

# Conventions Through the Years

by Christian Rank, FFS Historian

One day in late 1990 or early 1991, I was in the store browsing through CDs looking to build my library of music on the then still new format, when I stumbled upon The Four Freshmen Capitol Collectors Series. Wow, here are the Freshmen's greatest hits in CD form! Naturally I bought it and couldn't wait to get home and listen to it. After reading the very informative liner notes, which filled in a few historical gaps for me, I saw an address for the Four Freshmen Appreciation Society. Wow, the Freshmen actually have a fan club! Of course I inquired and eventually joined. To my absolute delight, I found out they actually have an annual convention! Well that lead me to attending my first convention in Oshkosh, Wisconsin in the summer of 1991.

Over the next 30 plus years, these conventions have spanned Groups 17 through 27 while celebrating all the groups before them. They have taken me to 13 states through the midwest, south, east and western United States. Through these conventions I have gotten to know some wonderful people and make many friends, including most of the Freshmen!



## A Memory From My First Convention in Oshkosh, WI, July, 1991:

After getting settled in I wandered into the hotel lobby not knowing or having met any FFAS members yet. I notice a tall gentleman had just checked in, maybe he's a member so I approach him and ask if he's a member of the FFAS, he replies: "Yes, I'm Palle Christensen from Denmark." And I thought I traveled far for this! Wow! Anyway Palle continues: "I think there's a few members in the bar, I'll join you shortly. Nice meeting you. See you shortly." So I wander over to the bar, grab a seat and order a beer. I notice a couple gentlemen conversing at the other end of the bar, maybe these are the members Palle was referring to, so I walk over and ask if they belong to the Four Freshmen Appreciation Society and one of them turns around and replies: "Yes, I'm Ross Barbour, please to meet you." And the other says "And I'm John Bangs. Pleased to meet you." Then I went numb!

They invited me to join them for a drink. I'm sitting at a bar next to Ross Barbour! Pinch me! So the first three Four Freshmen Society members I met in person were Palle Christensen, Ross Barbour and John Bangs in that order. Three people who played a vital role in the history of the Freshmen and the Society. And that was the start of 30 plus years of attending conventions!

