



E. ELWOOD NICHOLS, 1911 - 1997

E. Elwood Nichols began his teaching career in 1931 in Rockport, IN, as a science and math teacher. He had graduated from Central Normal Teacher's College in Danville, IN, where he majored in science and math, but was also active in the music department. While at Rockport he organized the first school band as an extra-curricular activity. In 1936 he was hired to teach science and math at Monon H.S. in Monon, IN, but also to begin a co-curricular band.

In 1938 he moved to Hammond where he became the assistant band director at Hammond High School, the Junior High director, and the physics teacher. While in Hammond he worked with Nilo Hovey who was the band director at Hammond Clark H.S. Hovey became a life long friend and mentor to Mr. Nichols.

World War II interrupted his Hammond career. He enlisted in the Navy in 1942. He became a Communication's Officer and separated in late 1945 as a Lt. Commander.

After the war he, his wife, and daughter returned to Brownsburg, his hometown, where he became the band director. He obtained his Master's in Music Education at Butler University, where he also taught low brass.

In 1949 the growing family moved to Angola. Here he built an award-winning music department. He was committed to building a whole department, including an orchestra. He, along with his vocal music colleague, established a schedule that alternated band and choir. Band met three days a week and choir two. Orchestra, which he taught, was after school. He always believed this made better musicians and students. Many of his students were able to experience all three organizations.

Mr. Nichols was quite active in the Northern School Band, Orchestra, and Vocal Association, serving as president in 1958. He also held memberships in other Band professional organizations, including Phi Beta Mu and the American School Band Directors Association, where he served in research committees and as secretary. He hosted many contests and judged in NISBOVA and later, ISSMA contests. For thirty years he served on the staff of the Smith-Walbridge Summer Band Camp.

Mr. Nichols was a gifted teacher. He applied his analytic skills to his teaching, using this method to understand embouchure difficulties in his students. He was a master at rehearsal techniques; his bands proved this by consistently winning superior ratings in NISBOVA contests, only rehearsing three hours a week.

He retired in 1974 and opened a music store where he continued to give lessons and encourage young people. He remained active in his community and professional organizations until no longer able. He passed away in 1997, having been widowed for twenty years. He left a legacy of music to his many former students and to his four daughters and grandchildren.

News-Sentinel, The (Fort Wayne, IN) - Wednesday, April 16, 1997

85, of Angola died Monday in Lakeland Nursing Center. The Danville native retired as band director for Angola High School in 1974 after also teaching in Rockport, Monon, Hammond and Brownsburg schools. He was a veteran of World War II and owner of Nichols Music Store from 1973-85. His wife, Marian, died in 1977. Surviving are daughters, Elizabeth N. Lord of North Olmsted, Ohio, Carol N. Loehrke of Monticello, Margaret N. Rothrock of Angola and Rev. Nancy J. Nichols of Muncie; sisters, Amy Horton of West Newton and Cosette Wolf of Reynolds; eight grandchildren; and two step grandchildren. Services are 10 a.m. Friday in Angola United Methodist Church. Calling is 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday in Klink Funeral Home, Angola. Burial will be with military honors in Circle Hill Cemetery. Memorials are to the church or Metropolitan School District music department.