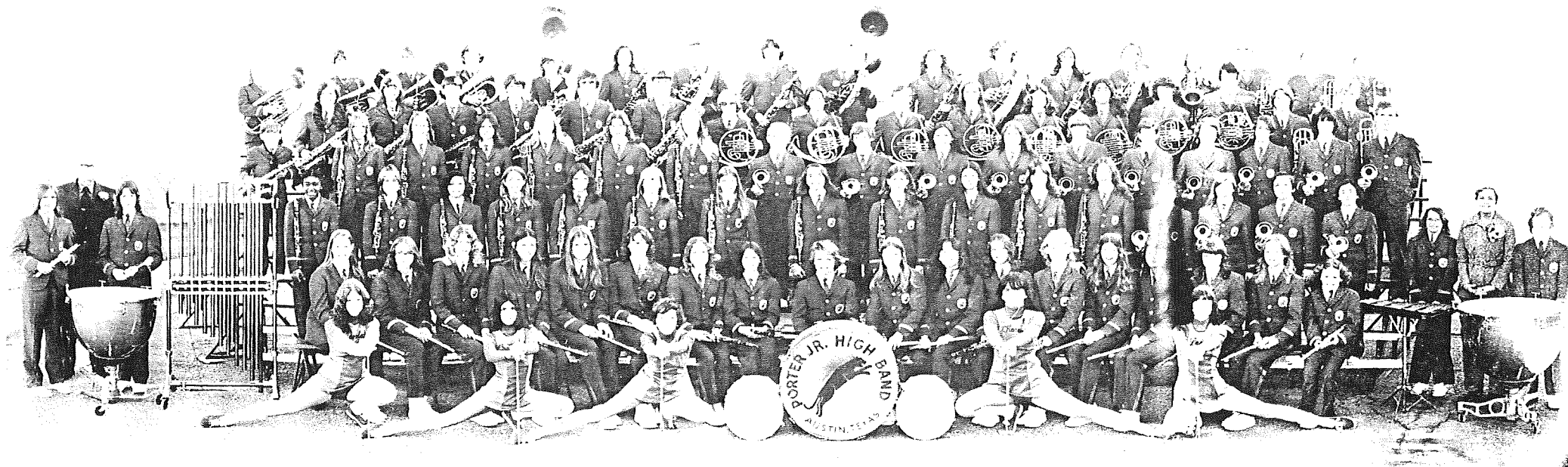
for them, Covington Middle School in Southwest Austin.

School District, starting band programs at Fulmore and Porter middle schools.

To have been and to remain so active, the Covingtons continue a lifelong healthy lifestyle — no smoking, limited drinking

and regular exercise. While she works out three mornings a week at a fitness club, he works out at their South Austin home lifting weights, a regimen he began when he was 14.





SIDE I

PROMENADE IN SPRINGTIME . . . . .	<i>Bill Holcombe</i>
SONUS VENTORUM . . . . .	<i>Claude T. Smith</i>
STORMY WEATHER . . . . .	<i>Koehler-John Cacavas</i>
BOSSA BRILLANTE . . . . .	<i>Bill Holcombe</i>
SERENADE TO A PICKET FENCE . . . . .	<i>Norman Leyden</i>
Mallet Soloists: Loril Doirin, Darryl Fiske, Laurie Hodnett	

SIDE II

STARS AND STRIPES . . . . .	<i>Sousa</i>
ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK . . . . .	<i>Van Auken</i>
SPIRITUAL CONTRASTS . . . . .	<i>Walters</i>
JUMPIN' AT THE WOODSIDE . . . . .	<i>Count Basie</i>
HANGIN' OUT . . . . .	<i>Mancini</i>
THE HORSE . . . . .	<i>James-Moffitt</i>
ITALIAN FESTIVAL . . . . .	<i>Osser</i>
THE GOSPEL TRAIN . . . . .	<i>Ployhar</i>

Austin is proud of the standard of excellence the T. N. Porter Honor Band has maintained since the opening of the school in the Spring of 1958.

The excellent co-operation of the band students, band parents, the Porter Administration and Faculty plus the dedication of the directors and their intense desire to give the School and Community of a FIRST DIVISION program every day of the year are responsible for the high degree of success enjoyed by this band.

