

## Ed Crosley

At every chapter meeting since I've been a member of Derbytown, there has been a tall white-haired gentleman with a white beard seated toward the back of the baritone section. In recent years he has mostly stayed seated while the rest of us have hit the risers during practice. His name is Ed Crosley and he's allowed – he's been doing this for a lo-o-ng time.

Ed still sings with the chorus and with the Matinee Singers after 43 years with the Akron chapter. He may not move as fast as he used to, but he shows no signs of stopping.

This soft-spoken man, who will reach his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday this December, has made quite an impact on the JAD. Ed was named to the JAD Hall of Fame in 1978, Newsletter Editor of the Year in 1982, and JAD BOTY in 1990. Now, anyone who has actually aspired to greatness realizes the amount of sweat required. Ed makes it look easy. Here's a little of his story.

Ed was born Dec. 27, 1919 in Parkersburg, WV, to a showbiz family. His own Vaudville experience started in 1928 at the age of 9, when he appeared with his mother, father and sister in the Friars 1928 Review at the Goodyear Theater in Akron. He continued to perform in the annual reviews until 1934 when he entered high school.

Ed went to East High School, where he sang with the acapella choir. It was here that he teamed up with 3 other guys and sang as a quartet. They would perform in the Friar's Reviews from 1935 to graduation in 1938. He doesn't remember the name of the quartet, but the music was mostly Jazz songs which were popular at the time.

In 1939, Ed graduated from East H.S. and applied to the University of Akron. At the outset he majored in chemical engineering, however, he was unsatisfied with the curriculum and switched to mechanical engineering. While he was going school he also worked at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. Such a busy schedule allowed him no spare time and he was forced to quit singing altogether\*. While he was at U.A. he joined ROTC. This, earned him a commission as a Second Lieutenant when he enlisted in the Army in 1941, and a trip to Camp Davis and Officer Training School.

When Ed got his bars he proposed to Billie "***a girl I went to high school with that sat beside me and kept bothering me all the time***". They were married on Jan 6 1943, before he went back to active duty following OTS. When he went to Camp (now fort) Eustice, VA, Billie went with him. When they left Fort Eustice, he went to the south pacific (Port Moresby, New Guninea) and she went home to Akron where she gave birth to their first child, Kenneth.

*\* Ed is a baritone / quit singing altogether...you do the math. (Just kidding)*

Ed served in the in the Air Defense at Port Moresby and was also attached to the 135<sup>th</sup> Philippine Army, 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Ed had a brief opportunity to sing with a chorus in a USO type show in the local theater of operations while stationed there, but nothing lasting-his barbershop years were still far ahead of him. Preparations for the invasion of Japan were underway in the Philippines at the time, however, neither Ed nor his unit ever took part in it. While they were waiting, "Fat Man" and "Little Boy" took care of things for them.

Ed was finally able to finish his degree in 1950 after eleven years, two changes of major, a war a wife and a son. While he was in the Army, Ed was a range officer and was required to take training classes for all the various machines involved in his job. When he was released and went back to finish his degree he settled on electronics instead. He continued to work at Goodyear but switched to the Aerospace Division. He also joined the Army Reserves after his discharge.

Ed was active in his church choir for many years. The wife of Art Ruggles, a member of the Akron Chapter was also in the choir. Art pestered Ed to join the chapter, which was relatively new (chartered in 1945, Akron, like most of the society at the time was quartet based) but Ed refused because of his commitment to the choir. As fortune would have it, the director moved out town and the choir was forced to disband. Finally, Ed allowed himself to be talked into joining the society as something to fill the void.

Ed finally signed up in 1966 after working (through Art) on staging for the annual "parade of quartets" for two years. True to form, he jumped right in and by 1968 had become a chapter advisor for a handful of Cleveland chapters, his first district post.

In 1972, Gene Courts heard of Ed's experience in audio recording, and approached him to take over recording the district contests. Together they did the first contest in Pittsburgh and Ed continued on until 1995 when he passed the reins to someone else. He was Music VP from 1990 to 1995, and continued to serve on the JAD Board of Directors music committee until 2000. While doing the recording for the district, Ed produced three vinyl albums for the district of quartets and choruses.

In 1978, Frank (Buffy) Buffington, started what became the JAD's premier music education forum, **Apple Core**. Ed of course was in on the ground floor at this innovative showpiece held on the campus of Kenyon College.

Eventually in 1984, Ed took over the administration of Apple Core, but he didn't limit himself here either. He was (and is) the district authority on copyright law, so he taught classes as part of the curriculum. Ed stepped down from his administrative duties in 2001, passing the baton to Herb Schreffler.

On quarteting; Ed tells us that he was in a registered quartet known as "The Crosstown Chordsmen", with Harvey Smith-lead, Glen Weaver-tenor, Ben Shane-bass for a number of years. Eventually, Ben Shane moved out of town and was replaced by Joe Wagner. Then one day the lead, Harvey Smith, decided to switch to baritone. Fred Glover, was recruited for the lead spot and suddenly, Ed was OUT! This was just after his and Billie's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (Jan 6, 1993). "That was my association with singing in a quartet".

Ed has been an active member of the Akron chapter since 1966. He has packed a lot of barbershopping into 43 years and made his home with us (he has never held membership in another chapter). He has made a name for himself in the district and the society, raised a family – one son, three daughters, and just made it look so easy.

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Sadly, Ed passed into the chapter eternal on March 31, 2010, just 3 months after his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. It seems so inadequate to say we will miss him. And even though he had slowed down in recent years and passed on some of his duties and responsibilities, the whole society that he lived and worked for will eventually take a moment and stop to wonder **how** he made it look so easy.

by: Mark A. Nedel  
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