

Robin Watson

Robin was born June 12, 1943 to Beatrix and Logan Watson in Monroe, Louisiana. His father died when he was three and his mom raised her four boys on the salary of a school cafeteria worker.

In the fifth grade, beginners started in band at Crosley Elementary. Mr. Carter, who had just graduated from college, was the band director. After a music listening test the students were asked what instrument they wanted to play. Robin told him he wanted to play the clarinet. He really meant the trumpet. He went home and told his mother and she went to church and found that Mrs. Landrum had a trombone. That is how he became a trombone player. The trombone she borrowed was very old. It had a very small bell, the slide hardly moved, and the two sections were simply twisted together. Mr. Carter said this would not work. So they rented a school instrument.

In 1956 West Monroe High School opened as an 8-12 grade school. After the eighth grade Robin went to Falfurrias, Texas, to spend the summer with his brother Frank and his wife. Frank was a preacher at that time who worked on a dairy to make enough money to make ends meet because his church was small. Frank made a deal with Robin. He did not have to get up at 4:00 am to go to the dairy if he would practice the trombone that Frank had bought for him. Being a city boy who had never been on a dairy he was thrilled with the idea of only working half a day at the dairy. He practiced a lot all summer and went back and beat all of the twelve trombone players and stayed first chair until he graduated. As a senior he received the Sousa Award, the Music Guild Outstanding Musician Award, and was in the Louisiana All State Band.

In college, at what is now the University of Louisiana at Monroe, his band director was Dr. Joe Barry Mullins. Band was starting at the beginning of the 1961-62 school year. Dr. Mullins told a group of us about Jeanne Foster. She went to Neville High School and was a really good clarinet player who had not signed up for our college band. He wanted us to go talk to her about being in the band. We went to her house and sat in the den and told her how great the band was. It worked. She joined the band and later changed her major to music education.

During one year of college Robin was the band director at the Louisiana Training Institute, a reform school for boys. He also was the commander of the ROTC Band his senior year. He was commissioned as an officer in the U. S. Army in May of 1965. He taught half a year at Mamou High School after the band director died in 1966. He went on active duty in June of 1966. He and Jeanne Foster, the clarinet player they recruited mentioned earlier, were married in August of 1966. He went to Viet Nam for a year in November of that year.

In August of 1968 Robin became the band director at Crossett High School in Crossett, Arkansas. Robin took over a program that had been strong at one time, but was small and weak when he arrived. The first marching show had 22 band members in it. When he left six years later this class 3A program was much larger and often successfully performed 5A literature.

In August of 1974 the family moved to New Boston, Texas. The New Boston Bands had been strong for many years. At the point Robin arrived the band was struggling. After meeting him a nearby band director and his assistant predicted that he would not last six months at New Boston. After a couple of years the band was back in its winning tradition for the next six years. He was chosen teacher of the year by the district one year. While there the band traveled out of state and were successful in contests in Kansas City, Nashville, Orlando, and Knoxville.

In 1982 Robin became the head director at Lamar Consolidated High School in Rosenberg. That year the band went to Florida. On arriving the contest director informed them that they were the only band in the contest which was a shock. They had hired three judges, set up a contest site, a banquet, and hired Alfred Reed as the guest speaker, all for one band. Obviously the Lamar Consolidated Band won the contest.

In 1985 Robin became an assistant to Bill Duggan at Dulles High School for three years. Teaching at Dulles was a great opportunity to work with David Lambert and Bill Duggan and become a

part of the Ft Bend ISD Band Program.

When Kempner High School opened in 1988 he became the head director there for fourteen years until he retired in 2002. The Kempner Band membership grew from 120 the first year to a high of 240 in the next seven years. A new school opened at that time and the band started back at 120 then began to grow again. In spite of this up and down band size, the program maintained consistent success and quality. The band traveled and competed in contests out of state in St Louis, Orlando (twice), Norfolk, and New York City. The band earned "Best in Class" in the Adjudicator's National Band Invitational in Norfolk, Virginia in 1996, also at the Big D Band Classic in Dallas, Texas in 1995, at the American Classics Band Festival in Dallas, Texas in 1994, and at the Music Fest Orlando Band Festival in Florida in both parade and concert events in 1993.

In April 2002 Robin took all three Kempner Concert Bands, Jazz Band and the choir to New York City. The Honors Band won "Best in Class" at the New York All-Star Music Festival.

