

Mini

# Add A Line



Blue Ridge Region 14  
SWEET ADELINES INTERNATIONAL

February 2000

Volume 26 number 6



*In Loving Memory of  
Mary K. Coffman  
"Thank You, Dear Lord, for Music"*



Mary K. Coffman will live forever in the music and hearts of Sweet Adelines. She died January 4, 2000 and a service of Death and Resurrection celebrating her life was held Jan. 8 at her church, Providence United Methodist in Charlotte, NC. Many Sweet Adelines attended the service and sang with the Queen Charlotte Chorus directed by Cindy Shook, the Gospel Medley which Mary K arranged for this occasion. Even more Sweet Adelines joined in singing Mary K's "Thank You, Dear Lord, for Music". The altar area was filled with love, emotion and the beautiful notes and words of her song. The Afterglow was a special touch requested by Mary K.

Selections from a booklet Kaleidoscope: A Collection of Little Rhymes by Mary K. Coffman were used in the service. One selection "Sisterhood" was printed on the back of the program. Mary K. wrote it "for my Sweet Adeline sisters". It appears in this issue.

The Region 14 had the honor and pleasure of her love and gifts. We are thankful for that. This issue of the Add-A-Line is dedicated to her memory and contains contributions from several who knew her well.

## **SISTERHOOD**

(for my Sweet Adeline sisters)  
by Mary K. Coffman

You, my sisters, standing strong,  
Flood my life with thrilling song  
You're goodness, you're laughter  
You're joy, you're love  
My musical soulmates  
Gifts from above  
Your beautiful voices fill my soul  
And lead me to a great goal  
To live each day in harmony  
And be the most that I can be  
So let the magic music ring  
Lift up your voices now - and sing!



## **Mary K Memorial Addresses**

### **Memorials to:**

Providence United Methodist Church  
2810 Providence Road  
Charlotte, NC 28211

### **Or**

Young Singers Foundation  
Sweet Adelines International  
PO Box 470168  
Tulsa, OK 74147.



**MARY K. COFFMAN**



## "FRIEND OF OUR HEARTS"

Ozzi Mask, Director  
Potomac Harmony Chorus

Now, it came to pass, many years ago,  
In that Far-Away-Promised-Land of Sweet Adelines,  
In the year of our Lord One thousand, nine hundred  
seventy-six,  
(In that Previous Century),  
A decree didst come down from the Highest-on-High  
(Known generally as the International Board)  
That the regions should go forth, split themselves  
(One more time),  
And form into new groups.  
And so it came to be that Blue Ridge Region Fourteen  
Was born.  
And the Board was happy with itself, and said,  
"Yea and forsooth, we have indeed done well.  
For look you - Region 14 is full of wonderful souls.  
But Egad! Those souls include tenors, leads, baris,  
And Basses...Not to mention Di-Rectors...and also  
Administrators, Faculty...and Judges...hmmmm...  
Let us send them some guidance Right Away!"  
And the Board then said  
To the bustling and bristling Fourteen Folk,  
"O people, O people...what qualities wouldst thou have  
In thy very first New Region Fourteen DMA?  
How canst we, thy Board, best choose someone for thee?"  
And the people straitway replied:  
"O Board, O Board...begging thy pardon,  
But we needeth a Paragon of a leader  
To handle this Wild Bunch...good people all are we,  
But we needeth the Very Best.  
So...we will bypass thee-all,  
And go directly to the Lord to provide thus."  
And the people did hie themselves to the Lord, and did  
say,  
"Lord, Lord, we crave a boon; we surely need the perfect  
leader to guide us in our music."  
And the Lord heard, and did answer, "What wouldst thou  
seek  
In such a person? How shall she be?"  
And the people replied,

"She must be made from the beauty of music  
To share with each of us  
And to teach us to share with the world.  
She must have compassion and care and love  
For the people who sing the songs.  
She must be able to see the value of all choruses,  
No matter what the size,  
And to make them realize their own value,  
She must sing and laugh and cry with us;  
She must give us music to sing;  
(But it is O.K. if she writes a song for us  
That the whole world ends up singing).  
We will not mind if You also need to use her as  
Judge, Arranger, Judge Specialist,  
International Faculty, International Board Member  
Or whatever else You choose.  
(They can all use the help),

And we do not mind sharing her (we are all heart).  
She can play her air piano anytime;  
We will even let her sing in her own quartets,  
And direct her own chorus-  
As long as they all understand and get it straight  
That she, in her goodness and in her gifts,  
Belongs to all of us  
And to all the world.  
She must just be a beautiful lady  
In every respect.  
She must just be our music and our song.  
So, Lord...have we asked for too much?  
Is there such a person?"

