**<u>Panel for Words of Wisdom from Career Choral Educators</u>:**
Ruth Dwyer, Rick Gamble, Bill Niederer, Mark Yount, and Pat Wiehe

**Introductions: 5 minutes**
(Fyi - If you have specific questions, please write them on a paper. A member of the mentorship committee will collect them. Please include your email as we may need to email your response to your question.)

**Lightning Round: 30 minutes**
Lightning Round Explanation- One sentence or one quick statement. *Please prepare your answers for this section and write them down so you can quickly respond.*

1. *"Instant Success" Repertoire Selection for Advanced Mixed Choir*
    a. **Rick - "Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal", Shaw/Parker, Alfred**
    b. **Mark - Gloria, Mozart, arr. Liebergen, Alfred Publishing (from Missa Solemnis)**
    c. **Pat - Horizons, Peter Louis van Dijk, Hal Leonard (King Singers, SATTBB) OR Sing Me to Heaven, Daniel Gawthrop OR anything Eric Whitacre**
    d. **Ruth - recommended by Dr. Eric Stark**
        i. **(Advanced SATB) Water Fountain, Nathaniel Brenner and Merrill Garbus, arr. Kristopher Foster, Mart Foster Music (voice and percussion, rhythmically exciting in vocal production, body percussion and instruments - both ordered and chaotic, eclectic, youthful celebration and protestation of the world)**
        ii. **(Beginning / Intermediate SATB) All Music Must Dance, Dr. Darla Eshelman, Colla Voce / Canticle (Joyful, buoyant, and lyrical piece to start your year - the dancelike chorus will have your ensemble swaying. The repetitive chorus holds no surprises and can help your choir begin to solidify SATB singing. Your singers and audience will exit humming with a smile.)**
    e. **Bill - Elijah Rock, Jester Hairston, Group 2**
2. *"Instant Success" Treble voiced piece*
    a. **Rick - "How Can I Keep from Singing?" Quaker/Walker; ECS Publishing**
    b. **Bill - Jonah, Rollo Dilworth, Hal Leonard**
    c. **Ruth -**
        i. **(SSAA grades 6-9) Dance Into the Day, Mark Patterson, Alliance Music Publishers (This high-energy piece is mostly 3-part/SSA with touches of 4-part/SSAA harmony with very accessible vocal ranges for all voices. The ABA form focuses on contrasting a rhythmic A section with a more sedate lyrical B section with contrasting dynamics. The optional xylophone is a great opportunity for collaborating with an exceptionally talented high school or college percussionist.**
        ii. **(2-part with descant, grades 4-7) Glory Train (three spirituals), arr. Jean Anne Shafferman, Alfred Publishing (Excellent for teaching inexperienced singers to follow a 3-part octavo. Three Spirituals are brought together as partner songs for very accessible part-singing: *This Train, When the Saints Go Marching In, and Swing Low Sweet Chariot.*)**
    d. **Pat - So Many Angels, Gwyneth Walker, EC Schirmer 6184 (SSAA, from "The Spirit of Women")**

