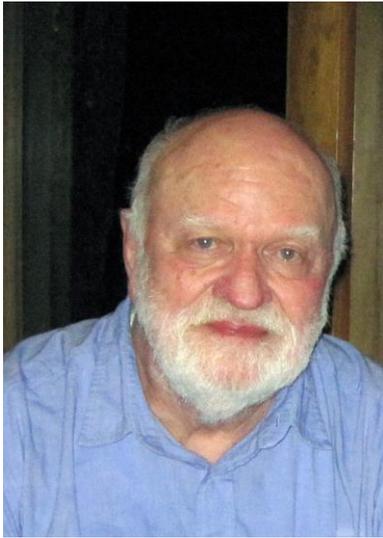


Distinguished Alumni Award: Steve Omar Sample, Sr., class of 1948



University High School honors Steve Omar Sample, Sr., class of 1948, as the 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient for his accomplishments as a jazz musician, performer, arranger, and educator.

While at U-High, Sample sang in the chorus, composed and directed the music for Senior Night, worked on the Clarion yearbook and Claironette staff, and served as a student manager of the football and basketball teams.

Sample's U-High experiences set the stage for his career in jazz music. He played and arranged music professionally with local and traveling road bands including the Larry Lonney, Leo Pieper, and Ray Robbins bands, as well as the Freddy Schaeffer's All-Girl Band. During the Korean War, Sample served in the U.S. Air Force where he directed and arranged the sixteen-piece band, The Modernaires, as well as a five-piece combo known as the Continentals. In 1955, Sample enrolled at The University of Alabama, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees, and then served as a tenured professor. During his career, Sample taught theory and composition, served as Staff Arranger for the concert and marching bands, founded the jazz program, and organized the bachelor's and master's programs in arranging. Sample's former students consist of professional jazz musicians, arrangers, and educators too numerous to list.

Sample has served as a judge, clinician, and director of national jazz festivals and competitions. He also authored a jazz theory textbook, *An Approach to Mainstream Jazz and Pop Harmony*. He also served on the U.S. College All-Star Jazz Band Advisory Board and two terms as President of the Alabama State National Association of Jazz Educators.

While at The University of Alabama, he toured nationally and internationally with the Jazz Ensemble, as well as worked with jazz greats, including Maynard Ferguson, Dizzy Gillespie, Dee Barton, Bill Watrous, Urbie Green, Al Vizutti, Gene Bertoncini, and Rich Matteson. He also collaborated with celebrities, including Bob Hope, Dave Brubeck, Jim Nabors, Vic Damone, Joan Rivers, and Toni Tennille.

For his contributions to jazz education and performance, Sample was inducted to the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame. Sample recently wrote new arrangements of the U-High fight song and alma mater for the band and chorus. He is a booster of the U-High jazz program and recently purchased a seat in the renovated Stroud Auditorium in honor of his teacher, Ruth Stroud.

Sample resides in Bellingham, Washington, with his wife Brenda and his two cats, Mona and Lisa.