



The Suncoast Statesmen

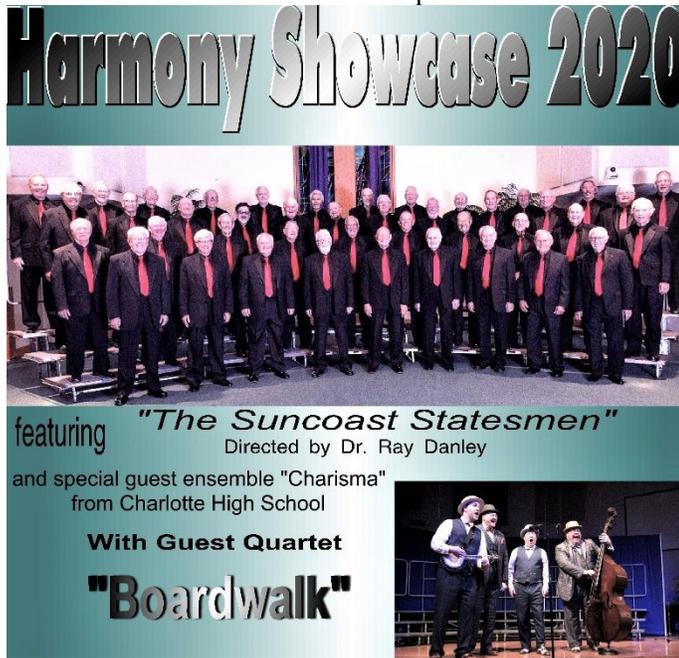
A newsletter for members and friends of *The Suncoast Statesmen*

Spring 2020

Volume I Number 3

ANNUAL SPRING SHOW CANCELLED

Our annual spring show scheduled for 22 March had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



The decision was taken after full consultation with Barbershop Harmony district staff, and an ongoing examination of contemporary news reports.

Purchasers of tickets were offered a full refund for their tickets. As an alternative, they were offered the chance to use their tickets for next year's show. Some purchasers opted to contribute their refund to the several outreach endeavours the chorus supports in our local community.

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2020 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Since 2012, the *Suncoast Statesmen* have been awarding Neil Plum Scholarships to deserving seniors from Charlotte High School and/or Port Charlotte High School.

The awards are named for the long-time former director of the chorus, Neil Plum. This year's winners will each receive a \$1,000.00 scholarship.

The 2020 winners are Jennifer Peters and Parker Williams. Both students are brass players at Port Charlotte High School---Jennifer on trumpet, Parker on tuba. Both will enter college in the fall to continue their education.

Normally, our scholarship winners are announced at *Harmony Showcase*, our annual spring concert, and they are presented with their scholarships at the Senior Awards Night at their respective high schools. However, because all such events were cancelled, this year's winners were announced early.

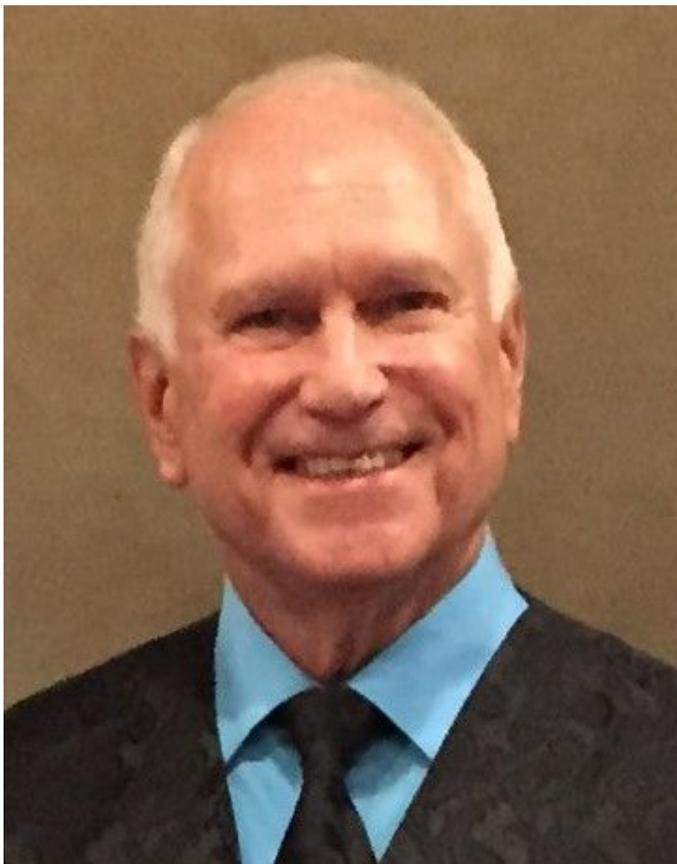
The *Suncoast Statesmen* are extremely proud of each scholarship winner, and we are delighted to be able to assist them in their educational pursuits. The chorus also acknowledges the contributions from patrons of our concerts and sing-outs to our scholarship fund.

Since the inception of the awards, the chorus has given more than \$10,000.00 to deserving students.

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CHORUS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Duane Fenn, who has been a member of the *Suncoast Statesmen* since 2016, was appointed assistant director of the chorus in the fall of 2019. In that role, he assists the director, Dr. Ray Danley, during the regular season, and helps help teach the chorus new repertoire during the summer.



Duane was raised in a musical family, and had four years of experience in the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra. As a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society since 1993, he earned seven Silver Medals and a Gold Medal with the *New Tradition Chorus*.

Duane has also sung with two District Champion quartets, *Lakeside Edition* (2004) and *Rush Street* (2008). With these quartets he qualified as an International Quartet Finalist five times.

Duane and his wife, Chris, who also sings, have three children who grew up in music as well.



COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPIST

We were blessed during this past year to meet a real community philanthropist, Mr. Gus Hawkins, who made us an offer we could not refuse last fall.

Mr. Hawkins promised to match any and all donations to our scholarship fund, once we reached the \$1,000.00 level on our own. Being without the benefit of an annual show this spring, our primary fundraiser, we looked back at the amount of scholarship monies we had raised at the past three years' shows.

Mr. Hawkins, understanding that our inability to raise substantial scholarship funds this year was outside our control, felt that the kids should not suffer because of that. To our great delight, he presented us with a check for \$500.00, the full amount he would have donated to our scholarship fund, had we been successful with reaching our \$1,500.00 donation target on our own!

The *Suncoast Statesmen* extend our warmest gratitude to Gus Hawkins for his generosity and commendable community spirit!

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2021 EXECUTIVE

The following slate of officers will assume their positions in January 2021:

President – John Walton; **Vice-Presidents** – Brad Burt, Ray Danley, Stu Pease; **Secretary** – David Weaver; **Treasurer** – Paul Rothschild; **Asst. Treasurer** – Rick Burns; **Members at Large** – Gary Branch, Jack Cronkwright, Dick Cunningham; **Past President** – John Williams

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (continued)

“Working with Ray Danley has been a very enjoyable experience,” Duane says. “It’s wonderful to be teaching men to enjoy harmonizing, and be in fellowship with like-minded, caring men.”

Needless to say, the men on the risers are incredibly happy to be benefitting from Duane’s talent and experience.

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