



Fresh News

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JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2023

The Four Freshmen Society 2023 Convention

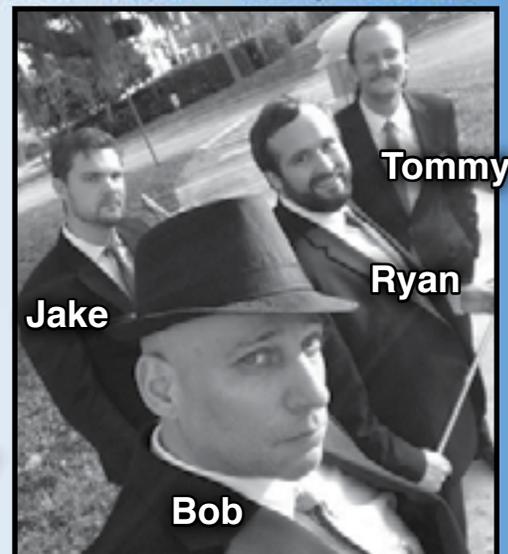
1948  2023

*“Back Home Again In Indiana”
Celebrating 75 Years*

Fort Wayne, Indiana
September 21 - 23, 2023



Hal Ross Don Bob



Jake Bob Ryan Tommy

Our
President,
**Donna
Gallaway**



GREETINGS FFS MEMBERS & FRESHMEN FANS

Time is drawing near for our big 75th anniversary celebration of The Four Freshmen. I sincerely hope you have registered to join us in Fort Wayne this September. If not, there is still time. Plus, we have pushed out the date when the registration fee goes up. Hotel rooms are filling up now, so make that reservation soon!

We continue to mourn the loss of faithful FFS members who now include Bill Martin. Bill served as our “piano man” for the Wannabes for many conventions. He was such a kind and helpful man.

I am also sad to report the loss of Tom Purvis who was instrumental in keeping FFS going when John Bangs retired. Tom also served as President of FFS for more than a decade and took over *Fresh News* finding a publisher in Sandusky, Ohio, where it remains today. (Thank you Eric Winkel!) Tom also chaired the 1995 annual convention in Huron, Ohio. He was a dedicated supporter of The Four Freshmen and will be missed by many.

We will gather as the FFS family once again in Fort Wayne with no guarantee we’ll be able to do this again. So, I urge you to do your best to make this event top priority. See you in September!



Tribute to Jim

by Gil Peterson

As many of you know, Jim and Linda Williams were our Co-chairs for the very successful 2022 Bay City convention originally scheduled for 2019. However, because of the Covid pandemic, the FFS Board of Directors voted to postpone the convention until the pandemic was under control. As a matter of fact, both Jim and Linda were victims of the pandemic. Thankfully, they both recovered after a long and painful struggle. Eventually, we were able to hold the convention in June of 2022. Jim and Linda accomplished something very remarkable. Because of the relationship they had established with the marketing manager of the hotel, all the terms and conditions of the original hotel contract remained as negotiated in 2019. I believe they were able to do this because the hotel staff had such respect for Jim and Linda. Those who attended remember how all the hotel management and staff extended themselves to accommodate our every need.

Sadly, many of you do not know that Jim Williams passed away several months ago. Jim was the Pastor of a local church in the Bay City area. Jim was a very softspoken gentleman who possessed incredible strength, tenacity and courage. He was truly loved by his congregation and all who knew him. He will be virtually impossible to replace. I’m not sure we even want to try. We all send our thoughts and prayers to his wonderful family and friends. May God bless his eternal journey to somewhere beyond the back side of the sky.

A Diamond Jubilee Celebration

*We are planning
a big opening night celebration
Friday night.*

75th Anniversary Highlights

- Remembering the original Four Freshmen
- Honoring the past Four Freshmen
- Celebrating the Legacy
- The Four Freshmen live

***Dress in your best with your diamonds, glitter and all.
It's going to be a great night!***

Marlene and Dave

FFS 2023 Convention Schedule*

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

9:00am-4:00pm	Registration
9:00am-4:00pm	113 Club Hospitality & Silent Auction
10:00am-12:00pm	FFMF Meeting

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

2:00pm-3:30pm	Wannabees
3:00pm-4:30pm	FFS Board of Directors Meeting

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

7:30pm-10:30pm	JAM SESSION-Cash Bar
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FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

9:00am-4:00pm	Registration
9:00am-4:00 pm	113 Club Hospitality & Silent Auction
9:30am-12:30pm	Tour Veterans Memorial with box lunch
9:30am-12:30pm	Sweetwater Sound with box lunch

FREE TIME – LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

2:00pm-3:00pm	Convention Coordination Committee Meeting
2:30pm-4:00 pm	Wannabees
5:30pm-6:30pm	Meet and Greet with Cash Bar
6:30pm-7:30pm	Dinner
8:00pm	Four Freshmen Concert Mayor Tom Henry Purdue Fort Wayne Music Department Four Freshmen Concert
Afterglow	Meet The Four Freshmen in the Hotel Atrium

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 2023

9:00am-4:00 pm	Registration
9:00am-4:00 pm	113 Club Hospitality
10:00am-11:30am	General Meeting- all FFS members
12:00pm-1:00pm	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
1:00pm-2:30pm	Fresh Memories
2:30pm-3:30pm	Pick up and pay for Silent Auction items. Free time
5:30pm-6:30pm	Meet and Greet with Cash Bar
6:30pm-7:30pm	Dinner
8:00pm	Honor Former and Current Four Freshmen Toast to 75 years
8:30pm	Four Freshmen Concert

*Subject To Change

TOUR ON YOUR OWN

The historical Embassy Theatre and Botanical Conservatory located directly across the street from the Hilton Hotel and Grand Wayne Convention Center will be available for tours on Friday, September 22.



Embassy Theatre

A guided tour at the historical Embassy Theatre is a 60-minute tour and available only from 10:30 to 11:30 AM. No reservations needed. Walk in. Fee is \$10 cash or credit card.

The Botanical Conservatory

will be “tour on your own” with available hours from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The fee is \$7 with no additional fee for the Café or unique Gift Shop. Both facilities are accessible for visitors with disabilities.



ENJOY FORT WAYNE

Enjoy fine dining, award-winning attractions, and vibrant art throughout Fort Wayne – Indiana’s second largest city. Fort Wayne’s walkable downtown provides access to shopping, dining, entertainment, and riverfront views for a vibrant experience in an urban setting.