    e. **Mark - Ad Astra, Narverud, Carl Fischer (SSA)**
3. *"Instant Success" Tenor/Bass voiced piece*
    a. **Rick - "Shout for Joy!", Davison, Walton**
    b. **Mark - Brothers Sing On!, Grieg, ed. McKinney (lots of versions)**
    c. **Pat - Seven Bridges Road (Eagles)**
    d. **Ruth - recommended by Dan Andersen**
        i. **Come Travel With Me, Scott Farthing, Walton Music Corp. (Inspired by Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road", your young tenors and basses will feel like their voices have taken flight. Their voices will feel strong and secure with the limited range of the melody and accessible choral harmony.)**
    e. **Bill - Brother My Brother**
4. *"Instant success" repertoire selection for the beginning of the year for a level of your choosing*
    a. **Rick - "If Music Be the Food of Love"; Dickau; Plymouth Music**
    b. **Bill - My Very Own, Susan LeBarr**
    c. **Ruth -**
        i. **(SA, grades 3-6) Linstead Market, arr. Douglas Beam, Colla Voce / Canticle (An exceptionally well-arranged Caribbean Calypso that your young singers will love to sing. Both voices stay well within head voice to help ensure vocal blend during harmonic singing. Both the melody and the descant counter-melody use repetitive pitch and rhythmic aspects to enhance sight-reading skills and solidify the harmonic ear.)**
        ii. **(SSA, grades 5-7) Lil' Liza Jane, arr. Leann Starkey, Colla Voce/Canticle (This great arrangement of a well known American Folk Song sets your ensemble up for successful sight-reading and harmonic skills. Several well crafted writing techniques lead the sing to successfully develop a harmonic ear, solfege skills and rhythmic reading through: ostinato, descant call & response.)**
    d. **Pat - Da Pacem Domine (unison, good tone)**
    e. **Mark - Like Someone In Love, April Arabian-Tini, Shawnee (SATB)**
5. *Best Classroom Management/ Positive Behavior Support* Tip
    a. **Rick - Make an actual lesson plan that requires you to transition to various activities.**
    b. **Mark -**
        i. **Deal with problems instantly and directly, without anger - then move on.**
        ii. **Be you, and be genuine - students can spot fake a mile away.**
    c. **Pat - Have individuals sing in small groups, have set goals and lots of different kinds of music.**
    d. **Ruth -**
        i. **Set expectations for entering and exiting the classroom. Have assigned seats.**
        ii. **Assign a 'DISCUSSION PARTNER" - Count of 1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2, 1's turn to your right, 2's turn to your left - You are now facing your discussion partner. If you are on the end of a row your partner may be in front of you or behind you. "Odd student out" becomes part of a trio.**

        iii. **Be prepared: Practice all the vocal lines before you teach a piece of music. Always have a LESSON PLAN.**
    e. **Bill - use proximity and humor, determine what requires an interruption and what doesn't**
6. *One simple way that you encouraged team building and social connections within your ensemble?*
    a. **Rick - "Say Hello": Ask one person each day 3 simple questions: 1) Where were you born? 2) Can you tell us something unusual about yourself? 3) and, what do you want to do after high school?**
    b. **Bill - bingo sheet at first rehearsal to help students learn about each other**
    c. **Ruth - Guided neighbor interview: Those who laugh together will sing together.**
        i. **Instruction: Learn how to say BOTH of your neighbors' first names and find out what their favorite ice cream might be AND if they play a sport.**
        ii. **Follow up: The teacher watches for an out-going group doing a good job. After a 45-60 second interview, have an outgoing group introduce the class to one of their neighbors and tell us their name and one other thing they learned about their neighbor. Note to the class, "More interviews will follow". You will most likely see an increase in serious discussions.**
        iii. **Repeat the first instruction and add, " What is their favorite color?" (90 sec to 2 min)**
        iv. **Follow up: Choose a different group of interviewers.**
        v. **3rd and final interview: repeat the list of questions from above and add something silly that will make them giggle. EXAMPLE: Do they have any pets..... brothers and sisters do not count as pets. *People that can laugh together can sing together*.**
        vi. **Follow-up: No introduction to the class. Immediately move into a music activity that puts the focus back on the teacher/conductor. EXAMPLE: Stretches, echo solfege or rhythm that will be in the next song or other active listening exercise that does not require the teacher moving from the present focus point.**
    d. **Pat - solo night, encouraging each other, can you remember other names?**
    e. **Mark - play stupid games that require no skill but force interaction - EX. "wizard, warrior, bear" (rock, paper, scissors)**
        i. **start back to back, 3 2 1 jump and face each other**
        ii. **Choose wizard (wave fingers in air), warrior (hold a bow and arrow), bear (arms up, growling is required) - Wizard kills warrior, Warrior kills bear, Bear kills wizzard**
        iii. **The loser of each round joins the winner's team, follows them around, and cheers for them until there is one final winner.**
7. *What was one specific way that you recruited that served most beneficial?*
    a. **Rick - 8th Grade Choir Day. All current 8th grade choir students attended an after school performance at the high school that featured the top choirs, a short tour of the facilities, a Q/A session with current seniors, and some snacks in the cafeteria.**
    b. **Mark - live performances for younger students**
    c. **Pat - get into the middle schools if you are a high school teacher, perform for athletic events, assign older students to younger students**
    d. **Ruth -**
        i. **ICC: Community Choir**

