



The Suncoast Statesmen

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

Winter 2020

Volume I Number 2

ANNUAL SPRING SHOW

A sold-out audience is expected for the performance of our annual annual spring show on **22 March, 4:30 pm**, at the Burnt Store Presbyterian Church in Punta Gorda.

The chorus will sing a number of songs from our repertoire, including some our audiences have not heard before. Several of the chorus quartets will also perform.

Our special guests, the award-winning *Boardwalk*, an unconventional quartet, are sure to delight everyone.



Dedicated to energetic, comedic performances fusing costumes from the roaring 20's and four-part harmony, they feature a unique selection of string instruments. They call their music "Barber-Folk" and it's inspired by many of their musical heroes of days long gone.

Leading up to our show, we will perform at two sing-outs for the community, the first at First Baptist Church in Port Charlotte, the second at Alligator Park. These are part of our outreach activities throughout the year as part of our commitment to our community.

* * * * *

UPCOMING EVENTS

Chorus Sing-Out

First Baptist Church

20 February 2020, 10:00 am

- 0 - 0 - 0 -

Chorus Sing-Out

Alligator Park

23 February 2020, 3:00 pm

- 0 - 0 - 0 -

Singing Valentines

12 - 14 February 2020

- 0 - 0 - 0 -

Harmony Showcase

Burnt Store Presbyterian Church

22 March 2020, 4:30 pm



© 2020 Suncoast Statesmen

2020 HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS

The *Suncoast Statesmen* Hall of Fame was established in 2012 to bestow recognition and honor for exceptional contributions to the Barbershop experience in Charlotte County. Honorees are selected by vote of a three-man nominating committee selected by the chapter President.

The 2020 inductees are: **Gary Branch, Rick Burns, Frank Gracie, and Ed Lewis.** The brief summaries that follow only touch on the contributions these men have made to our chapter.

Gary Branch has been with our chorus since 1997, serving as president for six years. In his 49th year of barbershopping, he also sings with the *Great Lakes Chorus* in Michigan, and with a quartet, the *Shades of Grey*. He has been at international competitions twelve times as a chorus member, and twice in quartets. He received our chapter BOTY award in 2013.

Rick Burns, a BHS member for twenty years, has been with us since 2004. He served as chapter treasurer for nine years, writing computer programs to allow the board of directors to make informed financial decisions. He also set up the chapter's scholarship program, developed a chorus website, and drafted a new members' handbook. He won our chapter BOTY award in 2012.

Frank Gracie, who happily celebrated his 91st birthday at the end of January, has been singing for fifty-five years. He has been a strong lead voice with the *Suncoast Statesmen* since 2010. He is a member of one of our chapter quartets, *Seems Like Old Times*, with whom he regularly astounds audiences with the power of the beautiful posts he holds...forever, it seems.

Ed Lewis, the only chorus member older than Frank, at 95, has been singing since he made his debut on the radio at the age of three. His first experience with a *capella* was in a high school choir, and he's been with the *Suncoast Statesmen* for twenty-seven years. He also sings with the *Cape Harmonaires* in New Jersey. He has received a BOTY award from chapters in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

These men are more than worthy of joining the previous inductees in our Hall of Fame: Bud Gault, Herb Liechty, Richard Lindsey, Bill Lucast, Neil Plum, and Lee Reser.

* * * * *

GUEST NIGHT

Fifteen aspiring singers from Charlotte County joined with us at our annual **Guest Night** on 28 January at the Burnt Store Presbyterian Church.

The evening was aimed at introducing a *capella* barbershop singing to men who might be interested in joining the chorus. Many of our visitors were accompanied by family members eager to be part of the festivities.

Chorus Director Ray Danley led the entire group in the learning of a new song from scratch, *That'll Be the Day*. By the end of the evening, everyone in the audience, including the ladies, was able to belt it out in four parts.



"Our Guest Night is an opportunity to experience the joy of creating harmony with others," Ray said. "Regardless of the singing one has done in the past, this was an opportunity to enjoy the fun of making music together."

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS

As a result of outreach initiatives such as **Guest Night** by all our members, our chorus has increased in size by four members since January.

We are pleased to welcome Tom Canoles, Doug Desilets, Robert Muelle, and Vern Savoie.

Men interested in singing with us are always welcome to attend our rehearsals, held every Tuesday night, 7:00 – 9:30 pm, at the Burnt Store Presbyterian Church.

* * * * *

2020 BARBERSHOPPER OF THE YEAR

Dr. Ray Danley is the 2020 winner of the *Suncoast Statesmen Barbershopper of the Year Award*.



Ray has been directing our chorus since 2015. A resident of Ontario with his wife, Vicki, he also directed a chorus at home, the *Gentlemen of Harmony* from 1958-1967 and again from 2001-2015. Several members of that chorus sing with the *Suncoast Statesmen* during the winter months, a tribute to their love and respect for Ray.

In 1976, Ray directed the *Dukes of Harmony* to a gold medal at the BHS international competition, the first chorus from outside the U.S.A. to do so. He holds five competition medals in total, two of which are gold.

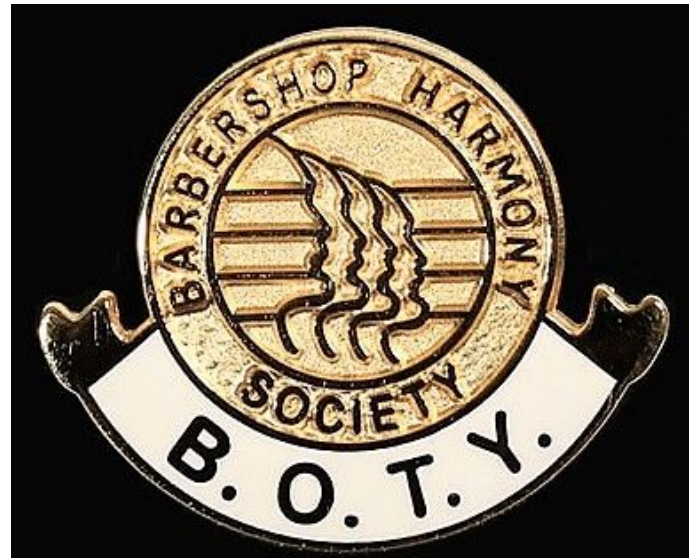
Ray has been a member of the international Barbershop Harmony Society's Hall of Fame since 2018.

During his time with the *Suncoast Statesmen*, Ray has worked to boost membership, encouraged and coached

BOTY AWARD

Each year, the *Barbershopper of the Year Award* is awarded to a chapter member who has, during the previous year, most closely embodied the exceptional commitment and service by members of the *Suncoast Statesmen* to the ideals of barbershop singing.

The award has been bestowed in our chapter almost every year since 1990, when the first winner was Neil Plum, for whom our annual scholarship program is named.



All twenty-six winners of the award have demonstrated their dedication by exemplifying our commitment to support community and charitable organizations, as well as senior citizens and schoolchildren in our district. Their names are listed on our website---

<https://suncoaststatesmen.com/about.html>

We are immensely proud of their contributions.

* * * * *

DANLEY (continued)

novice and experienced singers alike, and brought joy to each and every member. He also conducts a series of *Learn to Sing!* sessions for all comers every January, aimed at enhancing the pleasures of singing with others.

Congratulations are extended from every member and friend of our chorus---this is a well-deserved honor!

* * * * *