

# ‘FESSORGRAM

*The Newsletter of the Floyd Graham Society*



The FLOYD GRAHAM SOCIETY is an organization of individuals devoted to the memory of (Pro-)FESSOR FLOYD GRAHAM, who helped so many students at UNT, entertained thousands, and taught and inspired many more to become successful, each in his or her own field. To his memory and ideals this organization is dedicated. It was founded by J.B. Woodrum in 1972.

## *The FGS Proudly Presents*

### **Maynard Ferguson Alumni DiBlasio, Wiest**



*Denis DiBlasio*

The Floyd Graham Society (FGS) is pleased to present Denis DiBlasio, baritone saxophone, flute, and vocals; and Steve Wiest, trombone, alumni of the bands of the late Maynard Ferguson. DiBlasio and Wiest performed with, and wrote for, the iconic leader in both his big band and short-lived experimental septet, and both returned to the band for Ferguson's last recording, made at the Blue Note in New York in 2006. Two years after Ferguson's death, a consortium of donors brought the Ferguson collection to Texas. Thanks in large part to concerted efforts by Wiest, UNT became home to the Ferguson library of music. The Collins-Binkley Foundation, through the efforts of trumpeter Bill Collins III, acquired

Ferguson's memorabilia. (Collins' father, Bill Collins, Jr., played in Floyd Graham's Aces of Collegeland in the 1930s and was an founding member of the FGS.)

Dennis DiBlasio exemplifies a combination rare in jazz, the accomplished musician and natural entertainer. Also a skilled scat singer, composer and arranger, DiBlasio performed under Maynard Ferguson during two separate, extended stints that included five years as musical director. Today DiBlasio serves as executive director of The Maynard Ferguson Institute of Jazz Studies and director of jazz studies at Rowan University in New Jersey.

His discography includes more than 30 recordings, including ten as leader, and seven with Ferguson. DiBlasio's compositions and arrangements are found among offerings of leading music education publishers, including Kendor, Doug Beach, Hal Leonard, and Jamey Aebersold. He holds a bachelor of music degree from Rowan University and a

*see Maynard, page 2*



*Steve Wiest*

## **37th Annual FGS HOMECOMING LUNCHEON**

**11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Saturday  
Oct. 17, 2009**

**Silver Eagle Suite  
University Union**

*Program*

**“Maynard...and More!”**

*featuring*

**Maynard Ferguson Alumni**

**Denis DiBlasio**

*baritone saxophone, flute, vocals*

**Steve Wiest**

*trombone*

*with*

**Stefan Karlsson, piano**

**Jeff Eckels, bass**

**Ed Soph, drums**

*Music for your listening  
and dancing pleasure*

**THE ACES OF COLLEGLAND**

**Jack Rumbley, director**

## **DIRECTIONS**

The University Union is located on Ave. A, a one-way street between West Prairie and Chestnut St., and is accessed from Welch St.

From I-35E, exit at McCormick Street. Turn north toward the campus. Turn right at Eagle Drive, turn left at Welch Street, and turn left at Prairie Street (which dead-ends at the University Union). Turn right into the large parking lot/garage on the right.

master of music degree from the University of Miami.

Steve Wiest was featured trombonist with Maynard Ferguson from 1981 to 1985. His work as a performer and arranger may be heard on seven Ferguson recordings.

In 1987, Wiest returned to UNT as a graduate student; he is represented on eight One O'Clock recordings as a performer, arranger, and/or composer.

Following appointment in 1990 to the jazz faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Wiest was tapped by Doc Severinsen and, for 17 years, appeared regularly with the flamboyant trumpeter's big band. Seventeen years later, Wiest returned to North Texas as a member of the jazz studies faculty.

Today, Wiest is in his first year as director of the One O'Clock Lab Band at UNT, where he also teaches jazz trombone and jazz composition. He recently released his first recording as leader, *Excalibur* (Arabesque). Wiest earned a bachelor of music degree at Southern Mississippi University and a master of music degree in jazz studies at UNT.

## GRAHAM SCHOLARSHIP FUND UPDATE

At press time, the balance of the Graham Scholarship Fund endowed account is \$22,551.14. Balance of the companion (interest) account is \$1,577.61.