1. **Bring a Friend week.**
2. **Collaborative performances with schools and houses of worship. This allows the singer and their parent to see and hear the ICC and meet the staff.**
3. **Conductor visitations to both general music classrooms and school choirs.**
4. **ICC Choral Festival/Summer Camp**

ii. **Elementary 5th – 6th Grade Choir:**

1. **In-school performances for the younger students that include prepared sing-a-longs (songs the littles know) one concert per semester.**
2. **Spring in-school performance includes a special invitation to five 3rd graders and five 4th graders to come forward and sing ONE song with the choir. This was usually a patriotic song or folk song.**
3. **Spring-time evening concert for parents and family that includes the 4th graders playing recorder or Orff instruments, singing one song with just the 4th grade and one song with the choir.**

e. **Bill - take a choir and go through the halls caroling at Christmas, or sing at lunch, take the kids out to lunch, have your high school kids sing at the middle school concert**

8. *An epiphany you learned later on in your career that you wish you would have known early in your career.*
   a. **Rick - Use volunteers as much as possible. AND; notice that Joyce's idea of "instant success" is to choose great literature for your choir.**
   b. **Bill - Stop comparing yourself and your program to others' programs.**
   c. **Ruth -**
      i. **The best advice I ever received from Dr. Leon Fosha, my IU student teaching supervisor was," Talk less - Sing more". Address and issue in one or two brief statements, a visual example and/or a vocal example. Time yourself (video). How much time are you talking compared to the amount of time the students are actively singing?**
      ii. **THIS EVENTUALLY BECAME: "TALK LESS - DEVELOP VOCAL INDEPENDENCE – CONDUCT MORE". Build vocal independence and ensemble leaders. Don't constantly sing with your students. They are often hearing you and not themselves. Use at least one a-cappella warm-up at each rehearsal that will allow YOU to build your conducting skills and teach your singers how to follow a conductor.**
   d. **Pat - Develop your own tone quality and use what you are learning with your singers, practice looking at your singers when you are conducted, go to PD**
      i. **Rodney Eichenberger - conducting skills**
      ii. **Maxie Schnicke**
   e. **Mark -**
      i. **All styles of teaching work as long as it is your style and you are genuine - if you don't have good relationships with your students, you will not have a good choir.**
      ii. **Students want to be a part of something. If you give them a thing to feel a part of, they will usually show up for it.**

**Discussion Questions: 28 minutes total**

Questions: (7 minutes each) Approximately one minute response for each panel member.

1. *Currently school districts are focusing on data and some are actually paying teachers based on competition scores and ratings. How do you suggest that choral educators balance their time and energy between teaching a robust music curriculum with coaching singers for competitions?*
    a. ***Rick - This can be a difficult balance. On several different occasions, my school required the teaching of vocabulary and/or math problem solving skills, depending on last year's test scores. You have to do the required work, but you can probably tailor it to your curriculum (math was harder to incorporate). Regardless of the requirements from our administration, I always taught, tested, and graded a certain amount of music literacy, including music vocabulary and sight-reading. During contest season, a lot of this fell off.***
    b. ***Ruth - I worked only for schools and organizations that had a NON-COMPETITIVE philosophy. THOUGHTS: STATE STANDARDS are what we are hired to teach. Curriculum comes first. Check your contract. Perhaps, the teacher should suggest that competitive choirs should be extracurricular and paid as such.***
    c. ***Pat - competition is a narrow view to judge***
    d. ***Mark - To me, those are the same things - great singing translates.***
2. *As a follow-up question; How can we engage singers in choral music education that may lead to lifelong participation in choral activities post graduation?*
    a. **Rick - Be a good role model: participate in singing opportunities, and don't be shy about sharing it with your students. Invite collegiate and adult singing groups to come to your school so that students can see positive role models for themselves.**
    b. **Ruth - Collaborative performances with Community Choirs. Invite University and Community Choirs to perform at your school. Do your homework and introduce your students to what types of community groups are available at home and beyond. Use technology to connect with other choirs.**
    c. **Pat - sight reading, heard from students that they appreciated it later**
    d. **Mark - Expose your students to quality music that connects with singers.**
3. *All the educators on this panel have spent a majority of their lives as choral music educators. We all can name past associates who were successful teachers but left the profession due to burn-out. How do you suggest that choral educators avoid burn-out?*
    a. **Rick - I tried to vary the repertoire my choirs sang and the musicals I directed throughout my career. I couldn't imagine doing the same pieces over and over again. This isn't to say that the choir program didn't sing some annual favorites. I also participated in conferences and attended concerts so that I could learn how to improve my own program. Finally, I made it a point to be active with my family, church, and friends-activities that allowed me to shift my focus away from work,**
    b. **Mark - We all expect so much of ourselves, and we need to give ourselves permission to not do everything right and enjoy the journey. Make sure you know who you are without your career. It can disappear quickly. Unplug.**

