

Dr. Paul Mansur

I am a native Oklahoman, born July 19, 1926, in Hammon, Oklahoma to Josie Pauline Bayles and Estle Thurman Mansur; both of whom were born in the Oklahoma Territory in what is now western Oklahoma. My family moved about quite a lot during my early years. We settled in 1936 in the Wewoka area of Seminole County. My musical career began in 1941 as a Sophomore beginner on the French Horn under the tutelage of Everett Wilcox, the highly regarded band director of the Wewoka High School Band. During the following year I surpassed the other hornists and became the first chair player.

In 1943 I entered the Oklahoma Military Academy and graduated from that institution in 1944. I continued my musical work in the OMA band under the direction of P.H. Kelley, (known as Power House to the cadets). I gave up the horn for the next two years as I entered the US Navy in Sept., 1944. After attending Boot Camp and Service School I was assigned to the USS Leray Wilson, a Five Inch Destroyer Escort serving in the Philippines.

I was discharged in time to re-enter the University of Oklahoma in the Fall term of 1946. (I had attended the summer session in 1944 before entering the Navy.) My first major at OU was in Civil Engineering. Dismal math skills ended that venture and after considerable searching I changed to the School of Music as I had been playing with the university band and symphony orchestra for two years. I had also taken one semester of private study with George Yeager, the solo hornist with the Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra. I completed two Bachelor of Music degrees during the next three years in Music Theory and in French Horn, graduating in 1951. As a student, I had also played extra parts and substituted in the Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra.

Shortly after graduation I married Norma Louise Reed of Konawa, Oklahoma. We recently celebrated our 55th wedding anniversary. We have two children: Max Lynn Mansur of Centreville, VA; and Kay Lenora Toothaker of Somerville, Alabama. We now have six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

In the fall of 1951 I secured a Graduate Assistantship in Music along with the Phoenix Symphony Guild Scholarship to attend and teach French Horn at Arizona State College at Tempe and a playing position with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra. After two years I graduated with a Master of Arts in Education degree.

In 1953 I began a two year term as Director of Bands of the Marianna High School, Marianna, Arkansas. When Arkansas voters elected Orval Faubus as Governor, we ran! My next position was Director of Bands in the Tucumcari, NM Public Schools for the next four years.

In 1959 I accepted an Assistantship with the University of Oklahoma Bands and began my doctoral degree in Education with a teaching field in Music. I played in the University Symphonic Band, directed the Air Force ROTC band, and helped with the conducting and planning of the Pride of Oklahoma marching band. I also taught Horn at the University for one semester.

In the fall of 1962 I had completed my course work but needed to stay in Norman to work on the dissertation, so I accepted a post as Director of Music Therapy at Central State Griffin Memorial Hospital. I held this position for three years and count the

experience as one of the best learning experiences and most satisfying job of my life along with being the poorest paid position of my career.

I completed my doctoral degree in 1965 and with an introduction to Allen Shearer, President of Southeastern, by Kenneth Peters, was hired at the rank of Associate Professor and Chairman of the Music Department. I taught at Southeastern Oklahoma State University for twenty five years, beginning in 1965 as Chairman of the Music Department, and retired in 1990 as Dean, School of Arts and Letters.

During my tenure I became the Editor of the International Horn Society, serving in that capacity for 17 years with a total of 23 years on the IHS Advisory Council, the organizations governing body. Highlights of that experience included eight trips to Europe to represent the IHS at Symposia and other functions. Other activity during these years included representation to committees and conventions of the state association of college music departments, the Music Educators National Association, and the Jazz Educators Association. SOSU engaged in a thorough self-study and became an accredited full member of the National Association of Schools of Music during my tenure.

During my time at SOSU I was the Principal Horn of the Sherman Symphony Orchestra for 20 years. I encouraged many of our better students to audition for the Sherman orchestra and provided transportation for up to four students per year who were successful in being accepted for the orchestra.

In 1975 I was elected to the Board of Directors of Camp Fire, Inc. and served five years in that capacity as well as on the local Board of the Bryan County Council of Camp Fire for some ten years.

While teaching at SOSU I also preached for the Blue church of Christ for some ten years and later for 11 years with the Utica congregation.

We moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1995, and settled in the area known as Hixson. I soon began playing the French Horn in community bands and the Cadek Community Orchestra sponsored by the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. I also began teaching private lessons to students in several area high schools. A number of these students were selected for membership in the Tennessee All State Band and Orchestra and have since gone on to become professional music teachers and musicians. At present, I am the conductor of the community band known as the Metro Musicians and am playing with the Cadek Community Orchestra.

I was delighted in 2003 to be designated as an Honorary Member of the International Horn Society. This is the most prestigious award the Board of Directors can bestow on any living horn player and I feel honored indeed to be numbered with the most esteemed colleagues who have received this honor such as Barry Tuckwell, Hermann Baumann, Mason Jones, and other such noted hornists.

My wife and I remain active in church work with the North Hixson Church of Christ. At present we are engaged in teaching prison inmates in Tennessee and North Dakota via a Bible Correspondence course.