

J.S. Tilson - 2009



Jewel Tilson was born in Unicoi County and attended Washington College Academy. He received his Bachelor's degree from East Tennessee State University and received a Master's Degree from the University of Illinois in Champagne-Urbana, Illinois.

After finishing his degree in Choral studies at East Tennessee State University, Jewel said that he was "talked into" teaching band by former Elizabethton High School band director, Mel Kelly.

Mr. Tilson began his teaching career at Elizabethton Junior High School in Elizabethton, Tennessee, teaching band for 2 1/2 years. He then returned to Washington County, Tennessee schools and taught at his high school alma mater at Washington College Academy for 4 years. Returning to Elizabethton High School, Mr. Tilson taught band and chorus for 3 years. Jewel then replaced A.R. Casavant at City High School in Chattanooga, Tennessee for 10 years. Following City High School, Jewel returned to Northeast Tennessee at Dobyys-Bennett, Jewel taught at John Sevier Middle School with Kingsport City Schools for 5 years. Jewel retired from teaching in 1986.

During his teaching career, Jewel's bands were noted for outstanding concert and marching performances with his bands receiving numerous superior ratings. While he was directing in Chattanooga, the City High School Band won first place at the Contest of Champions held at Middle Tennessee State University. While in Kingsport, the Dobyys-Bennett High School Band became one of the first high school bands in the state of Tennessee to travel internationally. Under his tutelage, Dobyys-Bennett Band received the Minister of Education Award for Musical Performance at the International Band Festival in Vienna, Austria in 1972. In addition, the Dobyys-Bennett Band traveled to Spain during the 1970's and enjoyed a European tour in 1980.

Mr. Tilson has served as clinician and judge throughout the south both during his teaching career and since his retirement. Jewel has served as President of the Tennessee Band Masters Association and holds membership in the East Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association, National Band Association and Music Educators National Conference. Mr. Tilson is also a member of Phi Beta Mu.

Jewel resides now with his wife Koleta in Kingsport, Tennessee.