c. **Bill - give yourself permission to make changes so you don't fall into the same habits over and over**
d. **Pat - focus on music for intrinsic enjoyment, produce good music**
e. **Ruth -**
    i. **ALWAYS take care of your mental and physical health.**
    ii. **Purposely make time for your family.**
    iii. **Rest Hydrate Eat healthy Protect your voice (talk less – sing more)**
    iv. **Create fun and healthy time away from school and music. Have friends, activities, and hobbies that are NOT MUSIC RELATED: I coached basketball and volleyball, played racquetball, hiked mountains, read novels, gardened, traveled, and sailed. Make yourself say "yes" to fun things".**
    v. **Music has truly enriched my life. However, people have brought so much more to my soul, my peace of mind, and heartfelt joy. STAY CONNECTED!**

4. *As choral educators we are basically running a small business by budgeting, fundraising, and managing support staff and volunteers. Share ways that helped you stay organized and as you maximized available resources.*
    a. **Rick - We used the software program Charms to organize our volunteer sign-ups and to maintain individual student financial accounts. We had a website to advertise our upcoming activities to the general public. We had a number of different companies and events that we used for fundraising activities, being careful not intrude upon instructional times.**
    b. **Mark - This is my struggle. I have to set up lots of scaffolding and support for me like I do for my students.**
    c. **Pat - parent volunteers are critical, engage them frequently in group meetings**
    d. **Ruth -**
        i. **DELEGATE! You do not have to do every little thing. Delegate the small tasks. Good leaders build other leaders. Students, parents, and other educators will help.**
        ii. **You need to ask for help with a plan. Know what you are asking volunteers to do, have a time frame in mind, be supportive by following up.**
        iii. **Be kind and respectful, and always say "Please" and "Thank you".**

## One minute announcement:

***The Indiana Choral Directors are piloting a free mentoring program this Fall for Indiana Early Career Choral Educators with 5 or less years experience who are ICDA members. Please look at the ICDA website for a sign-up link to express interest in becoming a mentor or mentee. Please share any ideas with our committee members who are wearing a special ribbon on their name tags.***

## About our Panel:

**Ruth Dwyer** has recently retired from the Indianapolis Children's Choir after 35 years as a conductor, Director of Education and Artistic Director of the Columbus Indiana Children's Choir. Her ensembles have performed across North America, Spain, Brazil, and throughout Central Europe. Her teaching experiences also include 19 years as a K- 12 public school music educator and adjunct professor with Butler University. She is presently the Artistic Director with the Eli Lilly Employee Chorus.

She has authored several music education text books for ICC: now available for digital download at Beckenhorst Press. She is also a frequent guest author for the Hal Leonard choral music text book series, accomplished composer, arranger and the editor of the *Ruth Dwyer Choral Series* with Colla Voce Music now distributed by ECS Publishing Group.