After his two years military service, and thirty-five years band directing Robin retired in 2002. He and Jeanne now live in La Grange, Texas and spend their Summers in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. Daughter Laura lives in Houston with husband Michael Doyle, sons Logan, Wesley, Michael, and daughter Gwenna. Daughter Lynn lives in Bostic, North Carolina with husband Craig Julian and daughters Abby, Trinity, and Hanna. Daughter Lee lives in Houston with husband Todd Derschied and daughters Alex, Cori, and Daria.

Robin enjoys working in the La Grange area helping area bands with region music, solos and ensembles, marching and concert preparation



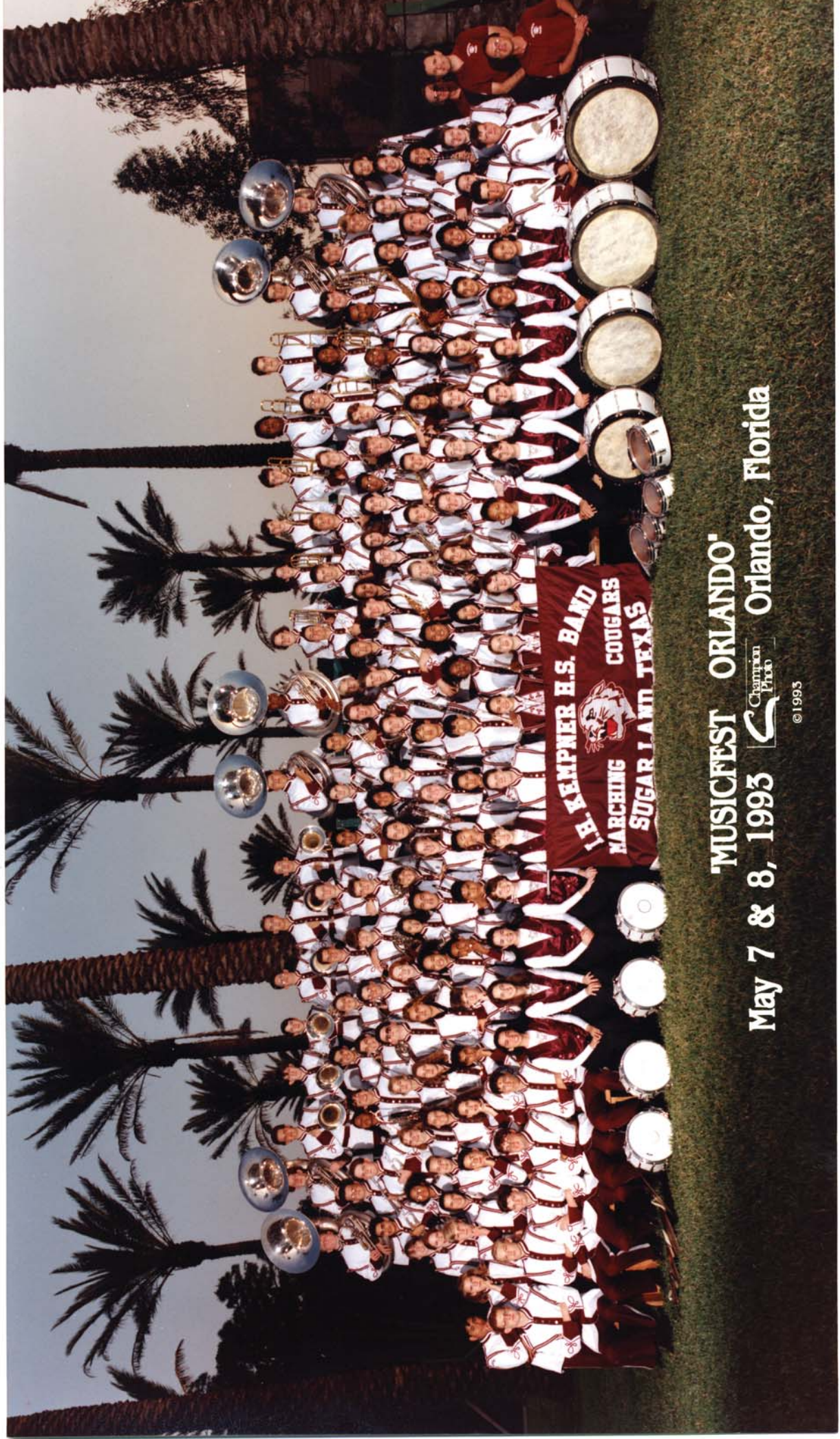












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