And the Lord replied, "Fear not- I have the answer  
Trust me. This one will take care of thee."  
And the people said, "Well, yes, but Lord,  
Who is it? For behold, this person will have to be  
Like one of Your angels from Up There.  
What is her name?"  
And the Lord said, "Well, yes, she is from Up Here,  
But I can lend her to you all for a while.  
Her name is Mary K."

And the people said, "Mary K WHO?"  
And the Lord said, "There is, and will always be,  
Only one Mary K - now and forevermore,  
And when thou look's at her, thou wilt say,  
"Behold! There is Sweet Adelines itself,  
Walking around on earth!"  
And the people then looked at Mary K,  
And the people then looked back at the Lord,  
And the people said, "Yea...we see that it is true;  
She is the one...  
We thank Thee, Dear Lord...  
Amen."



When Mary K retired as DMA, Region 14 planned a special presentation following the chorus competition and regional champs' performance by Queen Charlotte (QC). Since QC was still on stage and without assignment, QC decided to act independently and surprise her and the region. When the presenter announced "Mary K Coffman" the back row of QC held letters spelling "MARY K WHO?" She loved it and soon used it on her auto tag and later as her email address.  
*[from Mary Gravely]*

**"THE BEGINNING"**

*Sally Colwell  
Queen Charlotte Chorus*

My family and I moved to Charlotte in 1964 as a result of my (then) husband's job. He had made many contacts in the dental field prior to our arriving and in true southern style, we were invited to many homes, parties, etc. upon the family's arrival.

About this time we were having organizational meetings to establish a

Sweet Adeline chorus in Charlotte and I was already hooked due to hearing the Cracker Jills in Michigan prior to our move. One night we were invited to a party at a mutual friend's home and late in the evening, as usual, several of us got singing around the kitchen table. There was a guest of our host, an attractive blonde, that was adding wonderful notes to our endeavor to harmonize so, of course, I invited her to come to a chorus rehearsal. She wasn't all that familiar with barbershop but agreed to come.

Well, that was all she wrote you know the rest. Mary K was a charter member of Queen Charlotte, a quartet member (Charlottes and Diamonds in the Rough), director, arranger, International Board Member, judge, coach, etc. etc.

She gave so much of herself to Sweet Adelines and also her church, family and friends. I am proud and blessed to be the one who introduced Mary K to four-part harmony barbershop style and the Sweet Adeline organization. I'll never forget her!



**"THE DIRECTOR AND COACH"**

*Barbara Mauney  
Queen Charlotte Chorus*

During my years serving as Regent and MDR for Region 14, it was my pleasure being able to travel with Mary K many times, as she visited and coached many choruses. We all are aware of her perfect pitch and her lack of toleration for wrong notes or out of tune chords. I have seen her hold her hands over her ears in desperation as she tried to "fix" those notes and chords and then seen her rejoice when they were sung accurately. It gave her great pleasure, being able to share her knowledge, talents and time with others. She was one of the most gracious, loving and caring individuals I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. I remember one time, I was not able to go with her on a chorus visit, ( a previous visit had not been very successful), Mary K could not wait until morning to call me to tell me just how much they had improved, she was so proud.

Mary K had so much important knowledge in her head, that she didn't clutter her brain with trivial things. So many times she would lose her glasses during rehearsals, and we would have to tell her they were on top of her head. She has been known to wear someone else's glasses home, leaving some poor soul with no way to see. There was even one time, she drove another car, just like hers) home. She kept thinking, she didn't remember having those "Hardee's papers" in her car. Upon realizing what she had done, she hurried back to the parking deck, and changed cars, hoping no one ever found out.

There were many times during chorus rehearsals, that we could see the wheels turning, trying to find a solution to a chord that just didn't seem quite right. She would stop, play that imaginary piano, try different chords, frown and then after several tries playing the imaginary piano, that only she could do, would smile, and give us a new chord that always worked. She was always looking for a way to make her arrangements better.



**"SHE WILL ALWAYS BE WITH US."**

*Evelyn Stonecipher  
Queen Charlotte Chorus*

We lost our Mary K on January 4, 2000. Mary K's illness began to present itself at the International Convention in Nashville. When she had surgery in November of 1998, and learned the extent of this illness, she began to set her house in order. Now, she didn't have any "fences to mend" or the need to ask anyone's forgiveness, for she had always lived her life by the Golden Rule. Her doctor's prognosis gave her about six months, but with the love of her family, her love for her Lord, and the support and caring of her many friends, her indomitable spirit came forward, and we had her for a little more than a year. She valued this extra time so much. Every day was a gift. She bore her illness with dignity; and was her sweet, gracious self to the end.