Check out The Landing, downtown, to experience the revitalization of the most historic street in Fort Wayne. Where canals once landed in the 1800s find shopping, dining, and recreation in the historic, first post office, papermill, and other preserved architecture. Enjoy Asian fusion, burgers, pizza, fine American cuisine, Cali-Mex fare, and cafés on this one street, just four walkable blocks north of the Grand Wayne Convention Center.

Go to visitfortwayne.com/thelanding to learn more.



Along the Harrison corridor, stepping out of the Grand Wayne Center, find even more options for downtown dining with traditional Irish Pub, J.K. O’Donnells, Latin cuisine at Proximo, pizza by the slice at Pint n Slice and Big Apple Pizza, classic Coney dogs at Coney Island (more than 100 years in business), and sweet treats at Country Heritage, Sweets on Main, and Kilwins (just to name a few!) Find more

options for downtown dining at visitfortwayne.com/dining

On September 22nd during your visit, you may stumble upon the Art

This Way Art Crawl throughout the art-filled alleyways downtown. See live paintings, find food trucks, enjoy live music, and more. Enjoy all of the public art throughout Fort Wayne at visitfortwayne.com/publicart

Voted a Top 50 Best Place to Live, #1 Best City to Raise a Family, and Top 10 Cities for Quality of Life, among many other accolades. Fort Wayne offers big city fun with small town convenience and hospitality. To fill your visit with the best of Fort Wayne go to VisitFortWayne.com.



Welcome All Members of the Four Freshmen Society



From Marlene and Dave, Co-Chairs of the 2023 Convention

We continue our excitement as we plan the 34th annual convention and celebrate the 75th Diamond Jubilee of The Four Freshmen.

It is of great importance that we as members support The Four Freshmen and their place in the music-making history of our country, the United States and around the world.

How many vocal jazz groups do you know who have continued music-making uninterrupted for 75 years? We know of none. Our hats are off to Bob Ferriera who for the past 31 years has kept the The Four Freshmen alive through their personal appearances, recordings and live streaming nationally on “Live From Emmet’s Place.” with the Emmet Cohen Trio.

We are proud to be hosting this celebration in Fort Wayne, Indiana. We hope that you will support The Four Freshmen and join us for what one might refer to as an “historical event.”

Why Fort Wayne?

- The site of Jack Eisner’s 113 Club where the Freshmen made their first professional appearance in 1948.
- Located two hours north of Indianapolis and within one day’s drive of half the nation’s population.
- The Grand Wayne Convention Center and Hilton Hotel are connected with easy access and very little walking.
- Fort Wayne’s International Airport is within 20 minutes of the hotel with free shuttle service.
- There are several local attractions within two blocks of the convention center i.e. Historical Embassy Theatre, Botanical Gardens, Parkview Field (Minor League Baseball), Beautiful Cathedral of The Immaculate Conception and Fort Wayne Art Museum.
- The second largest genealogy department in the United States and an extensive Lincoln collection in the the Allen County Public Library is located a short distance from the convention center.
- Jefferson Point, an exclusive shopping center with many restaurants, is just a 15-minute drive.

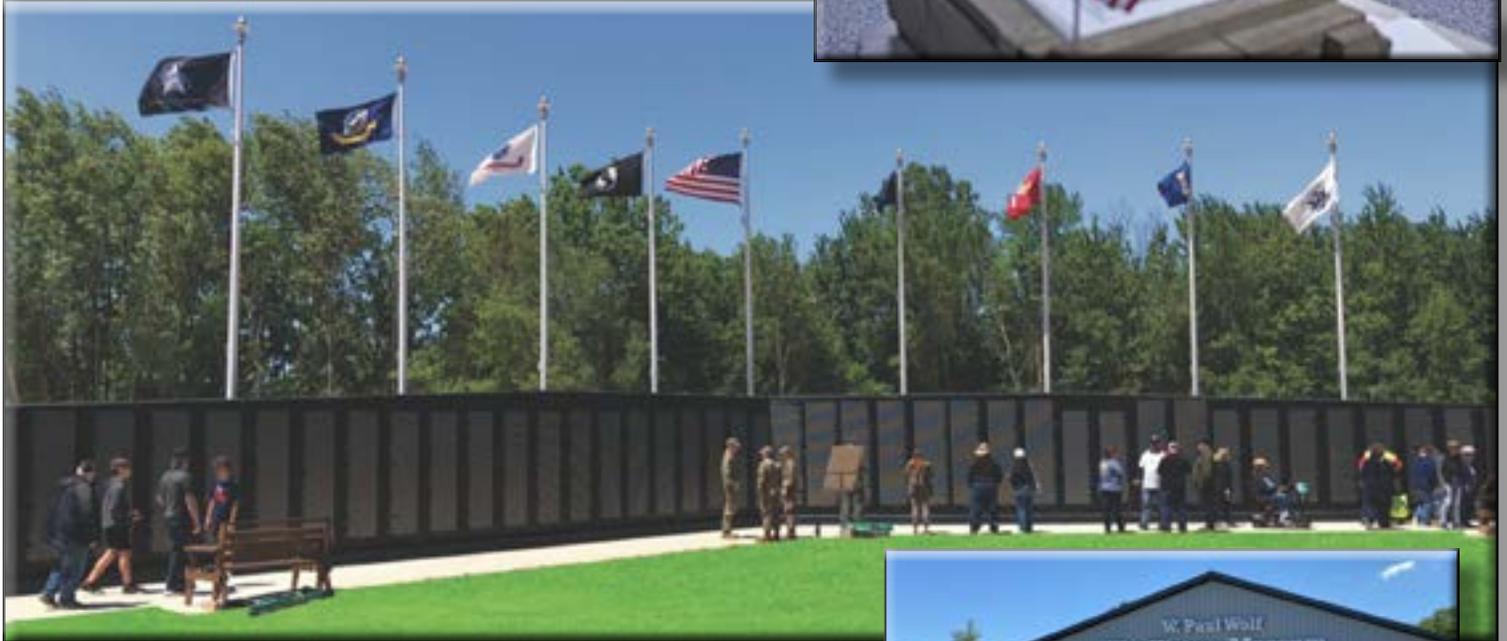


Check out **The Landing** downtown to experience the revitalization of the most historic street in Fort Wayne – where canal boats landed in the 1800s. The Landing was the hub for business in Fort Wayne, due to its proximity to the three rivers and the railroad. The first Fort Wayne post office opened here, along with the newspaper, theater, and eventual railway station. This historic spot has become an epicenter of revival in downtown Fort Wayne, with incredible dining options you won’t want to miss. Whether you are looking for something sweet or savory, The Landing is the perfect spot to relax and refuel during your stay.

