



Ben L. Niles, 1916 - 2006

Born December 10, 1916 in Rushville, IN, Ben Niles was a charter member of Gamma Chapter of Phi Beta Mu. As a high school student at Rushville he won many honors on both the trombone and baritone, graduating in 1934. His expertise as a soloist also won him a four year scholarship to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music where he graduated in 1938. He later earned a Master's degree from Indiana State Teachers College in Terre Haute. While at Cincinnati he played under Dr. Frank Simon's direction with the famous Armco Band which performed weekly broadcasts on radio (WLW and NBC) for four years.

Mr. Niles taught at New Salem, IN High School from 1938-1941 before enlisting in the Army on January 23, 1942. His professional experience provided him the opportunity to become a member of the newly formed 28 piece band for General George Patton. This became the Seventh Army Band which traveled for four years overseas performing for many dignitaries during World War II.

After returning from WWII in October of 1945, Mr. Niles taught at Connersville High School until 1948 when he became music director at Greensburg. He was at Greensburg High School for eleven years as director of both the band and choir. His bands at Greensburg won 11 consecutive first division ratings. His teaching career spanned a total of 37 years with the last 17 years in Warren Township as a junior high choral teacher.

Ben Niles was a member of Old Bethel United Methodist Church, a 32nd Degree Mason, and an active participant in the Shrine Band and the Scottish Rite Orchestra. He was inducted into the Gamma Chapter Hall of Fame in 1991. In retirement he volunteered for 23 years at Community Hospital.

Mr. Niles passed away on January 2, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Billie; daughters Beverly Conrad and Barbara Roth; four grandchildren and one great-grandson.