Mrs. Dwyer continues to enjoy serving the music community in retirement as a studio conductor for Chorister Guild and Alfred publishers, guest conductor, teacher mentor, composer and lecturer/clinician.

**Rick Gamble** taught at Avon HS for 31 years. Before that he worked as a singer and actor for about 7 years. He was educated at Indiana University in Bloomington. He served as ICDA President, and was on the board for about 10 years. He worked on the staff of various churches intermittently. He hosted Solo & Ensemble at Avon for about 15 years. He served on the staff of Indiana Musicians Abroad last year. He has judged for ISSMA, private contests, and the New Mexico Choral Association. He worked as interim choir director at the University of Indianapolis this past year after he retired.

**Bill Niederer** taught public school music for 35 years, in a variety of urban and rural settings and populations in Indiana (Porter County, Fort Wayne, Elkhart) and in Iowa. An alumnus of Indiana State University, he taught everything from grade 6-12 choirs, color guard, middle school, beginning and competitive show choirs, jazz choir, piano class, music theory, and AP Music Theory.

In retirement, Bill is a full-time accompanist and music department secretary at Mishawaka High School, where he also sometimes coaches student singers and piano class students as well sectional rehearsals. He is a former ICDA President and Central Region Editor and is an adjudicator for ISSMA (concert and sight-reading) and for the Iowa High School Music Association, as well as serving as a substitute organist at Michiana area churches.

**Mark Yount** was a public school music educator for 27 years, and most recently taught at Ben Davis 9th Grade Center and Martinsville High School. Mark Yount is a clinician and educator from central Indiana. He's taught award winning Concert Choirs, Show Choirs, and Vocal Jazz Choirs with students from Kindergarten through College. He's been a clinician throughout the country including the International Music Camp, Butler Jazz camp and Indiana All State Vocal Jazz. Mark is a regular contributor to IMEA, ISSMA, and ACDA as a clinician and choral director. He works with students of all ages, across all musical styles including Concert Choir, Show Choir, Jazz Choir, Pop Acapella and more.

**Patricia Wiehe** received her B.S. and M.M. degrees from Ball State University. She spent her entire teaching career in Washington Township, Indianapolis. She started teaching choir and general music at Northview Junior High School in 1967. At North Central, Wiehe directed five choirs. Counterpoints, the top mixed concert/show choir, won 22 ISSMA State Championships in both concert and show choir during her tenure. They also performed at four Central Division Conventions and one National ACDA Conference. They were featured at state and national MENC Conferences as well. Her top women's choir, the Descants, were 7 - time ISSMA State Champions in concert and show choir. Her gospel choir, the Northernaires, was the featured choir at the IMEA conference in 2005 She won numerous awards for her teaching during her outstanding career. She is a member of ACDA and is a past president of ICDA and is the past Central Division ACDA Repertoire and Standards Chair for Show Choir.

Upon retirement, Wiehe has served as a judge and clinician. She was adjunct professor at Butler University and DePauw University and is currently supervising student teachers from Indiana University. In her free time, she enjoys swimming, gardening and spending time with her family.

**Joyce Click, Moderator** taught 44 years in MSD Washington Township with 20 years in elementary music and 24 years in Choral Music at North Central High School, winning numerous recognitions for her teaching and with her choirs. She served as ICDA area chair for All-State Choir for 20 years, on the ICDA board as an area rep and served as Rep and Standards Chair several areas. She has served as an advocate for providing inclusive spaces in our choral and music classrooms. She currently chairs the ICDA Mentorship Initiative.

Post K-12 full-time teaching, she mentors future music and mild interventions educators through the University of Indianapolis and supervises student teachers in music and special education for Anderson University. She directs the children's music program at St. Mark's UMC, a position she has held for 30 years. She continues to co- direct the Summer Enrichment Musical Theater program for MSDWT which she co- founded almost 30 years ago. She recently authored a book for Beat by Beat press "Building A Musical Theater Program for Kids" and does other freelance writing in the areas of music and special education. She and her husband travel to California to see their adult children several times per year.

## For more information about the ICDA Mentorship Initiative:

