

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Nelson Ronald Nolden

Nelson Ronald Nolden was born in Dallas, Texas, in June 3, 1949. He was the middle child of three children of Frank and Lellah Nolden. Frank was a master aircraft mechanic and Lellah a homemaker and eventually an elementary teacher and taught English to people applying for citizenship. Frank became Chief Mechanic for Delta Crop Dusting Company (pre-cursor of Delta Airlines), in Monroe, Louisiana. While in Monroe they lived on Bayou Desiard, where Nelson learned to swim, fish, and run a boat. He and his brother caught baby turtles using large strainers on the end of a long pole and sold them to the local "5 and Dime" store for 10 cents apiece. The turtles were painted and sold as pets.

In 1960, Frank became an inspector with the Federal Aviation Agency, and they moved to Clinton, Mississippi where Nelson began his musical career at Northside Elementary School. His parents bought him an Olds Cornet. One night he dropped his cornet and jammed the mouth piece. Although he told his father that his director said not to let our parents work on our instruments, his father, being a master mechanic, decided he could fix it and, of course, twisted off the lead pipe.

A year later they were transferred to New Orleans, Louisiana where Nelson attended McDonald 28 Junior High School where he met his first mentor, Joseph Lafasso. Mr. Lafasso instilled in him the desire to become a musician. When asked to switch instruments, he volunteered to play french horn and then euphonium. Nelson attended Francis T. Nicholls High School under the direction of Joseph Lewis. Although Nicholls had one of the best band programs in the State, he felt that Mr. Lewis was egotistical, rude and treated students disrespectfully. Because of his high school band experience, Nelson decided to pursue music education as he was convinced that you could have a great band program, without sacrificing children .

While in New Orleans, Nelson took full advantage of the music offerings in the city where he heard artists such as Clarence Frog Man Henry, Pete Fountain, Fats Domino and others. His first professional gig was in the house band of a "strip joint" for a couple of weeks. While in New Orleans, Nelson met his best friend, whose mother was a cajun. They introduced him to the world of salt water fishing, shrimping, crabbing, and catching crawfish. He and his friend earned money catching and selling crabs and crawfish to the wholesale houses. He could back a boat trailer down the ramp and back before he could legally drive. He has lived on or near the water his entire life. He said he was born with one foot in the water and it still is. The day Janice was due to have their son, he was so nervous that Janice told him to get out, get in his boat, go fishing and leave her alone. So, being an obedient husband, he went fishing.

He attended William Carey Baptist College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi on a full scholarship for two years until the Baptists invited him to leave. While attending William Carey he played in a rock and roll, rhythm and blues band touring the southern gulf coast. In 1968, he and his band members went to see The Four Tops at an all African American night club as Mississippi was still segregated. He said, "We were immediately recognized, for some reason, and accepted by everyone. After all, it was "The Tops". In 1979 he transferred to Sam Houston State University. There he studied under Dr. Ralph Mills and was his senior assistant and Dr. Fischer Tull. "Dr. Mills and all of the musical experiences at Sam Houston, gave me the foundation that prepared me to teach."

After graduating from college in December of 1972, Nelson began his teaching career at Hardin ISD, a Class A school district, in Hardin, Texas. There he was the only musician in the district and, in addition to teaching band grades five through twelve, drove a morning bus route, and taught Special Education Music to life skills students (with no training). There were only 200 students in the entire high school. He started with 32 students in the high school band grades seven through twelve. In his four years at Hardin, the band earned its first ever first division rating in anything and eventually the first sweepstakes. When he left Hardin, there were sixty seven in high school

band, grades nine through twelve, and 175 in grades six through twelve. On his first day of summer band, his first year to teach, he was going to “change the world” with his teaching. He asked his students, “What is the diaphragm?” His first chair clarinet, whose mother was the superintendent’s secretary, said shyly and seriously, “Isn’t that a contraceptive?” Later he asked if anyone knew who Johan Sebastian Bach was, and his first chair trumpet raised his hand and proudly answered, “Isn’t he the guy that makes mouthpieces and mutes?” Nelson went home that evening and became extremely ill. After having success in his first year, he felt that he had arrived. Then, the next school year Diane Baker went to Hull-Daisetta and Bobby Fife to West Hardin. Their immediate success gave Nelson and the band strong competition. However, they all became friends and helped each other succeed. This began a forty-two year relationship with his best friend and “sister”, Diane Baker.