Four Freshmen to Appear at the Veterans' Memorial

You won't want to miss this tour!

The Veterans' National Memorial Shrine has invited The Four Freshmen to perform the National Anthem during our Friday morning tour. Not only will you hear The Four Freshmen perform during the tour, you will experience the beauty of the grounds, the Vietnam Memorial Wall, the Chapel, and view the extensive collection of military artifacts from all wars in the new Paul Wolfe Museum. A box lunch is included for you.



Sweetwater TOUR IS LIMITED TO 30. REGISTER EARLY.

You won't want to miss the tour of Sweetwater, the nation's largest retailer for musical instruments, pro audio gear, three state-of-the-art recording studios and in-house diner/café where you can get your favorite ice cream, DeBrand Chocolates and your flavored coffees at the coffee bar. A box lunch is included in their Down Beat Diner following the tour.



2023 FOUR FRESHMEN SOCIETY CONVENTION REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Listed below are details that give further information in regard to the Registration Form

REGISTRATION INFORMATION - Registration may be made online at ffs2023.com or by mail. Pay by check or with credit card using the form on the back of this page. Please provide all requested information including first and last names. Early registration is encouraged.

TABLE ASSIGNMENTS: Please provide all names of others you want seated at your table. Encourage your preferred tablemates to mail or create online their registrations early. **Seating will be arranged by postmark date or online registration date of the last member in your party. MULTIPLE REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED ON THE SAME DATE WILL BE DECIDED BY A LOTTERY.**

HOTEL INFORMATION: We recommend making your hotel reservations early. Rooms at the Hilton Fort Wayne and Convention Center will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Rates for the convention are guaranteed at \$149 per night plus tax for two queen beds or a king bed, double occupancy. Reservation rates subject to availability will also be available for three days before and three days after the official convention dates of September 21 - 23. **TO RESERVE YOUR ROOM, CALL Hilton at (800) 445-8667 and ask for Reservations.** Be sure to use the group code FOU (FOUR FRESHMEN)

SHIRTS: The shirt color is Black with the convention logo. Shirts are silk-touch 65%polyester, 35%cotton polo-style with collars. **Please Note: Convention shirts must be ordered at time of registration. Shirts will not be available for sale at the convention.**

JAM SESSION: Thursday night's open jam session promises to be a great evening of jazz. Society members are encouraged to participate. A professional jazz combo will anchor the evening's festivities. Freshmen past and current and attendees are welcome and encouraged to perform. Please indicate your song, key and instrument on the registration form so the combo will be prepared to back up your song.

TOUR: Two tours will be offered. The Veterans National Memorial Shrine is a tour of the grounds including an 80% replica of the Vietnam Wall and a Museum with artifacts from all wars. The Sweetwater tour will take you to the complex of the largest dealer in the United States of music gear, instruments, recording studios and equipment. Please refer to the photos in Fresh News. Both tours leave the hotel Friday Morning at 9:30 AM. You can only take one tour.

MENU SELECTION: Please specify if you require vegetarian or gluten free meals.

PAYMENT SUMMARY: Please complete all information on the Registration Form and forward your payment. Pay by check or credit card. Only **MEMBERS** of the Four Freshmen Society may attend this convention. Non-members must join the FFS for \$15, single or couple to attend the convention. The registration form can be duplicated for non-members who wish to attend the convention.

TRANSPORTATION FROM AIRPORT TO HOTEL: The Hilton Hotel offers a free shuttle from the Fort Wayne International Airport. Please call the hotel with your arrival time two days in advance. 260/420-1100. Rental cars and other transportation services are also available at the airport.

HOTEL PARKING: Parking is free for convention hotel guests with in and out privileges.

Online registration (PREFERRED): Go to FFS2023.com



2023 FOUR FRESHMEN SOCIETY CONVENTION
Fort Wayne, IN September 21-23, 2023
PLEASE PRINT

Send form to: Four Freshmen Society
6900 Hunters Knl
Atlanta, GA 30328-1763

Questions: call (260) 385-9855 or (260) 760-5531

REGISTRATION: Read registration information details in *Fresh News* prior to filling out this form.

Name(s) _____
(First Name) (Last Name) (First Name) (Last Name)

Address _____

Address 2: _____ Telephone # (_____) _____

City, State, Zip _____ E-mail _____

REGISTRATION FEE:

POSTMARKED (or online) **February 1 to August 1, 2023 - \$215 per person.** POSTMARKED (or online) after August 1, 2023 - \$225 per person. Cancellations - Cancellations with full refund before August 1, 2023. Cancellations from August 1 to August 31, 2023, will incur a \$25 processing fee. NO REFUNDS AFTER August 31, 2023

HOTEL INFORMATION: Have you made your Fort Wayne Hilton Hotel Reservation? Yes No

Please indicate the day you will arrive in order to assure the availability of rooms at the hotel:

Day _____

JAM SESSION: Plan to perform at Thursday's Jam Session? Yes No

Since the *Jam Session* time is limited, we will need your song, key and instrument so we can be ready for you.