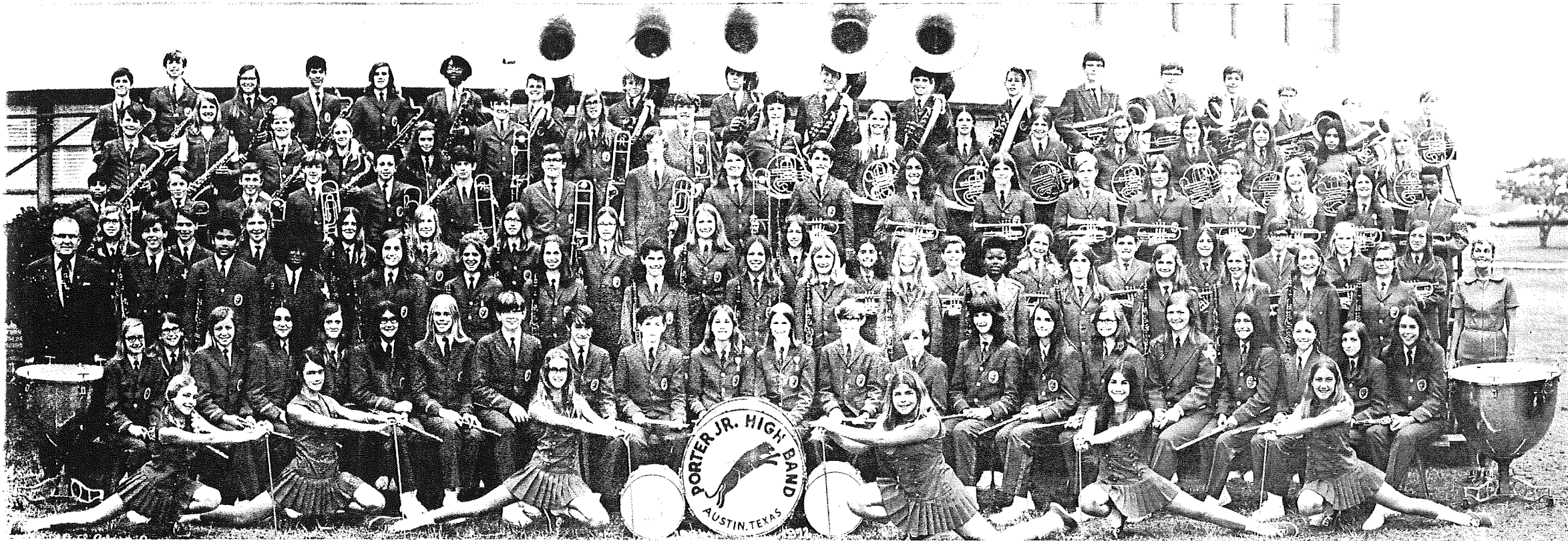
Verna Covington, Director

Advisor and Consultant, Weldon Covington

Guest Directors: Weldon Covington, Vincent R. DiNino, Linda McDavitt, Vic Williams

# PORTER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL BAND

**VERNA COVINGTON, Director**  
**M.R. DAVIS, Principal**



AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
REGION XVIII JUNIOR HIGH HONOR BAND

CLASS CC SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE

**SIDE ONE**

1. Gypsy Love Song - March . . . . . arr. Walters
2. The Black Knight . . . . . Grundman
3. Festivo . . . . . Nelhybel
4. Italian Festival . . . . . arr. Osser

CORNET SOLO: JILL HOFFMAN

HOUSTON EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

STEREO 1142

**SIDE TWO**

1. Tunes of Glory - Concert March . . . . . Cacavas
2. Trumpets Ole' . . . . . Cofield  
by 16 CORNET players
3. Yes Sir, That's My Baby . . . . . arr. Moffit  
Solo played by 7 Bass players
4. I'd Like to Teach the World . . . . . arr. Nestico
5. Highlights from Jesus Christ, Superstar . . . . . arr. O'Brien
6. Wabash Cannonball

# School board bestows honor by naming school after couple

An area couple was honored Jan. 27 when the Austin school board decided to name a new junior high school after them.

Weldon and Verna Covington, both retired from the AISD, are believed to be the first to have a school named after them while they are still living.

Covington Junior High School will open next fall near the intersection of Brodie Lane and William Cannon in Southwest Austin. Construction is now about two-thirds complete.

