

VERLE BETTS



In 1959, when Monterey Bay Academy was looking for a music teacher, Verle Betts had just taken the Armona Adventist Academy Band and choir on a month-long cross country tour to the Atlantic City Youth Congress, where he presented what is believed to possibly be the first high school marching band in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. This “can do” spirit and “get it done” attitude, combined with this progressive teaching style, struck a chord with the MBA search committee and he was immediately hired.

Driven by a commitment for performance excellence, Verle began to move MBA’s music program forward, from not only traditional and classical forms but also to more contemporary music with modern composers, styles, and presentations. He began to develop the Oceanaires performance personality and expectations of excellence by requiring memorization of all music so as to be fully entrenched in the brain and allow a true performance from the heart. Verle taught his students to look in the mirror while singing so they could know if their audience was being blessed by what they saw. He embraced innovation by recording the choir and Oceanaires in a series of records. His vision was to have the music program of MBA be more than a school choir and band, but to be treated and viewed as elite and select performance touring ensembles, promoting MBA to both the church and business communities. He advocated for his students successes and began the fight for tours to be allowed outside of California.

Attention to these program elements created a new level of excellence and helped to create the framework that would allow MBA to become a musical powerhouse in Adventist secondary education for years to come.

MBA is proud to recognize Verle Betts for his innovation and vision for the music program at MBA, laying the foundation for the future accomplishments experienced by many.