Song: _____ Key _____ Instrument _____

TABLE SEATING: Tables of 8. List names of those you want at your table. **SEATING IS ARRANGED BY POSTMARKED**

REGISTRATION DATE Be sure your entire group mails in on the same day.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____

MENU SELECTIONS: Do you need **vegetarian or gluten free meals**? How many? Friday _____ Saturday _____

TOURS: Tours will be Friday, September 22, 2023

Tour #1 Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum (includes box lunch) \$35 _____ (limited to 80, reserve early)

Tour #2 Sweetwater (includes box lunch). \$35 _____ (limited to 30, reserve early)

COMMEMORATIVE SHIRT: \$37 each: (Shirts will not be available for sale at the convention)

(Enter NUMBER of shirts wanted by size and gender)

Men's Sizes: (___small) (___med) (___large) (___XL) (___XXL) (___XXXL) (Add \$2.00 each for XXL and XXXL)

Women's Sizes: (___small) (___med) (___large) (___XL) (___XXL) (___XXXL) (Add \$2.00 each for XXL and XXXL)

PAYMENT SUMMARY:

REGISTRATION: (\$215 OR \$225 after August 1) _____ people @ \$_____ each = \$_____

Add \$6/person if paying by credit card _____ people @ \$6 each = \$_____

COMMEMORATIVE SHIRTS: Men's _____ Women's _____ @ \$37 or \$39 each = \$_____

Tour #1 Veterans National Memorial Shrine _____ people @ \$35 each = \$_____

Tour #2 Sweetwater _____ people @ \$35 each = \$_____

NEW MEMBERS ONLY: - FOUR FRESHMEN SOCIETY Membership Fee \$15 = \$_____

(\$15 fee applies to couple OR single)

Couple _____ Single _____ Name(s) if different from above _____

Total = \$_____

If paying by check, please make checks payable to **Four Freshmen Society**

If paying by credit card, please fill out the form below.

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ Print Name as on Card _____

Card Holder's complete address (include ZIP Code) _____

Corporate Board of Directors

Gil Peterson, Chairman 541-672-0937
 Donna Gallaway, President 419-516-3642
 John Emerson, Treasurer 843-271-6001
 George Nosky, Secretary 734-397-7096
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 Chaz Cone 770-394-2663
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 Marlene Lobsiger 260-760-5531
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Tony Leone	Washington, PA		

New Members

Chris & Doree Bonn	Dunlap, IL	Kim Mann	Cincinnati, OH
John Brecht	Cincinnati, OH	Jeff & Jeanette Morrison	Ave Maria, FL
Gary Cole	Holland, MI	Judy Perdrix	Cincinnati, OH
Keith O'Brian	Holland, MI	Raymonde Sainvilus	Cape Coral, FL
Colleen Collins	Cape Coral, FL	Harold Tan	Costa Mesa, CA
Fred Dirska	Edgewater, FL	Ben Vonderheide	Manheim, PA
Lucille Dolab	Moraga, CA	Jim & Judy Wessar	Anderson, IN
Victor Evans	Grand Rapids, MI	Ann Marie Whalen	East Petersburg, PA
Patty Hunter	Fort Wayne, IN	Pete Williamson	Frankford, DE

Fresh News is published quarterly © 2023, all rights reserved, celebrating THE FOUR FRESHMEN, the best vocal/instrumental quartet in the world. Publication does not imply approval of FFS corporate directors or trustees. Each author is responsible for his/her article.

Deadlines for consideration of articles:

1. Jan/Feb/March - Dec 01
2. Apr/May/June - March 15
3. July/Aug/Sept - June 15
4. Oct/Nov/Dec - Sept 15

Submit manuscripts to the Editor:

Barb Meyers, bam241136@gmail.com, Cell 419-309-7855



The Four Freshmen Society Inc.

Item	Cost	QTY	Total
5 Trombones/5 Trumpets	\$15.00		
50 Years Fresh	\$15.00		
Culmination - Greg Stegeman (*)	\$15.00		
Faux Freshmen - Scratchin' the Surface	\$10.00		
Faux Freshmen - Seasons of the Heart	\$10.00		
Faux Freshmen - Unsung	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen (Jazz Factory)	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen and Friends	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen and June Christy on the BBC	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen Live in Stockholm (*) (CD & DVD) <small>(group 4)</small>	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen in Japan (CD) (*) <small>(group 18)</small>	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen in Japan (DVD) (*) <small>(group 18)</small>	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen with the Emmet Cohen Trio <small>(group 21)</small>	\$18.00		
Fresh	\$15.00		
Freshmas	\$15.00		
Freshmen Year/Voices in Latin	\$15.00		
Golden Anniversary	\$15.00		
Graduation Day	\$15.00		
In Session	\$15.00		
Live at Butler	\$15.00		
Live at Clearwater	\$15.00		
Live at Constitution Hall 1979 (*) <small>(group 4)</small>	\$15.00		
Live at Penn State (*)	\$15.00		
Live at the Franklin	\$15.00		
Live from Vegas CD	\$15.00		
Live from Vegas DVD	\$15.00		
Live from Vegas (DVD & CD)	\$25.00		
Live in Holland	\$15.00		
Live in the New Millennium	\$15.00		
Live Trombones	\$15.00		
Lost Soul - Curtis Calderon	\$15.00		
Love Songs	\$15.00		
More 5 Trombones/In Person Vol. 2	\$15.00		
Remembering Ken (*)	\$15.00		
Return to Romance/Live in Manchester (*)	\$15.00		
Road Shows	\$15.00		
Road to Portsmouth (*)	\$15.00		
Snowfall	\$15.00		
Stars in Our Eyes/The Swingers	\$15.00		
Star Spangled Banner (up to 10 per order)	Free		
Still Fresh	\$15.00		
The Liberty Years	\$15.00		
The Swingers/ 4 Freshmen-5 Trumpets	\$15.00		
Through the Years (*)	\$15.00		
Voices in Brass/In Person Vol. 1	\$15.00		
Rod Henley's Jazzmin Vocal Band	\$10.00		
"Now You Know" (Leather Bound Book) <small>(\$120 non US)</small>	\$100.00		

Please use "Return Address" label when available - Thanks

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____ - _____

Email: _____

Name on Card: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

_____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Expiration Date: ____/____/____

Pre-owned CDs (\$4 each includes shipping)

- Through the Years
- Live in the New Millennium
- Live at Constitution Hall (2)
- Graduation Day (3)
- Fresh (2)
- Return to Romance
- Remembering Ken
- Voice in Love (2)
- The Liberty Years
- Voices in Latin
- Still Fresh
- Greatest Hits
- Live at Butler
- Faux Freshmen
- Unsung
- Scratchin' the Surface (2)
- Season of the Heart
- Ray Brown
- Southern Comfort
- Thank You Very Large

New LP's - Friends \$20, others \$15

- Four Freshmen and Friends
- Fresh
- The Freshmen Year

Subtotal
 Shipping - \$1 per CD for US orders (CD/DVD Combo is \$2)
 \$4 per LP for US orders
 Foreign Country: actual shipping costs for CDs
 and LPs, \$20 for "Now You Know" book

Total _____ (*) Available to Members Only

Get to Know Your...