The Covingtons share a love of music and teaching. Both were band directors in junior high and high schools for many years.

Weldon moved to Austin from Alvin, near Houston in 1931. He became director of the Austin High School band and orchestra, a position he held for 22 years. Then he was appointed supervisor of instrumental music and served for 20 more years.

During 26 summers, he kept in practice by directing the Austin Municipal Band. Weldon's own musical instrument specialty is the trumpet.

He studied at North Texas Agricultural College and Simmons College in Abilene. He received his master's degree from the University of Texas and completed further studies at the Ithaca Conservatory in New York.



CARLA  
SLY

## Town Lake South

Verna is a native South Austinite. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Texas.

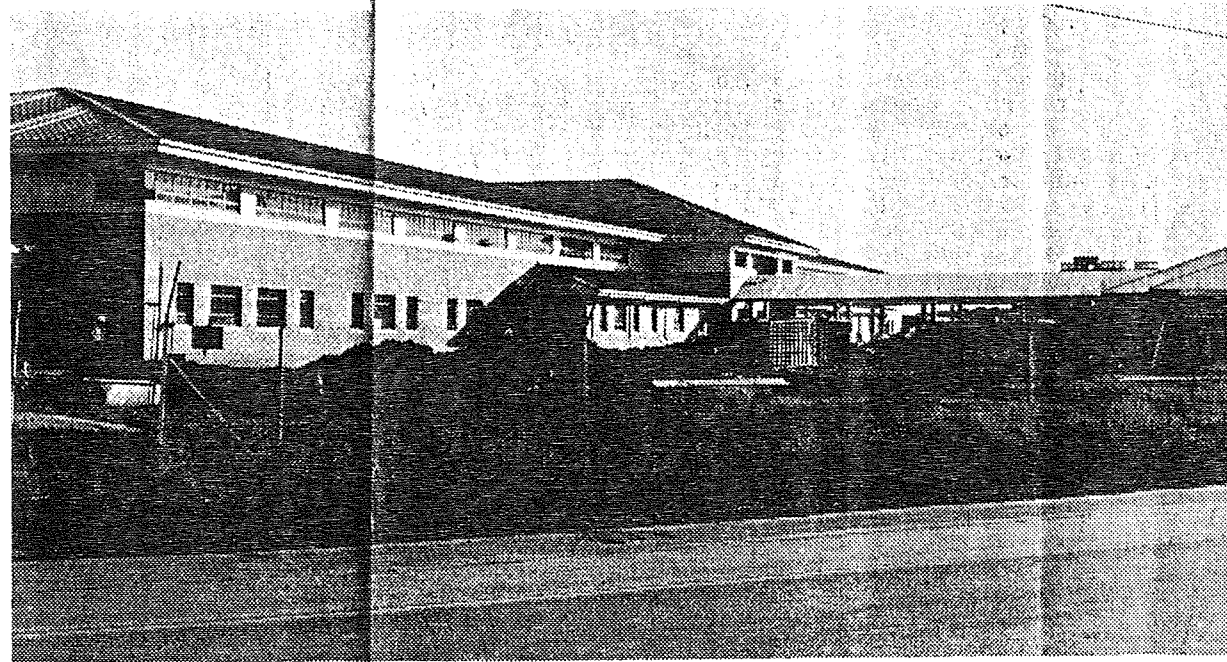
For 15 years, she directed the band at Fulmore Junior High. She rounded out her career with 19 years in the same position at Porter Junior High. Her personal musical specialty is the clarinet.

The Covingtons found time between band practices to raise two sons. Clarke has been with NASA for 22 years and is currently manager of the Project Office that is working on plans for the space station.

Scott is a counselor at Angleton High School and owner of a driving school. Each son has two children.

## Planning group

Although the Planning Commission failed to take any action on the



The new Covington Junior High School in Southwest Austin was named after two Town Lake area residents, Weldon and Verna Covington.

Photo by Carla Sly

Neighborhood Conservation Combining District at the first February meeting, developers and owners are still working steadily on agreements that would be part of the final package.

A subcommittee of the South River City Citizens is working with the developers and owners on plans for four locations, according to Brian Dudley.