In January of 1977, he met his wife Janice while conducting a local little theatre musical, “The Music Man”. Janice was a dancer in the show and, when he saw her on stage he knew she was the one! He told his best friend and sax player in the pit that he was going to get to know her. Janice attended Liberty High School and had Lowell Clark as her band director. She played bass clarinet, was a twirler, and then drum major .

When Nelson first started teaching, he was told a “tale” about a goose landing on the football field at halftime and following the band up and down the field. While dating Janice he learned that the story was true. It took place at the Liberty stadium, and Janice was the drum major. They married in July of 1977. They borrowed \$1500.00 and moved to Orange, Texas where he became Assistant Director of the Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School Band and Head Director at Mauriceville Middle School. In 1979, he was named Director of Bands and in 1980, their son Nicholas was born. After graduating with honors from high school and with honors from Lamar University, Nicholas began his career as a performing musician and private instructor now in Austin, Texas. Nick has traveled the world playing music for Holland America Cruise Lines before settling in Austin.

While at Little Cypress – Mauriceville, Nelson, at age thirty-five, entered Lamar University to pursue his masters degree where he studied with Dr. Jimmy Simmons, Dr. Wayne Dyess, and Dr. Barry Johnson. He received his Master of Music Education and then eventually his certification in School Administration. In first semester he was asked by a young graduate student, “You don’t have a masters degree? If you don’t have a masters degree, why are your bands so good?”

In his twenty-three years at LC-M, the band program grew from ninety to a peak of 240. Under his direction, the band earned twenty-three UIL Sweepstakes and advanced to State Marching Contest every time eligible except once. They consistently ranked in the top ten in Class 4A, in the state contest. The LC-M bands performed at several Houston Oiler football games, won numerous national contests, and performed for President Ronald Reagan when he came to Beaumont.

In 1989, the LCM Band was named the TMEA 4A State Honor Band and performed at the 1990 convention. Nelson was so nervous, he still doesn’t remember much of that performance except for the smiles on his students’ faces as they enjoyed performing and a big hug from Scott Taylor, the TMEA Band Division Vice President.

Before the State Honor Band concert, then president of TMEA Robert McElroy, who guest conducted on that concert, worked with the band on a slow, lyrical section of one piece. Robert asked the band to close their eyes and play without him conducting and to interpret the music the way they thought it should be played. The third time they played with eyes closed, the band sounded great. Robert turned to Nelson and said, “Just get out of their way and let them play.” Later Nelson asked the band who they would like to have as a guest conductor at the Honor Band concert and they unanimously said, “Robert McElroy.”

In 2000 Nelson left LC-M and moved to Highlands, Texas to be the “Director of Performing and Visual Arts, Foreign Language, and Communication Applications” for the Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School

District in the Baytown and Highland area. He retired in 2009 after nine years of service to the schools and communities of Baytown. In 2013, he became Executive Secretary of Region 10, UIL Music.

Nelson is a member of TMEA, past member of TMEA state board, TBA, TMAA, TMAC, served on the state UIL Music Advisory Committee, Phi Beta Mu, Kappa Kappa Psi, and Phi Mu Alfa Honorary Lifetime Member. "I was so honored to be inducted into Phi Mu Alfa by Dr. Jimmy Simmons and to have the fraternities brass choir perform a piece written by his son Nicholas. It was titled, "My Father, My Teacher, My Friend." He was a member of the Little Cypress Lions Club for 23 years where he served in every office and was "Lion Of The Year" three times. He is an active adjudicator, clinician, guest conductor, and is a presenter of staff developments and trainings in Texas, and across the south. In 1990, Nelson received a letter of acclamation from then Governor Bill Clements for his service to the students of the LC-M School District and the citizens of Orange, Texas. In 1991 Mayor Dan Mohon, presented him with the "Key To The City Of Orange, Texas" and proclaimed September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1991 as "Nelson Nolden Day". To celebrate "Nelson Nolden Day", Nelson says you should drink adult beverages and eat bar-b-que, boiled crabs, and shrimp. In 1997, the 75<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature presented Nelson with Resolution H.R 758 for his service as an educator in Texas Public Schools. He was inducted into the Little Cypress-Mauriceville School District's Teacher Hall of Fame and honored at halftime in 2014. Nelson has taught or supervised in Class 1C, 2C, 3C, 1A, 4A, 5A and 6A. The creation of the 4A (now 5A) Texas All-State Band arose from an idea of Nelson's and colleague Val Rose.

