

The Paper Airplanes of The Four Freshmen

By Mark (and Erin) Schlichting

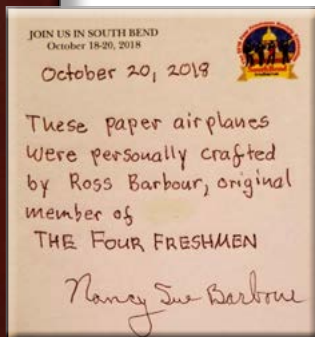
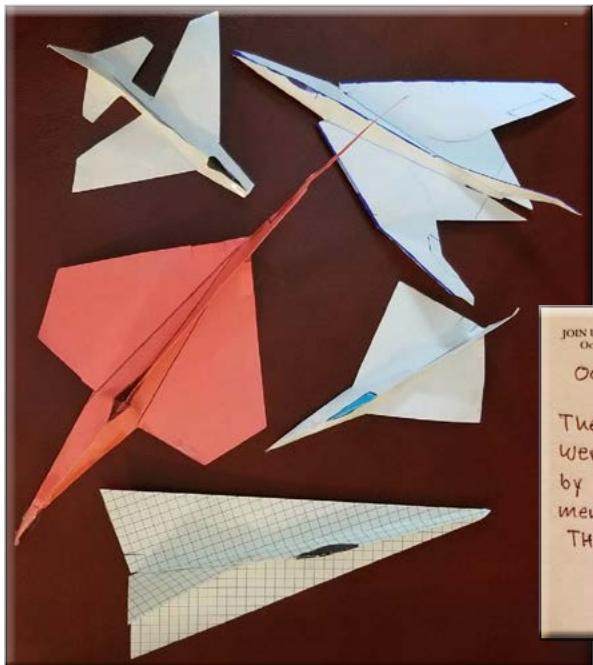
Established on September 20, 1948, the Four Freshmen began as an American vocal group that grew in popularity after being signed to Capitol Records in 1956 by one of their high profile fans, Stan Kenton. Brothers Ross and Don Barbour, who were freshmen at Butler University in 1948, added cousin Bob Flanigan and Hal Kratzsch (later Ken Albers) to the group. Well-known for their rich male vocal harmonies (originally rooted in Barbershop) they developed a vocal

dissonance which has been coveted and imitated to this day due to its ability to tug at listeners' heartstrings. The Four Freshmen sound has inspired the likes of The Beach Boys, The Hi-Lo's, The Manhattan Transfer, and The Singers Unlimited, to name a few. The current Four Freshmen members have maintained the vocal style of the original group and continue to be in demand world-wide. It is often said: "The legendary sound of the Four Freshmen is bigger and more significant than any one of its members." Thus, although the group's personnel have continued to change through the years, the unique vocal harmonies have remained as vibrant and creative as they were from the beginning.

While on the road, one of the favorite pastimes of Four Freshman Ross Barbour was to forage for any paper that might be in the hotel room, and start making paper airplanes. He would create his own



THE FOUR FRESHMEN (1956)
Left to Right: Ken Albers, Ross Barbour, Bob Flanigan, Don Barbour



Five paper airplanes that remain from literally thousands that were created by Ross Barbour during and after his time with The Four Freshmen. (How about a new album: "Four Freshmen and Five Paper Airplanes."...?)

designs and decorate the planes with colored pencils and pens and, of course, test their "airworthiness" with the other Freshmen. No two of his planes were exactly alike. His creative juices continued to flow after he left the



Freshmen and penned the book *Now You Know*, which chronicled the magnificent history of this legendary group during the time he was a member.

Nancy Sue Barbour, widow of original Four Freshmen member, Ross Barbour, on October 20, 2018, South Bend, IN

Barbour Family and the New Group

by Jon Gaines

Yesterday was a really special day for us in Columbus, Indiana. We played a show at the High School that Ross and Don Barbour attended in the town they grew up in, for an audience filled with family members and longtime fans. We did a workshop with a vocal group from that same high school. We talked about our shared love of harmony, and we got to connect with the origins of this great musical legacy that we are a part of. We are so grateful for the staff, crew, and audience that made the show so great. And, of course, we are grateful for the Four Young Men that started it 70 years ago.

