

## So This is Florida:

On May 21 we closed the sale of our home in Toledo. On the same day we closed the home we bought in Mulberry, Florida. How is that for a stretch? Why you may ask? A big reason for us is the number of concert dates by the Four Freshmen in Florida in the winter, the cold winters in Toledo helped with the decision also. Since moving and beginning to get acquainted, we found we have a virtual aviary in our back yard. And, we anxiously waited for the arrival of the Four Freshmen.

First came Sarasota, a seaside town on the west side. Great Christmas show here followed by Largo and another great Christmas show. You can tell by the picture they were ready to go home for Christmas. Then came Bonita Springs where they played to two oversold crowds of very impressed people. That venue held around 1,200 for each show. Many of them Floridians and others were Snowbirds from the Midwest, running from the snows up north. Their performances were well rehearsed, crisp on their attacks and having a good time on stage. The crowds were really impressed with lots of "oohs, ahs, and yeah." exhibiting total acceptance. A CD or two were sold also.

Then came Mt. Dora, a bustling little town in Central Florida. This is a place where folks come and hide or getaway from the usual routines. The smaller crowd was rewarded with the Freshmen at their best and they responded in kind.

Now here is where I am going with this article. Having seen them many times in my lifetime, already, I keep coming back. This group of four are on a mission, and enjoying operating out of the box. Their song selections were part of a historical time tunnel starting with *Poinciana* into the present day selections. Bob and Curtis took us on a musical trip that was very heart warming — a great evening of Freshmen stuff, copied by many others. They have worked hard, rehearsed hard, and in general, created a high level of energy on stage.

What tunes did they play? I'm not going to tell you. Y'all get your behinds out the door when they are in your town and see for yourselves. You will not be disappointed. These Guys are viral. "Catch 24!"

Just Sayin,  
Mel Meyers, V/C FFS



Ready to go home for Christmas.

## Remembering Bob, Ross, Bobby & Blue II

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That Hoosier helpfulness and happiness Though we've lived for years in Southern California, That I knew as just a boy. My heart kept its Indiana Home."

Bob also made a few heartfelt remarks, "I don't get excited about much anymore, but I am REALLY EXCITED about receiving this honor!" President and Mrs. Fong were gracious hosts, and the President's conversations over the evening capably demonstrated his wide range of knowledge and interests from the history of the Four Freshmen to atmospheric science; from his thoughts on the future of higher education to the Butler basketball program (for which they became nationally known as NCAA Division I finalists in 2010). He was indeed a most interesting individual. In 2011, he was named president of Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pennsylvania near Philadelphia. Unfortunately, Dr. Fong died unexpectedly in 2014.

Butler's commencement day, May 10, began with a morning breakfast with President Fong, the Barbours, the Flanigans, Butler deans, trustees, and FFS guests. The graduation ceremony was held in the nearby historic Hinkle Fieldhouse. In the robing area prior to entering the arena, Ross and Bob were officially welcomed by Blue II, Butler University's English bulldog mascot. Rumor has it that final approval by Blue is required for all doctoral candidates. In view of the Four Freshmen history with their legendary *It's a Blue World* (still a part of the Freshmen repertoire as heard on Group 24's CD, *Four Freshmen and Friends*), I'm quite certain that the guys were highly regarded by Blue II.



The dramatic Commencement ceremony followed as President Fong welcomed thousands of friends and families of the graduates. He opened the doctoral presentation by stating "At this ceremony ..., Butler University pays tribute to distinguished achievement." He proudly announced that "Bob and Ross were once music majors here." He went on: "They began singing together in 1948, along with Ross' brother Don and their friend Hal Kratzsch. As the Four Freshmen, they put out hit song after hit song for more than a decade." He explained the innovative open harmony of the Freshmen and cited the group's continuing success, "Still going 60 years later...." His presentation concluded: "On the recommendation of the faculty, with the approval of the Butler University Board of Trustees, and by the authority vested in me, I confer upon you, Ross Barbour, and upon you, Robert Flanigan, the degrees of Doctor of Arts, honors cause, with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities thereto."

Following the ceremony, late FFS member Bob Davis, my wife Sara Lou, and I hosted a reception on campus to congratulate Drs. Barbour and Flanigan. We were joined by President and Mrs. Fong, university officials, Society members, the Flanigan and Barbour families, and friends. It was a fitting conclusion to a wonderful tribute for two of our favorite Freshmen. Notice the musical décor on the platform of Blue's statue in the midst of our group photo ... certainly another appropriate symbol in recognition of Blue II's connection with Ross and Bob.

Unfortunately, Ross, Bob, Bobby, and Blue II have all passed on, but the memory of that wonderful weekend back in 2008 lives on for many of us in the Society.