She planned her funeral, choosing the music to be sung, and Sweet Adelines came from far and near to sing this music. She also wanted an "Afterglow" following the service. The women of her church provided refreshments, and we gathered in the church atrium to sing the music she had chosen for this. The chorus and several quartets sang, we talked and told stories about her. We laughed and we cried. She would have loved it all.

Mary K was also a poet. Her poetry was about many things -- her life, her friends, funny happenings, and revealed her deep religious faith. Her poetry could make you laugh, and it could wring your heart.

We do not say goodbye to Mary K. She will always be with us. The rich legacy of her music, the remembrance of her warm funny personality will help sustain us, and perhaps in time, even console us. Mary K, you really did "touch our hearts with the magic of harmony."

## "DIRECTOR AND ARRANGER"

Claire Gardiner, Director  
Vienna-Falls Chorus

I remember my first encounter with Mary K, as a brand new Sweet Adeline. It was at my first Regional meeting in Charlottesville in February of 1985. Mary K was then the director of the Regional "Star" chorus. Back in the "old" days singing in this chorus was a big deal! You had to audition, and then got a star pin in a certain color depending on your part. I auditioned with Tommie Dobson and was scared out of my mind!!!! What an honor it was to sing under Mary K's leadership.

I drove to Charlotte that same winter to an arranging class Mary K was offering at her home. There were probably 8-10 of us that weekend and we reviewed the famous 11 chords and practiced ear training....learning to "hear" the chords and identify them. Having just recently graduated from James Madison University with a degree in Music Ed., this was more like a review for me....but the slant on Barbershop harmony and the specific voicings for our harmony was fascinating! (to me anyway...what can I say, I'm a chord "geek!")

I would say that one of the MOST famous things Mary K was known for is what we all called "air piano." If you ever showed her an arrangement, and you wanted her opinion on whether it was good for contest, she would play "air piano"....pretending there was a piano, and playing the arrangement right in front of you. And of course, she could hear it in her head. And after she was done, she'd say "oh yes, this is fine!" Alice Guy tells the story of Mary K at the hair dressers, sitting under the drier, working on an arrangement. Now get this: she had no piano, no paper, and no pencil, but there she was, playing along and writing things down (and erasing her mistakes)!!! But when Mary K did have pencil and paper in hand, it was fun to watch her, because she was one of those who was born left-handed, and was "forced" to write right-handed. But for some reason, she always erased left-handed. (I guess they didn't "force" her to do that right handed!) It was just funny to watch her write something down with her right hand, then switch the pencil to her left hand to erase it!

Probably the most amazing thing I ever saw her do was write an arrangement "on the spot" to a song she'd never seen before. At a regional arranging school, one of the students in my basic theory class had written a song (just a melody....no chords). She asked Mary K if it would be ok to arrange in barbershop. Mary K looked and said "Where are the chords?" The student said..."There aren't any. I don't know how to do that." Mary K said, "no problem...we'll figure them out." She fiddled a bit, and within a few seconds (literally!) was plunking out chords to go with this melody....and within seconds of that....she was playing a barbershop arrangement of this melody she had heard only a minute before. Both the song writer and I were astounded!!!! But for Mary K..this was just normal! Her mind worked like a computer, it was absolutely fascinating to watch. I always wished I could do a "Spock mind meld" with her, so I could have some of that knowledge and ability. It was a true gift.

I sat next to her once at quartet contest where she had coached practically half the quartets in the contest (well...not really, but it seemed that way!) She took every breath with every quartet....and would grunt, make little noises as each performer would do something well...or perhaps do something not quite like she wanted. She was on stage with everyone of them! And I don't think she was ever happier, than when Queen Charlotte placed 10th in Indianapolis. I was sitting next to her then too. She literally jumped out of her chair and started crying!

If you ever dabbled in arranging and let Mary K look at one of your arrangements, it always came back with the famous "red pencil" markings. She LOVED critiquing arrangements and helping people get better. Her joy of arranging, and teaching others to enjoy it was always so inspiring to me.

Region 14's arranging program would not be where it is today were it not for Mary K. When I first began coordinating the program, we had two classes, my basic theory class, and Mary K's more advanced class. We have now grown to 3 levels of classes, basic theory, Intermediate arranging, and Advanced arranging. Melissa Martin is now the coordinator. The Arranging Home Study Course would never have gotten off the ground without Mary K. When a student got to the level where their arrangements needed to be critiqued, I mailed them to Mary K. She critiqued them both on paper and on tape, playing correct voicings, and returned everything to me. I was ever so thankful for her assistance.