One involves upgrading the zon-

ing on two lots if the owner agrees to purchase multi-family lots elsewhere in the area and downgrade the zoning there.

In a second case, the subcommittee is negotiating with the develop-

er of a proposed three-story building on Riverside Drive. Residents say they would prefer a single-story building with underground parking and landscape buffering.

The other proposed agreements involve preserving a historic dwelling and building a restaurant rather than a planned condominium development with six or seven units.

The NCCD will be considered again next Tuesday by the Planning Commission and then by the City Council Feb. 27.

## INS center debate

Controversy still surrounds the location of the Immigration and Natural Services Holding Center in South Austin.

Protestors were encouraged to picket the center during their lunch hours last week. A meeting was scheduled last Tuesday evening at the South Austin Neighborhood Center to discuss the issue.

Residents are upset because of the potential violent nature of center activities and the proximity to a proposed elementary school.

*To keep Carla informed of activities in the neighborhoods bounded by Town Lake, Interstate 35, Lamar Boulevard and Ben White Boulevard, call her at 447-2624.*

3/29/92



Dear Barbara,  
I was great visiting with you during  
the recent contest here in Austin.  
While going thru drawers + boxes  
to find photos + articles about Weldon  
+ the AHS band (to take to TMEA), I  
found several that I thought you  
might enjoy reading. Weldon had  
a very difficult time trying to get  
permission to use girls in the  
AHS band but girls have come a long  
way in the past 52 years! Right?  
Hope to see you again soon. Sincerely,  
Verna Kov

# Austin High Girls Will March In Band Upon Consent of Parents

Girl students of Austin senior high school will be permitted to become members of the Maroon band but not to march or parade unless written consent has been given by their parents, the five high schools had decided Saturday.

At a meeting attended by A. N. McCallum, superintendent and Principals George H. Wells, J. B. Watkins, I. I. Nelson, H. A. Porter and Harvey S. Williams a resolution dealing with the subject which has been in controversy for the past several weeks was finally settled.

The resolution, unanimously adopted, reads: "After careful consideration the superintendent and the principals of the five high schools recommend that girls be permitted to become members of the high school band and to play at the football games. We further recommend that the girls be

encouraged to participate primarily in the strictly musical aspects of the work of the band, rather than in the more strenuous physical activities of marching and parading; and that the director of the band be instructed to obtain written permission of their parents before allowing girls to march in parades."

It was also recommended that the director be instructed not to enter in the senior high band any student who is not a bona fide student of senior high. While this recommendation is effective immediately it will not affect present members of the band.

Plans for the construction of a field house at House Park at the rear of the baseball bleachers have been approved and bids will be opened April 5.

Plans for constructing sidewalks and retaining walls at the Robert E. Lee school have likewise been given approval.



RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING GIRLS AS MEMBERS OF THE  
AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL BAND

After careful consideration the superintendent, the principal of the High School and the principals of the four junior high schools recommend that girls be permitted to become members of the high school Band and to play at the football games. We further recommend that girls be encouraged to participate primarily in the strictly musical aspects of the work of the band, rather than in the more strenuous physical activities of marching and parading; and that the director of the band be instructed to secure written permission of their parents before allowing girls to march in parades.

We further recommend that the director be instructed not to enter in the Senior High School Band any student, boy or girl, who is not a bona fide student of the Senior High School, this recommendation to become operative at once, but not to affect any student who is now a member of the Band.

Respectfully submitted,

A. N. McCallum  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

Geo. H. Wells  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, Austin High School