Nelson is extremely proud of all of his ex-students who span the globe. They include an international banker, Communications Director of The World Health Organization, numerous members of the military including career military musicians, many in the medical profession including a designer of heart valves. There are several members of law enforcement, County Judge, fire fighters, engineers, professional musicians, class room teachers and administrators, and a multitude of successful band directors. One of his proudest moments was attending State Marching Contest, as a spectator, where three of his ex-students had bands competing in Class 2A and 4A.

Nelson and Janice love traveling the United States in their RV, when they get a chance. They are both mentoring many of the young directors in Region 10 and across the state. He truly believes that teaching is why God put him on this earth and would do it all again, in a heartbeat. He feels so blessed and lucky to have been a band director in Texas and gives all of his credit to his mentors, students, parents, and staff. "Being a Texas band director is the best job in the world. I loved going to work every day and having fun. As a teacher I had a blast and got paid for it. After all, it is and always should be about the kids."

Nelson is extremely honored to be selected to the "Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame". "I can think of no greater honor."



STATE OF TEXAS  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

WILLIAM P. CLEMENTS, JR.  
GOVERNOR

October 24, 1989

Greetings to:

*Nelson Nolden*

*It is a pleasure to congratulate you on achieving the honor of having the best 4-A concert band in Texas.*

*I am sure that you and the band members worked diligently to earn this award. This is a testament to the value of hard work and commitment to excellence. I urge you to maintain your high standards.*

*Mrs. Clements joins me in wishing you the best in the future.*

*Sincerely,*

*W. P. Clements, Jr.*  
William P. Clements, Jr.  
Governor



*dg/ls*

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School Band Program has had approximately 750 students

WHEREAS, under the direction of Nelson Nolden, the LCM Band has participated in the State Marching Contest eight out of nine years; and

WHEREAS, the LCM Band has been "Sweepstakes Winner" for thirteen out of fourteen years; and

WHEREAS, under this program one hundred students have been "All Region" students, and eight have been "All State"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Nolden has contributed to the education and growth of many students; now therefore

I, Dan Mohon, Mayor of the City of Orange, Texas do hereby proclaim Monday, September 16, 1991 as

"NELSON NOLDEN DAY"

in the City of Orange in recognition of appreciation by students and former students as well as the entire community for his commitment to excellence in his profession.

HAVE CAUSED THE SEAL OF THE  
CITY OF ORANGE, TEXAS TO BE  
HERETO AFFIXED THIS THE 13TH  
DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1991.

  
*Dan Mohon*  
Dan Mohon, Mayor





The State of Texas  
House of Representatives

H.R. No. 758

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Nelson Nolden's longtime tenure as band director at Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School has earned him the respect and admiration of his students and fellow teachers, and his dedication to education is truly deserving of special legislative recognition; and

WHEREAS, A native of Dallas, Mr. Nolden attended high school in New Orleans and studied music education at Huntsville's Sam Houston State University; he earned his master's degree in music education from Lamar University before accepting his first directorship at Hardin High School in Hardin, Texas; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, this noteworthy gentleman was hired as assistant band director of Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School, marking the beginning of his illustrious career at this institution; two years later, he was named head band director, a position he continues to hold today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Nolden has helped to establish a tradition of excellence during his years as band director, with many of his former students going on to careers as professional musicians; one of the high points of Mr. Nolden's career came during the 1989-1990 school year, when band members were selected as the Texas Music Educators Association Class 4A State Honor Band; and

WHEREAS, The Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School marching band has earned a 1st Division rating in the UIL Region Marching Contest for 20 years, while the school's concert band owns a remarkable 19-year record of winning sweepstakes at the annual UIL Concert/Sight-Reading Contest; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Nolden has made a lasting difference in the lives of many young people during his long career as an educator, and by encouraging those individuals to embrace the emotional power of music, he has established an environment of trust between himself and his students, while instilling in them an appreciation for the importance of discipline and cooperation and a lifelong love of music; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 75th Texas Legislature hereby honor Nelson Nolden for his many years of service to the students of Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School and extend to him sincere best wishes for continued success and happiness in the years to come; and, be it further

H.R. No. 758

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for Mr. Nolden as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.

