

# Our New President, **Neil Lantz**

## **FOUR FRESHMEN LEGACY HONORED IN PALM SPRINGS, CA**

On January 20, 2013, I was privileged to represent the Four Freshmen Society Board of Directors as the City of Palm Springs, CA proclaimed the day to be The Four Freshmen Day and unveiled a star in the Palm Springs Walk of Stars in honor of the Four Freshmen, past and present. Along with the installation of the Golden Palm Star on the Walk of Stars, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors also presented a proclamation honoring the history of the group and its current members.

The star and the impressive ceremony were sponsored by Dr. H. William Brown, a long-time fan and recent new member of the

Society. The Four Freshmen star was the 350th to be placed since the Walk of Stars was founded in 1992 on the sidewalks of Palm Canyon Drive. Honorees include Medal of Honor recipients, former United States Presidents, show business personalities, literary figures, pioneers, civic leaders, and humanitarians. The first group of inductees in 1992 included William Powell, Ruby Keeler, and Ralph Bellamy. The following twenty years have seen the dedication of Golden Palm Stars to nearly 200 show business honorees including superstars Marlene Dietrich, Bob Hope, Al Jolson, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Elizabeth Taylor, and on and on.

During the ceremony, major emphasis was placed on the 65-year legacy of the Four Freshmen. Guest speakers at the event included Sue Barbour, Bob Flanigan's son Steve, and Donna Barbour Donaldson, Don Barbour's daughter. Ken Albers' widow, Nancy, was also in attendance. Tributes were offered by Jim Pike, founding member of the Lettermen, and Tim Hauser, founder and current member of the Manhattan Transfer.

(continued on page 3)



# **FOUR FRESHMEN MAKE STAR GRADE**

by Dr. William Brown, FFS Palm Beach, FLA

The dedication of the 350th star for the Palm Springs Walk of Stars brought out a crowd of over 250 consisting of mainly devoted fans, local celebrities, and several media and music industry professionals.

The star and the event were sponsored and co-organized by H. William Brown, Ph.D., a member of the Society. He also served as co-master of ceremonies for the event along with Robert Alexander, President of the Palm Springs Walk of Stars. The dedication ceremony began with President Alexander presenting each of the Four Freshmen with a replica of the star and a proclamation from the mayor of Palm Springs declaring Sunday, January 20, 2013, The Four Freshmen Day. President Alexander then turned the microphone over to H. William Brown.

As a young lad, William Brown would visit Capitol Records recording studios with his uncle, a former sideman with the big bands. It was there that William first encountered the founders (Group 1) and has been an ardent fan since.

The founders were well represented by guest speakers at the dedication and after-party in the presence of Sue Barbour (Ross Barbour's widow), Donna Barbour Donaldson (Ross's daughter) and Stephen Flanigan (son of Bob Flanigan and Mary Flanigan). Unfortunately, Bob's widow Mary was unable to make the trip from Las Vegas.

They all expressed how thankful and appreciative they were of the honor of a star for their respective kin and all the groups that followed.

Also in attendance were Nancy Albers, widow of Kenny Albers (Group 3), who was with the Freshmen at the time of some of the most memorable recordings and a large contingent of the extended Barbour family.

Three famous close harmony groups have openly attributed their vocal styling as being influence by the Four Freshmen. Two of these groups were represented in person by their founders.

Jim Pike of The Lettermen recalled how he first heard the Four Freshmen on campus and it changed his life.

Tim Hauser, founder and active member of The Manhattan Transfer, stated that in 1979 when he first formed the group he was profoundly influenced by the Four Freshmen and is a close friend of members of the current Group 22.

Don Shelton, an accomplished clarinetist, vocalist and former member of the famous Hi-Lo's, had the following to say in a letter addressed to the dedication,

"I would like to say that the Four Freshmen were the first vocal group that captured my attention back in the 50's when I first heard them live at Texas Tech. Gene Puerling, founder of the Hi-Lo's, always gave much credit to the Freshmen for laying down the standard for a male vocal group."

All in all, these peers praised the groups from 2 to 22 for carrying on the legacy of the Four Freshman by staying true to their original unique sound.

The Four Freshmen, the guest speakers, special invited guests and the Board of Directors of the Palm Springs Walk of Stars were guests at an after-party hosted by H. William Brown.