J. B. Watkins  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, John T. Allan Junior High School

I. I. Nelson  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, University High School

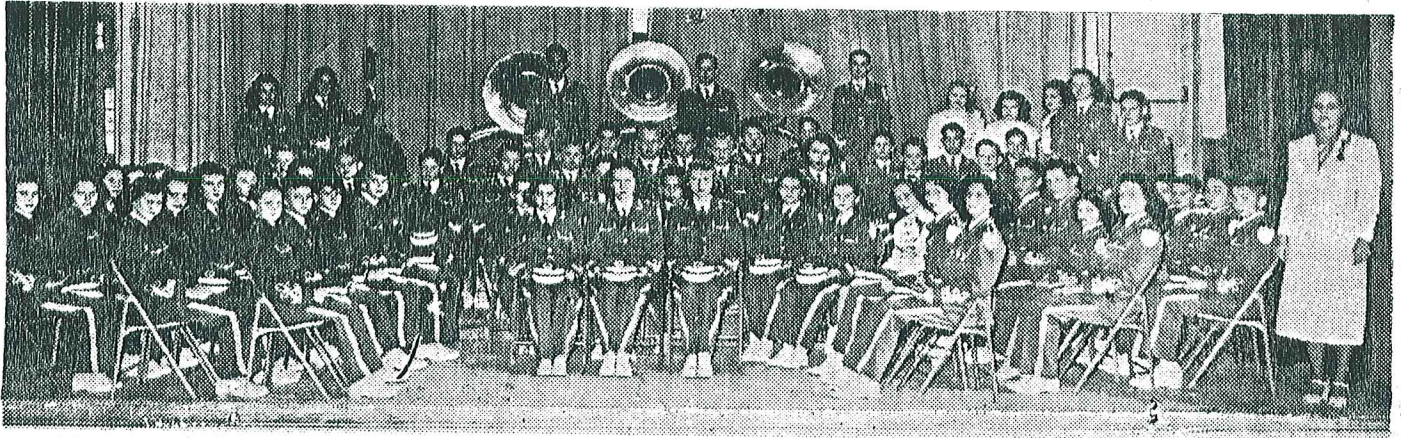
H. A. Porter  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, Baker Junior High School

Harvey S. Williams  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, Fulmore Junior High School

March 15, 1940

*no uniforms to be bought for students  
not now in A. H. S.*





## FULMORE JR. HIGH BAND

# Has Successful Woman Director

Mrs. Covington was an honor graduate of the University of Texas in 1944 with a Bachelor of Music Degree. She is a member of Mu Phi Epsilon and Pi Kappa Lambda, national honorary music sororities. Mrs. Covington started teaching instrumental music in the Austin Public Schools in 1943 and has taught at Allan, Baker, and Fulmore Junior High Schools. She has been the director of the Fulmore Band for the past six years. During that time the band has entered three con-

tests and has received a first division rating each time.

Last fall, the 64 piece Fulmore Band secured a thirty minute spot from a local radio station on Saturday mornings. The band played a program at this time and the band parents sold sponsorships to the Austin business firms. This advertising was the main source of income with which the band paid for their new uniforms, worn for the first time at the San Antonio contest, April 1st.



MRS. WELDON COVINGTON  
Director

## ON THE COVER

# "Best All-Around Band" At Del Rio

The Fort Stockton High School Band, under the direction of LaVerne R. Reimer, was awarded a Sweepstake Trophy at the Region VIII U.I.L. Contest in Alpine, April 2.

Along with the band's first divisions in Concert, Sight Reading, and Marching, eight soloists placed in first division, four in second division, and three ensembles placed in first division.

The Stockton Band was started in the early 30's, and in 1935 a band building was built. The Building consisting of a director's office, storage room for instruments and uniforms, practice rooms, and wash rooms was one of the first (if not

the first) band building to be built for a Texas High school band.

Fort Stockton High School is a Class B school having an enrollment of about 180 students. During the past two years the music department under the direction of L. R. Reimer has grown considerably. There are 50 members in the senior band, 25 in the junior band, 60 in the mixed chorus, 20 in the girls chorus, and a large instrumental class of beginners.

Two new musical organizations formed this year are the mixed chorus, and the high school dance orchestra. The orchestra has been active since its origin, playing for

community, school, and regional dances.

In February of this year the Stockton Band, in competition with thirteen other bands, was awarded a trophy for "Best All Around Band" at the Del Rio Band Clinic and Festival.

Reimer received his B.M. and M.M. degrees from Northwestern University. For two years he was assistant director of bands at Northwestern. Previous to entering Northwestern, Reimer attended the U.S.N. School of Music in Washington, D.C., and was a member of a Navy band that saw a lot of action aboard the U.S.S. Honolulu and U.S.S. Helena in the Pacific during World War II.



# Porter Band To Present Concert

The bands of Porter Junior High School, directed by Mrs. Verna Covington, will present their annual winter concert Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the school gymnasium. Admission is 20 cents for students and 40 cents for adults.

Vincent Di Nino, director of the University of Texas Longhorn Band, will be guest conductor on this program. He will conduct "American Heritage Suite for Band" by James Ployhar and "Italian Festival" by Glenn Osser.

