



Earl D. Irons

Colonel Earl D. Irons is honored for his dedication and service to the Corps of Cadets during his tenure as the Bandmaster for the Corps of Cadets at North Texas Agricultural College and Arlington State College. Colonel Irons was born near Sulphur Springs, Texas on March 10, 1891. He became interested in musical instruments at the age of four. By the age of ten, he was playing in a band, and when he was fifteen, he was elected director of his own community band, which he directed for a number of years. For the next several years, Colonel Irons continued to study both violin and cornet. He played in theaters and toured the country with bands and orchestras. During World War I, he served in an Army band and studied in the U.S. Army Band School. He rose to the rank of Corporal and was released from the service in December 1918. After the war, Colonel Irons returned to Sulphur Springs and again took up band directing. In 1922, he became director of the Greenville American Legion Band and head of the Violin Department at Burleson College.

The Colonel's association with The University of Texas at Arlington, then North Texas Agricultural College, began in 1925 when he became head of the Band and Orchestra Department. Upon his assignment to NTAC and as Bandmaster for the Corps of Cadets, he was made an honorary Colonel in the Corps of Cadets by the Corps. It was by this virtue that he became well known as "Colonel Irons." Colonel Irons was head of the Fine Arts Department from 1942 to 1956, and he retired from the college in 1958. He was made Professor Emeritus of Music, Arlington State College in 1962.

Colonel Irons' talents and contributions were widely recognized; he was appointed a Lieutenant Colonel on Governor Allred's staff in 1935. He founded Phi Beta Mu, national school bandmaster's fraternity, in 1938 and was made honorary life president in 1942. In 1951 and

1952, he served as President of the American Bandmasters' Association. The Texas Bandmasters' Association honored him as Bandmaster of the Year in 1965. Colonel Irons was listed in Who's Who of Musicians. The Colonel, a renowned cornetist was also a nationally known composer and author of such works as "Emeral Isle", "American Rhapsody", "American Grandeur", and "Hail to the Fraternity March."

In addition to playing, directing and composing, he traveled extensively, teaching clinics and serving as a judge at numerous band contests and festivals. As early as 1934, he was said to have done more for the advancement of band music in Texas than any other individual. Colonel Irons died on May 19, 1967.

Colonel Irons' performance while at North Texas Agricultural College and Arlington State College as Bandmaster and his subsequent achievements in his chosen field of music brought great credit and recognition upon himself, the Corps of Cadets and The University of Texas at Arlington.