Levis of Orange

*Paul J. Lujan*  
Speaker of the House

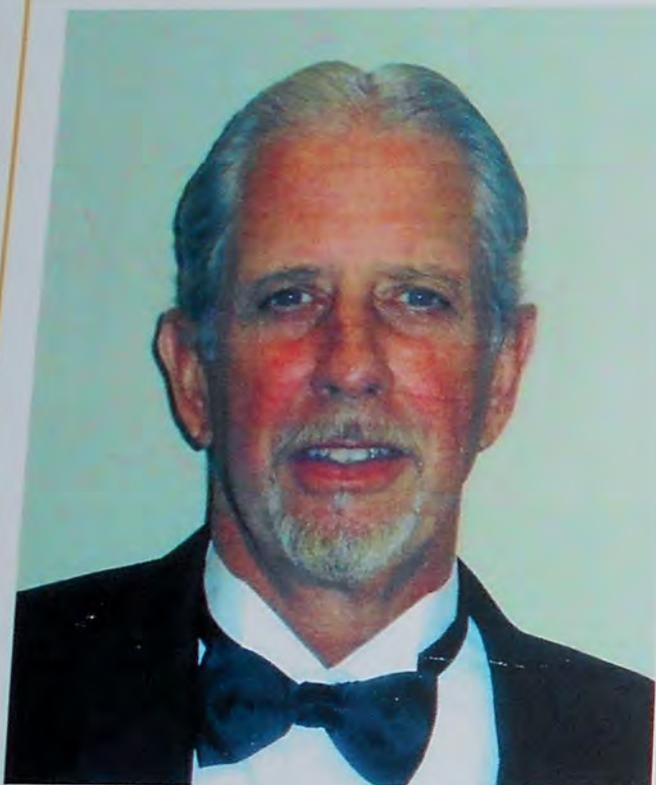
I certify that H.R. No. 758 was adopted by the House on May 2, 1997, by a non-record vote.



*Sharon Carter*

Chief Clerk of the House

# 2013 Hall of Fame



## Mr. Nelson Nolden

**Affiliation with LCM:** *Nelson Nolden was the successful and well-loved Director of Bands at LCM from 1977 to 2000.*

**Contributions:** *Nelson Nolden has been a professional music educator for the past 41 years. He taught or supervised programs in Classes 1C, 2C, 3C, 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, and 5A schools. The band programs under Mr. Nolden's direction have received numerous UIL Sweepstakes awards and Outstanding Performance awards at national competitions. During his 23 years at LC-M, his bands have performed at professional football halftimes and performed for President Ronald Reagan. They appeared at UIL State Marching Contest on numerous occasions, and were selected several times as the Region X and Area Honor Band. In 1990, the Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School Band, under his direction, was selected as the Class 4A State Honor Band and performed at the Texas Music Educators Convention in San Antonio, Texas. Before his recent retirement, he served as the Director of Fine Arts for the Goose Creek Schools in Baytown and Highlands, Texas.*

**Additional Information:** *He has received personal accommodations from Bud Adams, The Texas State Legislature, Governor Bill Clements, and was honored by Mayor Dan Mohon by presenting him with the Key to the City of Orange, Texas. He is an active adjudicator, clinician, and music education consultant. He is a member of the Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, Texas Music Adjudicators Association, Phi Beta Mu, and the Texas Music Administrators Association. He is currently serving as the Region X, UIL Music Activities Executive Secretary. He earned his Bachelor of Music Education Degree from Sam Houston State University and his Master of Music Education Degree at Lamar University. Mr. Nolden has spent his entire career in Region X.*

# Hall of Fame

*Nelson Nolden*

Presented by

Little Cypress-Mauriceville CISD



*Dr. Pauline Hargrove*  
Superintendent

November 1, 2013

*David Hester*  
Board President



LION OF THE YEAR

AWARD



PRESENTED TO

NELSON NOLDEN

FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE,  
LOYALTY AND DEVOTION TO LIONISM



LITTLE CYPRESS  
LIONS CLUB

1984-85





CYPRESS MAURICEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTORS- NELSON NOLDEN, DAVID FRAZIER



Our Leader ?! \*

THE LITTLE CYPRESS-  
MAURICEVILLE  
BATTLING BEAR BAND AND  
HONEYBEAR DRILL TEAM ARE  
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
NELSON HOLDEN & DEAN LUMPKIN.

AMERICAN

19 OCT  
12:50  
25 OCT  
17 OCT



