Some of the other numbers to be presented are "Jamaican Folk Suite," "La Bella Roma," "The Happy Wanderer," "Christmas Music for Winds" and "A Fantasy on the Twelve Days of Christmas."

The Porter Band was chosen in May as the honor band of Region VIII FOR Class AA-CCC bands, and in the state final honor band competition, the Porter band placed second among the five honor bands chosen.

## Congratulations

to the T. N. Porter Junior High School Band and their director, Mrs. Verna Covington, on their selection as the number 2 band in the State of Texas, Class AA, for 1966.

The Porter Band was awarded this high honor, July 30 in San Antonio, during the Texas Bandmaster's Association Convention.

Austin can be very proud of these young musicians and this high accomplishment.



# Southwestern Musician combined with The Texas Music Educator

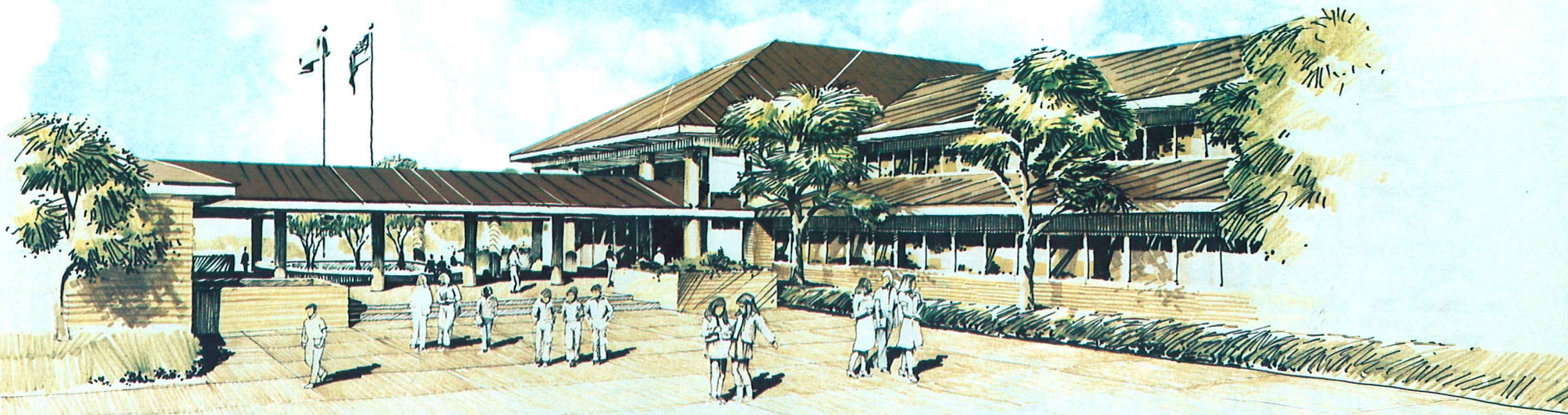
May, 1986



## VERNA and WELDON COVINGTON



**TMEA President  
1947**



COVINGTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL





# Editor's Column

By

**Bill Cormack**

## **VERNA AND WELDON COVINGTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

The Austin Independent School District recently honored Verna and Weldon Covington, retired music teachers, by naming a school for them. This came about after many former students and friends petitioned the Austin School Board to consider a request that the new Austin High School be named for the Covingtons. Upon receiving this request the board stated that high schools were customarily named for deceased persons. A new proposal was then made for the new junior high school and it was accepted.

The Covingtons have been distinguished members of TMEA for over fifty years, Weldon, serving as a band and orchestra Chairman and as President in 1947. His work at Austin high school, starting in 1932, saw the band grow from eight members to a program of over 1,000 students in 1953. From 1935 on they were winning first division places in the old National Band Contests.

Verna met Weldon when he became her choir director at Austin HS. After graduation they married and started a family. When their two sons entered school Verna enrolled at the University of Texas majoring in music education. After graduating in 1943 she immediately started to teach, becoming the first woman band director in Texas. This was during World War II when most of the directors had gone to war. Together, Verna and Weldon taught in five different schools, keeping the music programs going until the directors returned.