As tuition costs continue to increase, while available scholarship funds are shrinking, your donations are more important than ever. The FGS and the students are most grateful for every gift, no matter the size.

To contribute, designate checks to "Floyd Graham Scholarship Fund" and send to: Lindsay Keffer, Treasurer, Floyd Graham Society, 815 Ector, Denton, Texas 76201.

## GRAHAM SCHOLARSHIP NEWS Ohio Native Named 2009-2010 Scholarship Recipient

Adam Robertson, a senior majoring in jazz studies, has been named recipient of the 2009-2010 Floyd Graham Memorial Scholarship. Robertson began playing sax in fifth grade in Ohio and cites his mother's country music and his father's soft rock as early musical influences.

By eighth grade, however, young Robertson had discovered Charlie Parker and Cannonball Adderly.

"I sought music other than what I heard at home and on radio and MTV," Robertson said. "I went through punk rock and indie rock, and finally found jazz." He said he found the idea of improvisation fascinating and unlike any musical style he had encountered previously.

The family moved to Indiana the summer prior to his ninth grade year, and Robertson began playing tenor saxophone in his high school jazz band. He soon became acquainted with jazz players from Indiana University-Bloomington and later studied with Harry Miedema, jazz studies director at the University of Indianapolis.

Robertson was a member of the Indiana All-State Jazz Ensemble and was twice named a member of the Buselli/Wallarab Jazz Orchestra High School. He received awards for performance at Ball State University and at the Bloomington Jazz Festival. The summer before his senior year, Robertson attended Jazz Combo Camp at UNT and, he said, soon knew North Texas would be his college of choice.

Since enrolling as a freshman in 2006, Robertson has played in the Eight, Six, Five, and Four O'Clock Lab Bands and in the Repertory Ensemble. This year, he plays second alto in the Two O'Clock Lab Band, under the direction of Jay Saunders, while pursuing a major in jazz studies with saxophone performance emphasis. Upon graduation, Robertson's goal is to move to New York and work as a professional musician.

\* \* \* \* \*

## News of Former Scholarship Recipients

Sam Reid, 2007-2009 Graham Scholarship recipient, is completing his course work for two degrees, a bachelor of music degree in jazz studies and a bachelor of music degree in music education. He plays lead alto in the One O'Clock Lab Band and traveled with the band to Thailand in July. He is teaching private lessons to 15 middle school students in Plano, Texas; leads the Sam Reid Quartet, and is expanding his composing and arranging skills. Reid has been invited to perform as a guest artist, with saxophonist Jeff Kashiwa, for a concert benefiting the Shoreline Public School District near Seattle, Washington, in January.



Zack Hexum

Hexum has appeared on *The Late, Late Show with Craig Kilborn* (CBS).



Adam Robertson

Zack Hexum, 1998-2000 Graham Scholarship recipient, is working as a professional musician in Los Angeles recording studios and touring with his own band. His versatility has earned him respect of both musicians and producers; he plays saxophone, piano, guitar, bass, drums, bass clarinet and flute. Also a composer, Hexum is scoring for film and television. His songs have been featured on *The O.C.* (Fox), and his "How Many

## ABOUT MEMBERS

Ed Alley serves as a trustee of the Sarasota Opera, vice president of the board of Gloria Musicae, a professional chamber chorus in Florida; and chair of the grant and policy panels of the Sarasota Tourist Development Council. He served for many years as general manager of the New York Philharmonic and directed and managed leading U.S. opera companies. In March, Alley wed June LaBell, a lecturer and host, personality, and writer for almost 30 years at WQXR-FM in New York. Ed reports their respective dogs are equally compatible, so we hold high hopes for this nice couple. Alley played bass in 'Fessor's Aces from 1954 to 1956.



Leon Breeden

UNT Professor Emeritus Leon Breeden, director of the One O'Clock Lab Band and chair of the jazz studies program from 1959 to 1981, has been named recipient of an honorary doctor of humane letters by the University of North Texas. The honor was conferred at the Doctoral Commencement and Hooding Ceremony on Aug. 14, 2009, at the Murchison Performing Arts Center. A reception honoring Breeden followed the event.

