



MEDIA CONTACT:
Michael Brashear, Executive Director
Texas Bandmasters Association
(210) 492-8878
mbrashear@texasbandmasters.org

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High res photo available upon request: marybyrd1@me.com

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TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS 2018 MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO MUSIC EDUCATION

San Antonio, Texas – The Texas Bandmasters Association recently named the Steve Wessels of Leander Independent School District recipient of a 2018 Meritorious Achievement Award. TBA President Chico Portillo will present this award to Mr. Wessels during the annual TBA Convention/Clinic in downtown San Antonio this summer. The ceremony will be held on Thursday, July 26 at 7:15 p.m. in the Lila Cockrell Theatre and will be followed by a performance by the U.S. Air Force Band of the West. The event is free to the public.

Steve Wessels is in his twentieth year at Cedar Park High School and fourteenth year as Director of Bands at the school in the Leander ISD. This is his thirty-second year as a Texas music educator. (*More on Mr. Wessels below. Photo attached.*)

The Texas Bandmasters Association promotes the value of music education in our society and the important role instrumental music plays in our cultural, intellectual and social lives. Each year, TBA recognizes those who have made a difference in the lives of band students in Texas. It is a tradition dating back to 2000 for TBA to honor those who exemplify the qualities of an exemplary band director with the Meritorious Achievement Award.

The Texas Bandmasters Association is made up of persons working in or retired from the music education profession. TBA promotes the value of music education in our society and the important role instrumental music plays in our cultural, intellectual and social lives. This year, TBA is celebrating their 71st annual Convention/Clinic. Over six thousand band directors, music teachers, and university music students from across the state will attend the convention July 26-28 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio. The schedule includes over 60 educational clinics, numerous concerts and performance demonstrations, and an Exhibit Hall with approximately 600 vendors presenting the latest products from leaders in the music industry. The TBA website offers more information on the Convention/Clinic and an extended catalog of educational material for band directors, music teachers and students www.texasbandmasters.org.

Steve Wessels

Steve Michael Wessels is in his twenty-first year at Cedar Park High School and fifteenth year as Director of Bands at Cedar Park High School in the Leander Independent School District. During his tenure at Cedar Park, the band has won UIL 4A/5A State Marching Contest in 2001, 2011, 2015 and 2017, UIL 5A Silver 2004, UIL 4A Silver 2013, BOA Grand Nationals Finalist 2010 and 2016, Numerous Marching Festival Championships, Concert Music Festivals, UIL Sweepstakes all 20 years, and TMEA Honor Band finalist 4A/5A 2002, 2007, 2012, 2018 and 2014 TMEA Honor Band.

This is his thirty-third year as a Texas Music Educator. He began his band directing career in 1986 at Shamrock HS and MS as associate to Daryll Kaire. In 1988 he was an associate with Rusten Hess at Galena Park HS while director at Woodland Acres MS in GPISD. In 1992, Steve taught as an associate and director of

bands respectively at Spring Oaks MS in Spring Branch ISD with Ron Morrison (Director of Bands) and Bob Navaro, in Spring Branch ISD. All of the bands were successful UIL Sweepstakes bands.

Steve was fortunate to have band director icons who blessed him with countless enriching experiences in his home town of San Angelo, Texas. He began band on the cornet at Edison JH under director Don Hayes (Phi Beta Mu Hall of Fame 1992), then to Central HS where he played alto saxophone under the direction of Gary Wylie. He has also been under the direction of Harris Brinson at San Angelo State University and Lee Boyd Montgomery (PBM Hall of Fame 2001) at Texas Lutheran University, where he received his Bachelor of Music Education in 1983. Steve finished his formal education in graduate school in piano performance at Texas Christian University.

Steve attributes learning to teach ensemble to band directors, clinicians, and CEOs of our field: Tom Bennett, Eddie Green, Tom Shine, Alfredo Vélez III and Matthew McInturf.

The people that really touch our lives are the people we work with day to day. Steve has learned from his colleagues and they have enriched his life and teaching experiences beyond measure. Thank you to Ron Morrison with whom he taught in one capacity or another for some 15 years! He owes gratitude to gifted teachers who have the continuous learning attitude: Evan VanDoren, Jeremy Spicer, Christopher Yee, Jason Robb and Bob Chreste. One band director who gave of himself to Steve and his family and will forever be a model is Evan VanDoren.

Steve is an active adjudicator for festivals and competitions in marching and concert related events. His professional affiliations include Phi Beta Mu, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association and Texas Music Adjudicators Association Vice-President Marching.

After God, Steve is most thankful for Melanie, his wife of 33 years and the love of his life. Steve would do anything in life for Melanie, even if it took away from band directing! Melanie has shown her love with patience, support, commitment, serving, working, in love of God, Steve and family. Steve's and Melanie's children are Micah, Daniel and Anna. All three participated in the Cedar Park Band program and enjoyed their experience in music education. Micah is a chemical engineer, Daniel passed away in 2015, and Anna is a two-year TMEA All-State musician and is majoring in music education with a performance certificate on trombone at the University of Texas.

Steve is extremely honored to receive the Meritorious Achievement Award and expresses his thanks to the Texas Bandmasters Association Board. The notification came as a shock! He never thought of himself as one to be counted among the recognized in this beautiful, giving profession. His heroes are all the men and women who are currently in this profession and continue to give of themselves to others.

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