The Covingtons gave their entire educational careers to their students and to the Austin ISD. Likewise, they gave many, many hours to TMEA serving as officers, clinicians and in any capacity requested of them.

Twice Verna's band was runner-up to the honor band proving that in her case a woman's place was not in the home but in the band hall.

They are loved and respected by all who know them.

TMEA is most proud to have had a small part in the naming of this school in their honor.

Once again we must announce the death of several of our members and friends.

TMEA lost one of its Past Presidents shortly after the Convention as Charles Sanford Eskridge passed away suffering a heart attack.

Mr. Eskridge was a pioneer in the early years of the band movement in Texas, teaching in the 1930's in Monahans and into the 40's at Lubbock High School while being elected President of TMEA in 1941. He later moved to Austin and ultimately became Associate Commissioner of Education at TEA, serving with Dr. Edgar.

Mr. Eskridge was a frequent visitor to our office and to our annual Past-Presidents Dinner. His comments were always ones of sincere love and respect for TMEA and we looked forward to his stories of the early years of printing our magazine when he and Jack Mahan, then band director at Borger, would meet halfway in Plainview to put the magazine together.

Mr. Eskridge was a man of integrity and a true believer in music education.

\* \* \* \* \*

The death of G. Lewis Doll occurred during the Christmas season. Information concerning Mr. Doll was requested from his wife and she responded quickly. We sincerely appreciate her sharing with us many personal items for our office and our historical archives.

Quoting from the San Antonio Light

... George Lewis Doll was a prominent musician and educator who dedicated his life to his career and his family.

"He made it possible for thousands of young people to participate in orchestras and bands in Texas and Kansas," said his wife, Ruth Doll. "One of his greatest joys was the success of the San Antonio Youth Orchestra and

*(continued on next page)*



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**EDITOR . . . . . cont.**  
helping young people.”

Doll, 84, died Wednesday of a heart attack.

He was well-known in San Antonio musical circles and held several important posts, including founder and president of the San Antonio Youth Orchestra, first director of music for the San Antonio School District, organizer of the Battle of Flowers Band Festival and vice president of the San Antonio Federation of Music

Clubs. He also served 22 years on the board of the San Antonio Chamber Music Society.

“Music was everything,” his wife said. “He dedicated his life to it.”

Doll was born and reared in Larned, Kan., and lived and taught music in several Kansas cities. Later he moved to Corpus Christi, where he was principal viola in the Corpus Christi Symphony, as well as band and orchestra director for Corpus Christi schools before coming to San Antonio in 1949.

He started violin and piano lessons at age 5. As a senior in high school he won first place in the Midwest Violin Contest at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kan.

He completed undergraduate work at Bethany College and graduated with a master’s degree in music from Northwestern University. During his years at Bethany College, he was a tennis singles champion. He worked for nine years as a professor of music and orchestra conductor in several Kansas colleges and high schools.

In addition to his wife, Doll is survived by a daughter, Marilyn Yonley of Anchorage, Ala.; and a sister, Leonora Gloyd of Ann Arbor, Mich.

Doll was vice president of the Texas Music Teachers Association and a member of the Texas Orchestra Directors Association and the Musicians Society of San Antonio and served as regional chairman for the American String Teachers Association. He was a longtime member of the San Antonio Optimist Club and the San Antonio Area Retired Teachers Association. He was also a member of Incarnate Word College and Trinity University community orchestras.

He was also a member of the Methodist Church in Larned.

Three years ago Bob Hollowell, Executive Director of Kansas Music Educators Association called this office to find out if we could give him any information on Mr. Doll. We, of course, complied but during the conversation found out that Mr. Doll was a pioneer in the formation of the KMEA and the Kansas public school program. He also served during the 40’s as a president of KMEA.

Mr. Doll was a Vice President of TMEA and a strong backer of the Orchestra program in Texas. He pushed for string instruction in the Corpus Christi & San Antonio school districts and was very successful.

We respected Mr. Doll and were most appreciative of his long service to TMEA and the service he rendered to his music students he so ably served.

\* \* \* \* \*

This office received word this morning that Mike Johnstone, former choir director at Abilene Cooper HS and Past-President of TCDA, passed away a week ago in Little Rock, Arkansas. Mike was a real leader in the choral field in Texas, helping Al Skoog edit

*(continued on page 6)*

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