J.B. Floyd announces release of his latest recording, *In Crossing the Busy Street* (Mutable Music) in August 2009. The music was composed by Floyd for Tom Buckner, baritone, and was premiered in New York City and in San Francisco. George Marsh, drums, is included on six tracks. J.B. serves as chairman of the department of keyboard performance at the University of Miami.

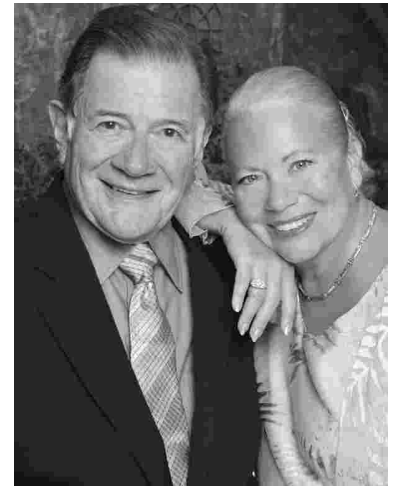
R. Dale Olson reports his two-part work, "Chronology of Innovation: The Trumpet Mouthpiece," has been accepted by the International Trumpet Guild *Journal* for publication in the January and March 2010 editions. The study details the development of modern mouthpieces as traced through United States patents. A student of John Haynie while at UNT, Olson is an international authority on technical aspects of trumpet design, testing, and performance.

Louise Tobin was sighted recently enjoying lunch in downtown Denton with two of her nephews. She lives in Garland, Texas, with her son, Harry James Jr. Tobin began performing as a child on the Saturday Night Stage Shows, then left Fessor's stage as a teen to sing with Harry James and, later, bands of Benny Goodman, Bobby Hackett, Will Bradley, and Peanuts Hucko, among others. Her "Scatter-brain" with Goodman topped the charts in 1939.



John Moehring

John Moehring stepped down in January as editor of M-U-M magazine, the official organ of the Society of American Magicians, to pursue other interests. His book, *The Magical Life of Marshall Brodien: Creator of TV Magic Cards and Wizzo the Wizard* (McFarland) was released to high acclaim in 2007. While a student at UNT in the early 1960s, John performed as a magician on the Saturday Night Stage Shows and appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* (CBS).



Ed Alley, June LaBell



Trumpet in hand, 'Fessor leads the band, possibly for a dance on The Slab behind the Student Union. We know this photo was taken prior to 1946, but little else. If you can identify the year, place or personnel, please contact us!

**Luncheon Reservations** (*prepayment required; due by 5 p.m., Wed., Oct. 14.*)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

(Please include, to help us reduce postage costs)

**FGS 2009-10 Officers**

*President*            **Martha Len Nelson**

*Vice President*   **Nat Adams**

*Treasurer*         **Lindsay Keffer**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Luncheons** (\$30 each) for \_\_\_\_\_ person(s).

Deadline: **5 p.m., Wed., Oct. 14.** (\$10 surcharge after Oct. 14 - per the venue, not us!)

*My form of payment is the following:*

\_\_\_ **Check enclosed.** *Mail to:* Mr. Lindsay Keffer, Treasurer, Floyd Graham Society, 815 Ector, Denton, TX 76201

\_\_\_ **VISA/MasterCard** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exp.** \_\_\_\_\_ **CVV** (3-digit number on back of card) \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

Call to (940) 387-9068 or (940) 382-5962 (voice) or via fax to (940) 891-0690.

**NOTE:** Charge will show as **Tattersall Publishing** on your credit card statement.

\_\_\_ **Paypal:** Use <gpr1@earthlink.net>

**Name(s) as you wish them to appear on name tags:**

Yes! I'd like to help young, talented jazz musicians achieve their dreams!

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to Floyd Graham Scholarship Fund  
(*separate check, please*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THE FLOYD GRAHAM SOCIETY  
815 Ector  
Denton TX 76201

*Make Reservations Today!*

**FGS Homecoming Luncheon**

**SATURDAY, OCT. 17**

*with*

**Maynard Ferguson Alumni**

**DENIS DIBLASIO**

**STEVE WIEST**

*Celebrating 37 years  
of good friends & great music!*