

Chester L. Hedgecoth – 2009



Chet Hedgecoth began playing drums in the Cumberland County High School Band in Crossville, Tennessee. Upon graduation, he enrolled in The Roy Knapp School of Percussion in Chicago, Illinois. After leaving there he enrolled at Tennessee Polytechnic Institute in Cookeville, Tennessee. He graduated from Tennessee Tech in 1959 with a Bachelors Degree in Music Education and received his Master of Music Education degree from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in 1966.

He began his teaching career at East Ridge High School in 1959 and stayed until 1965. In 1966 he was hired to be the Band Director at Bearden Middle School where he stayed the remainder of his career, until 1989. His bands at both East Ridge and Bearden received consistent superior ratings in all competitions entered. Mr. Hedgecoth had a premiere program of music education while at Bearden Middle School.

In 1987, Remo, Incorporated, maker of drum sets and drum hardware, presented Mr. Hedgecoth the EPPI Award for Excellence in the Profession of Dedication and Contribution to the field of Percussion Arts and Education. He also received the Knox City Schools Citizenship Award for the 1966-67 school year.

Mr. Hedgecoth was not only a great educator; he was associated with the following organizations: the American Federation of Musicians, local 546; Barnum and Bailey Circus; Chattanooga and Knoxville Symphony Orchestras; and Holiday on Ice. He had played with some big jazz bands, such as Tony Pastor and Ray McKinley and others. He was involved with several jazz bands in the East Tennessee area on weekends.

He belonged to the National Band Association, the East Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association, the Tennessee Bandmasters Association and Phi Beta Mu, a national honorary fraternity for Band Directors.

He passed away at Baptist West Hospital on August 14, 2005.