Marlene Lobsiger

She enters a room with a burst of energy – this blond, stylish, gregarious, ageless woman, who has been seen at every Four Freshmen Society (FFS) convention since Indianapolis (2008). In 2013, she co-hosted (with Dave Blackwell) the highly successful FFS convention in Fort Wayne, and they are ready to do it again. Of course, we are talking about Marlene Lobsiger. And, according to her daughter, she is a “multi-tasker do-er” who has spent her entire life focused on music and business.

Marlene’s grandparents migrated with three small children from Switzerland in the late 1800s. Her dad was a lover of Swiss music and had a custom-built accordion made for her when she was five years old. It wasn’t until she was eight that she began taking piano lessons. She studied piano, organ, and accordion privately for many years. She became a church organist at age 16, which she continued for 36 years.

She always knew she wanted to work. While in high school, she did bookkeeping for her father’s automotive business. She took business management courses at IPFW (Indiana Purdue

Fort Wayne) and started her own career as a buyer and business manager for two Hallmark gift shops.

She was invited to become marketing coordinator for Dunbar Furniture in Berne, Indiana, which built custom, high-end residential and commercial designer furniture. This position involved planning events and sales meetings in Chicago and New York showrooms, overseeing large graphic organizations with photos and write-ups for catalogs/display ads for illustrated magazines, and developing price lists for architects and designers for their ten showrooms around the country.

Marlene and her husband Jerry, who was an architect, lived in Decatur for 27 years and raised their two children there. Her husband owned an architectural firm in Fort Wayne, so when they moved to Fort Wayne, she took on a distributorship for a fine line of clothing. When Jerry passed away, she became a buyer for a high-end retail store. When she heard that Von Maur was opening a new store in Fort Wayne and was looking for a pianist to play their grand piano, she joined the company and has been playing there for 17 years.

The whole Lobsiger family has been involved in music. Marlene’s husband was a gifted vocalist, and when their son Kim was four, he was a boy soprano and started singing publicly with her husband; Marlene was the accompanist. They were in several Broadway productions at the Civic Theater and the Embassy Theater. Lori, Marlene’s daughter, has been involved with Choral Production, a company out of Germany, and Music for All, a choral events group out of Indianapolis.

In 1989 Marlene formed The Music Express, a six-piece ballroom dance band, including her husband as the lead vocalist and her son Kim (then a high school principal) as the trumpet and flugelhorn player; they invited Dave Blackwell to join them. When Marlene’s husband died, her son took over the vocals. The band continued to play together for 30 years. The group played for experienced ballroom dancers who danced to all different rhythms.

It was at a jazz festival in Marshall, Michigan that Dave and Marlene became reacquainted with The Four Freshmen and met Sara Lou and Neil Lantz. They learned that the Lantz’s would be hosting the 2008 convention in Indianapolis, and they learned about the connection between the 113 Club in Fort Wayne and The Four Freshmen. Today, Marlene is a board member of The Four Freshmen Music Foundation and a member of The Four Freshmen Board of Directors.

Marlene’s entire life has been involved in music, business, and event planning. “But,” as she sums up, “One of the most exciting and rewarding things that I have done in my life was co-chairing the FFS 2013 annual convention, where over 420 members came together to support the group and renew friendships with other fans. Today, I am happy to once again co-chair the 2023 FFS convention, which is the 75th anniversary of The Four Freshmen on the very site where they performed for the first time as professional musicians.”

(continued on page 11)

...Conference Hosts

by Linda Harrison

Dave Blackwell (continued from page 10)

When he was ten years old, his mother took him to see “The Benny Goodman Story.” As they left the theater, he said, “I want to play clarinet like Benny Goodman.” The next day his mother bought him a clarinet and arranged for a teacher, and David Blackwell’s musical career was on its way. At Four Freshmen Society (FFS) conventions, we see him leading and playing at Jam Sessions and Wannabee gatherings, but we don’t know the road his life has taken to get him to that point.

Dave’s father was an electrical engineer who had many important jobs. Because of this the family moved several times in Dave’s early years – Indiana, Wisconsin, New York -- so the clarinet got lost in the shuffle for a while. When Dave’s family moved to New Jersey, he started playing again. Eventually the family moved back to Fort Wayne where he developed his skills in earnest.

Dave recalls: “I joined the wonderful high school band at Northside High School in Fort Wayne where they were playing opera overtures and all kinds of difficult music, and I thought, ‘Wow -- this is something else!’” He started taking lessons from Carl Bartlett, an outstanding clarinet teacher who helped him develop his clarinet skills.

“I started writing arrangements for the Blackwell Family Band who just performed in our living room for our own enjoyment when I was about 15 years old,” said Dave. “My mother was on piano, my dad on drums, my brother on tenor sax and I was on clarinet and alto sax. There weren’t any arrangements available, so it was a good introduction for me on how to write them.”

Dave continues: “What dawned on me while I was writing these arrangements down is that I could clearly hear in my head what I was writing on paper. That was when I made up my mind I was going to be a high school band director instead of my original direction of becoming an artist.”

Dave went to music school at Indiana University in Bloomington. He recalls, “That was a wonderful time for me because the IU School of Music was a world-class school and I had to work very hard to improve my playing, conducting and teaching skills.” He completed his student teaching in Fort Wayne and graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education degree, then spent three years teaching band and choir music to high school and elementary students at three schools every day of the week in Ridge Farm, Illinois.

At age 25, Dave was invited to become the music teacher and band director for Syracuse Junior High. During this time, he received his Master of

Science in Education degree. Four years later, Dave took over the high school band and continued teaching in the Wawasee School Corporation for a total of 35 years. His years there were filled with concerts, contests, marching and jazz bands and Broadway musicals. Dave had a reputation for being tough, but he wanted to get the job done right, which led to many first-place awards over the years. He gained the respect of a great many students who have become music teachers, professional musicians and just friends. Dave finished his career by retiring in 2003 after 38 years in the classroom.

While Dave was still teaching, he began to perform more often. Kim Lobsiger, Marlene’s son, invited him to join The Music Express, a six-piece dance band, with Marlene’s husband as vocalist, Marlene and Dona Longbons on keyboards, Kim on trumpet and flugelhorn and Mike Shively on drums. They needed a clarinet/sax player so Dave joined them and often wrote arrangements for the band.

At the same time, he joined the Fort Wayne Area Community Band and soon became the conductor, a position he currently holds. Shortly after retirement, he began to play in senior communities, which has continued to the present. Currently Marlene, Dave and Ron Orman, a member of FFS, still perform for parties, special events and in senior communities under the name The Music Express.

Dave has spent his entire career conducting, performing, and writing arrangements for various music groups, and one of his favorite kinds of music to play is Dixieland.

In 2007, Dave and Marlene went to a jazz festival in Marshall, Michigan, where they rediscovered The Four Freshmen. The following year they attended their first Four Freshmen Society convention in Indianapolis. For the last 15 years they have been supporting the Freshmen by attending their performances and hosting the 65th Anniversary Convention and now the 75th. Since that time Dave has served as Grant Director on the Board of the Four Freshman Music Foundation.

Dave organizes the Thursday night Jam Session for the conventions by having the performers send the name and key of each song in advance for the back-up group to be ready. Each person can then perform in a pre-determined order to ensure a program that flows. For the Jam Session finale each year, he arranges a true jam song that represents the location of the convention. Surely this year, the choice should be “Back Home in Indiana.”



Tom's Tribute

Tom and Delee have been great friends for such a long time. If I told you everything they did for us it would take a whole page. Mel and I were lucky enough to have seen them before the Bay City Convention. Little did we know it would be the last time we would see Tom.



It was Tom that talked Mel into following him as President and Chairman of the Board. And, it was Tom that talked me into following him as *Fresh News* Editor. He made it easy for me as he already had Eric and Mark Advertising on board. — Barb Meyers

I remember the day this distinguished gentleman walked in the front door of The ArtD'partment. He hobbled over to the nearest chair and sat down without saying a word yet. Then looked up with a smile that says, "there is no way you can say NO to me." He introduced himself with voice that had almost a southern draw to it and said, "Have you ever heard of The Four Freshmen?"

"Yes," was my response. But I had no idea what I was getting into. What an amazing experience Tom has opened my eyes to.

Tom and I had wonderful times putting together the *Fresh News* newsletters. Tom had a way to make work fun - similar to Tom Sawyer. He was extremely organized.

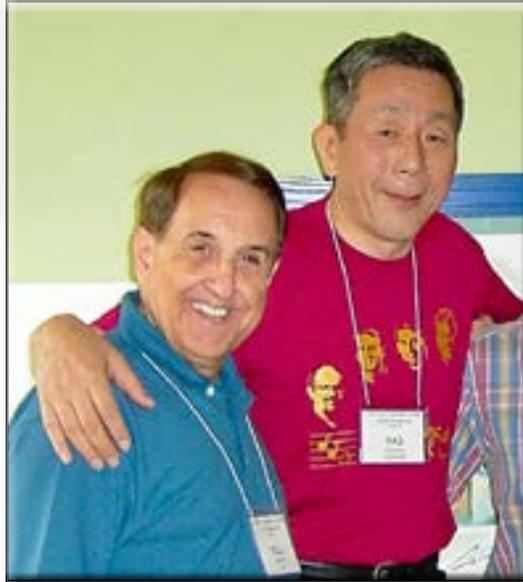
Almost 14 years later, we still enjoy putting together the *Fresh News* after Tom passed the baton to Barb Meyers. Tom would still pop in once in a while to see how we were doing and just chat for a while. Tom, I owe it all to you. Thank you so much!

— Eric Winkel

Tom Purvis was a man with a purpose. I got to know him well after my stint as chair of the FFS, and we shared many a talk and cocktails always discussing how to best help the Freshmen, and how to make the FFS a better society. Tom's contribution to the society was large and important. He was organized and wanted the society to be the same. He was passionate about the Freshmen music, and many times recommended ways to communicate that music to a growing fan base. Tom Purvis did not suffer fools, and he was not reluctant to share his thoughts be they in keeping with the general posture, or against what he considered the proper course. I shall miss him and reflect on the knowledge that this was a good man, dedicated to his family and dedicated to The Four Freshmen." — David Bentley

Four Freshmen Vocal Scores

by Bill Martin



Dear Freshmen Fans,

I grew up in Ashland, Kentucky and became a Four Freshmen fan in the early 1950s when I first heard one of thier recordings; But, I became even a bigger fan in 1958 when I first saw them "in person" at a Stan Kenton Road Show Concert in Columbus, Ohio.

Fans have always considered The Four Freshmen to be in a class by themselves, and to think every quartet, both amatur and professional, has desired to sing like them.

Freshmen arrangements, however, are quite challenging to perform and not easily obtainable. Through the years, though, I was able to collect several Four Freshmen vocal scores from the vast collection of David Bentley, and from The Four Freshmen themselves.

In 1995, my collection grew by leaps and bounds when I received copies of some marvelous transcripts of Four Freshmen arangements from Yasushi "Yas" Ichiura who lives in Tokyo, Japan. The transcripts were done by a friend of his, and a very talented musician, named Yutaka Alaki who lives in Nara-Shi, NARA, Japan.

It happened a few months before 1995 FFS Convention at Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron, Ohio, when the transcripts arrived with the suggestion that he, (Yas) and I, along with two others, get together to sing them privately during our stay at the convention. We needed a piano in order to get our starting pitches, but the only place we could locate one was in the public meeting area called "The Birdcage". As we started singing, other fans became involved, and The Four Freshmen "Wannabees" had its begining.

We had originally planned to sing the charts a cappella, but we became dependant upon the piano, as each singer had to strike a note here and there to stay on pitch. Finally, I sat down and started playing chords behind the vocals, and Yas began playing the instrumental solos on his valve trombone (which was formerly owned by Bob Flanigan). So, Yas and I became accompanying "orchestra" for the Four Freshmen Wannabees.

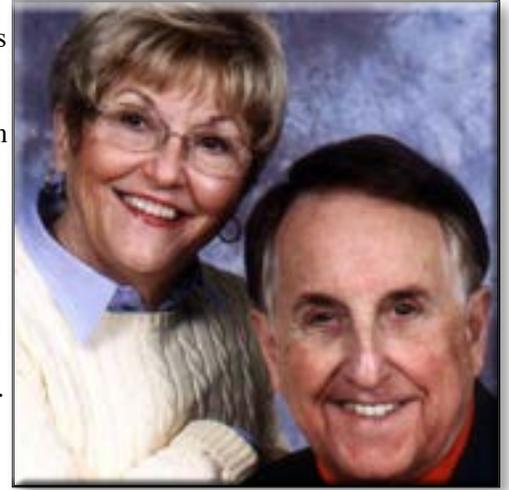
At each convention since then, the Wannabees have gathered around a piano to sing these wonderful arrangements. During that period, more transcriptions, in various forms, have been collected. But, it seems there were never enough copies, some copies had errors, some were far too complex to sing, and they were not in a consistent form. So, I, along with an Ashland friend, Jim Greenslate, took up the task of completely re-noting the charts, correcting any errors, writing out most of the intros and instrumental solos, and selecting those songs that lent themselves to group singing. We hope you enjoy!

Remembering Bill

by Paul Halac

Last winter the FFS lost one of its most influential members, Bill Martin from Ashland, KY. Please allow me to say a few words to reflect and remember my dear friend.

I have known Bill for perhaps 30 years but it seems like he has been a friend all my life. I can't say exactly which FFS convention it was where we met but it was likely in the mid 90s and probably it was around a piano with Bill playing and a group of FF members singing Freshmen songs. He was soft spoken, but so enthusiastic about the music, it rubbed off on every participant.

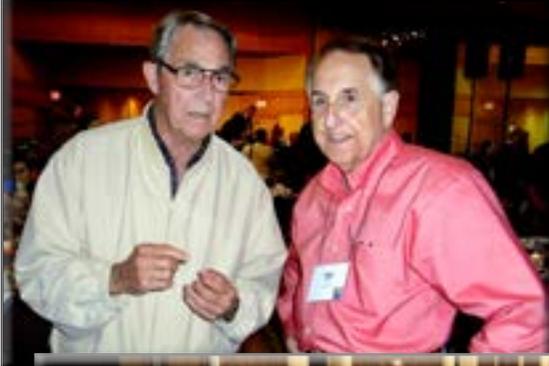


Over the years, Bill and I became closely associated with a special group of FFS folks. We only saw each other for a week or less at each Reunion but it was like a family to us. We sat together at FF performances and spent time together dining and exploring the current convention city. It seemed like time stood still between conventions. We even had a saying when we parted, "We'll see each other again next year, . . . in two weeks."

Bill and Yas Ichiura were the driving force behind the "Wannabees" sessions at each Reunion. Bill labored for weeks over the Songbooks that were distributed at each Wannabees meeting, by now an integral part of every convention. It was most important to him to make that sing-along meaningful to those who were there. Needless to say, his efforts were fully justified.

Bill made the tape recording which ultimately became the FFS exclusive CD called *Road to Portsmouth*. It was my honor to collaborate with him and Ross Barbour on that project. Bill's contributions to our Society were many.

I could write much more about this remarkable man but I will close by saying he was one of the kindest, most gentle men I have ever known and I never heard him utter a negative word about anyone. He was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. I will always treasure his friendship and remember all the stories and laughs we shared together. Bill, I hope and expect you and Ross will be smiling down on us in Fort Wayne next September. I'll really miss you at our table but, as the song says, *We'll be Together Again*.



How I Met The Four Freshmen

By Keith E. Murray

I was brought up in a Northern English town listening to Mills Brothers, Ink Spots and Deep River Boys vocal groups. However life changed for me aged 16 one evening in 1960 when listening to BBC Radio 'In Town Tonight' from London. A visiting American vocal group, called The Four Freshmen were interviewed and sang a new a cappella ending to their arrangement of *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*. Those Freshmen sounds changed music for me.

In 1961 The Four Freshmen performed at Newcastle City Hall and I dared to take the big step of traveling into the Big City. The Freshmen wowed the audience with their musicianship, their exciting harmonies and their interaction with the audience which was novel at that time. I was enthralled. The following weekend I went with my saved pocket money, to Jeavons Record Shop in Newcastle and asked for Four Freshmen records. "We don't have them in stock but we will order one for you." I wanted to hear what I had heard on stage so ordered the Freshmen Year LP with the group singing some of the City Hall program while playing their own backgrounds.

The following weekend I went to collect my LP. What is this? The second voice was sung by Don Barbour, not Bill Comstock whom I so admired playing guitar on stage. When I got home to my mother's Dansette Major record player, I quickly accepted Don Barbour's second voice and guitar playing. So began a life-long love affair with the sound of The Four Freshmen.

I started to collect Four Freshmen LPs from local record shops whenever I could afford to do so but I also got interested in other vocal groups such as the Hi-Lo's! and the Clark Sisters. Around 1966 I bought my last new issue Freshmen LP '*Got that Feelin*' and was told that the Freshmen were no longer in the record catalogues! That record was not what I expected from the Freshmen.

So I had to search clearance sales in the record stores, and second hand shops feeling that I was the only Four Freshmen fan in the whole world. In 1972 my wife, Hazel, saw a small advert in the local newspaper. What? The Four Freshmen were appearing at a small nightclub, The Top Hat Club in Spennymoor about 20 miles from Newcastle. I immediately rang the Top Hat to enquire about the Freshmen. My questions were - are they Americans? - are they men and not teenagers? - do they play instruments? - are they good? The telephonist replied yes to all my questions but I still did not believe her. The Four Freshmen in Spennymoor? So on the evening of the show Hazel and I drove out to Spennymoor to search out the Top Hat Club. On our third search along the High Street we spied the Top Hat above the now defunct Fish and Chip Shop.

I parked the car and went to the reception. As we arrived, two teenage girls were being evicted for causing trouble. A great start! We paid our £1.00 cover charges and were informed that this was the first time that an entry fee had been charged for the Top Hat. We went up the stairs to the stage and dance floor area. My heart sank at the sight of about 200 teenagers singing and dancing to Cliff Richards' song *Congratulations*. I said to Hazel, we have been cheated because there is no chance on earth of The Four Freshmen appearing here.

We sat down at a table with my heart crushed. Then to my astonishment I saw Kenny Albers peer around the stage curtain. At least one of them is here! The MC then announced that it was cabaret time so 200 teenagers immediately left the dance floor and crowded round the bar at the far end of the hall. Around 20 people sat around the stage apron and a young couple joined us at our table. As we applauded the House Band the leader said that in all the years they had played here that was the first time that they had ever been appreciated!

The band left the stage and the curtains opened to reveal Bob Flanigan, Ken Albers, Ross Barbour and new man Ray Brown who had only been in the group a few weeks after Bill Comstock retired. The Freshmen sang and blew their hearts out whilst the 200 at the bar ignored them completely. I was in heaven and kept saying to the young couple at our table "You will enjoy this song, just listen to the harmonies and the instrumental solos." They said nothing? At the interval we learned that they were Jørgen and Betty Bjørno and that they had driven from Denmark to attend the concert. Hallelujah! Because I had thought I was the only Freshmen fan in the world and now I had found another! We sat together through the second part of the concert and I kept advising Jørgen about the music that he was hearing. During the a cappella ending to *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*, a man walked across the stage and between the Freshmen carrying three pints of beer. All four pairs of Freshmen eyes opened wide in disbelief until he cleared the stage.

The concert ended to rapturous applause from the 20 fans around the stage but to the complete indifference of the 200 around the bar. As we recovered our composure and chatted to our new friends from Denmark, Ross Barbour came out from behind the curtains and sat at our table embracing and talking to Jørgen and Betty. I was so embarrassed I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me after I had tried to teach Jørgen about Freshmen music. I can't remember if I even said one word to Ross Barbour. Once Ross had left, Jørgen and I discovered that we both sang in quartets and exchanged addresses so that we could keep in touch. I was in awe because his group, Kvartet 70, actually sang Four Freshmen music arrangements while my quartet sang Barbershop Harmony.

We drove home on cloud nine, ecstatic that the Freshmen were still active and that, through Jørgen and Betty, I had actually sat at the same table as my musical hero, Ross Barbour. Jørgen and I bonded at our chance meeting and that close friendship has survived undiminished for 50 years.

We began snail mail correspondence and exchanged tape cassettes and Barbershop and Four Freshmen music arrangements. *This Whole Wide World* was my quartet's first challenge and we devoured those chords that Jørgen had transcribed from a Freshmen recording. From then on all my quartets and choruses sang Four Freshmen arrangements.

So began a lifelong friendship with the Bjørnos and after attending Freshmen concerts all over Europe and the USA, we became lifelong friends with Sue and Ross Barbour. Ross and Sue hosted us on a Four Freshmen history tour of LA and we reciprocated when they visited Edinburgh, Scotland along with the Vocal Majority from Texas.

What a privileged life we have lived with all those good people and good music.

A Blast in Bothell!

by Mark Schlichting

Bob Ferreira made a triumphant return to his home town of Bothell, WA on Saturday night, April 1st, and he brought his sidekicks with him! The Four Freshmen performed at the Northshore PAC, which is a beautiful theatre in Bob's "alma mater" complex of Bothell High School. The concert was sponsored by the Northshore Performing Arts Center Foundation.

The audience was peppered with relatives, classmates, former teachers, local vocal jazz students, Barbershop enthusiasts from up and down Puget Sound, and a busload of fans from Bellingham! The night was magical as the legendary quartet played their classic hits such as *Day In, Day Out*, *Someone Like You*, *Graduation Day*, *Guilty*, *Day by Day*, and of course *It's a Blue World*. The boys also featured tunes from their new CD; *From This Moment On, All the Things You Are*, and the sentimental song that always conjures tears from every loving parent's eyes, *Waltz for Debby*.

Of special note, there were three people in attendance who went "way back" with the group; Ross Barbour's daughter, Kathy Feese, who set up a table to sing the praises of The Four Freshmen Foundation, Kirk Marcy, low voice in FF Group #12 (and Bob Ferreira's "Mentor") and Dave Keim, solo trombone with the Stan Kenton Band that toured with The Four Freshmen Groups #4 and #5 during the 1970s. (On the ride back north after the concert, the Bellingham bus was treated to a "PBS Special" on DVD that featured the Kenton Band, the Freshmen, and Dave Keim on several trombone solos!)

Board member, Mark Schlichting, was also in attendance with his teacher/composer son, Austin, and wife, Janelle, to enjoy the fabulous musical sound that they have cherished through the years, and to distribute information on The Four Freshmen Society. Mark also spread the word on the Society's monumental September Convention in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where Four Freshmen Society members

The Four Freshmen...On the Road!

Check the Website: fourfreshmensociety.com or fourfreshmen.com for updates

For bookings: International Ventures Incorporated

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Phone: 661-259-4500

Email: ivimanagement@me.com

Please note: Dates subject to change without notice.

Please be sure to keep up with the status of concerts at fourfreshmensociety.com

2023

July 26-29

Grosse Pointe Farms, MI

The Dirty Dog Cafe, 97 Kercheval Ave

Show times: 6:30p and 9:00p Reservations: 313-882-5299

August 4

Chautauqua, NY

Chautauqua Institution Amphitheater, 31 Roberts Ave

Show time: 8:15p Tickets: 716-357-6250

September 15

Mission Viejo, CA

Saddleback College, McKinney Theatre, 28000 Marguerite Pkw

Show times: 7:30p Tickets: tba

September 21-23

Fort Wayne, IN

Four Freshmen Society Convention

Hilton Fort Wayne at the Grand Wayne Convention Center

1020 S Calhoun St

FFS Members only; join [HERE!](#) Registration is open

December 2

Green Valley, AZ

Community Performing and Arts Center, 125 W Continental Rd

Show times: 3:00p and 7:00p Tickets: 520-399-1750

December 3

Gold Canyon, AZ

Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 South Kings Ranch Rd

Show time: 7:00p Tickets: 480-493-6731

2024

March 1

Bonita Springs, FL

First Presbyterian Church of Bonita Springs, 9751 Bonita Beach Rd SE

Show times: TBA Tickets: TBA

and fans will be returning to the "scene of the crime" where all of The Four Freshmen "Musical Magic" began 75 years ago!

The enthusiastic audience brought the guys back onstage for an encore, and then everyone packed the lobby for an "afterglow" that featured many autographs, conversations, handshakes, and tears.

Thank you for another "stellar musical flight," gentlemen!



Jake Baldwin and Dave Keim, former First Trombone of the Stan Kenton Band, "talking shop" after the Bothell show.



L-R: Tommy, Kathy Feese, Bob, Jake, Dave Keim, and Ryan after the show in Bothell, WA on April 1, 2023



Kirk Marcy, of Four Freshmen Group #12, with his protégé, Bob Ferreira, of Groups #18 to #27 (and still going strong!).

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