Anyone who knows about the 11 chords, knows about the Mary K. Coffman "Commemorative chord," the Dominant 9th....with the 9th in the bass. Oh, how she loved that voicing! I guess now we'll have to call it the "Mary K. Coffman Memorial Chord. If you were a bass, and ever sang tags with Mary K, you just "had" to sing that note!!!!

And it was fun to watch her arrange stuff these last few years....because she stretched the boundaries just a bit (at least for her!!!!). She used chords that she'd never consider using before....just because she could! Who was going to stop her????? She was the first arranger in the organization awarded the Emeritus status....and rightfully so!

I know I will miss her terribly, as will we all. She was such an inspiration to me. Thank You Dear Lord, for Mary K!"

**"QUOTES FROM HER QUARTET"**

Mary Gravely  
Queen Charlotte Chorus

The special bond with my fun loving friend began over thirty years ago when she auditioned me to sing Bass in her quartet. Before she told me that I had passed, she insisted on interviewing my husband. Fortunately for me, he passed, and it would be the beginning of a long and very special friendship.

Soon we became travel buddies, my driving and Mary K navigating. We could tell you some tales about the places we've been and the things we've seen that weren't on the map. But getting lost didn't bother us a bit. You could always find us together at Sweet Adeline events laughing and singing in the hospitality room 'til the wee small hours. You'd better not sing a wrong note even at 3 AM. What an ear!

Her fighting spirit was quite evident during her years' illness. In spite of her surgeries and treatments she continued to see her friends and would "go to lunch," her very favorite thing to do, any time that she felt like it. Seeing and hearing from her Sweet Adeline friends was the highlight of her day.

Talented, fun loving, and great sense of humor are just a few of the qualities that describe Mary K. I'll miss my good friend.



Mary K (1968) as bari in first "Charlottes" contest.  
Songs were originals by Mary K "Barbershop  
Wedding" and "Wedding Day."

Alice Guy  
Queen Charlotte Chorus

In 1973, Mary K asked me and two other chorus members to try out some of her arrangements. We sounded pretty good, decided to register, to do comedy. I wrote words and parodies and Mary K. arranged the "stuff" for us "Diamonds in the Rough". Folks took to us right away. We sang and traveled a lot. But most of all, we had a ball.

We loved to play practical jokes on Mary K 'cause her reaction was so funny - like the time in Williamsburg. While she was at Regional Board meeting, we took toothpaste and changed our room number from 338 to 388. At 1 AM she came trippin' down the cobblestones, looking for her room. She finally stopped and knocked on the door. Strangers answered, she screamed - then apologized, as we "rescued" her. In Florida we put creepy crawlers in her bed. Another time we short-sheeted her - after struggling with the sheet, she was going to call the manager to say the maid "doesn't know how to make up a bed". Yet another time, a rubber medical glove filled with water and tied was placed under her pillow. During the night she felt it and was out of bed like a lightning bolt!! She was always good natured about our tricks and laughed with us.

A music seminar in Atlanta invited the Diamonds (only a few days ahead) to sing an invocation. Mary K indicated that the Diamonds didn't have anything appropriate - their response - "write one". She wrote "THANK YOU, DEAR LORD, FOR MUSIC". We learned it going down in the car and had the nerve to sing it. We didn't realize that Sweet Adelines all over the world would soon be singing it. The Diamonds are proud that we had a small part in it. Mary K was a talented, gracious lady - and a good friend. We all miss her.

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**Titles of Rhymes in  
Mary K's Collection:**

Kaleidoscope	One Week A Year
My Old Radio	Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow
The Imposters	Who Hears The Children?
The Ice Cream Chair	Red Basket
Cousins	Our Boys
To Lib	Me
The Paragon	Sanctuary
Sibs	Keep On Laughing
When Austin Smiles	Snow
The Grass Is Always Greener	Sisterhood
A Clean Story	What Does Christmas Mean To Me?
Gus	Gold
A Peek At The Pope	Thank You, Dear Lord, For Music
A Night To Remember	
The River Wild	

### “MARY K's SPIRIT LIVES ON”

Sharon LeDuc, Region 14  
Communication/Tech. Coord.

Mary K loved us all and she loved good music. The last email I (and many others) received shortly after the scan in which “news is not good”, thanked us for our good wishes and prayers throughout her illness and ended with “I love you.”

Mary K requested that memorials go to her church or to the Young Singers Foundation (YSF). She was always thinking ahead! She is not with us in body anymore, but let's strive to always keep her spirit.

Toula Oberlies who is heading up the YSF Silent Auction in Orlando this year wrote to offer the region her heartfelt condolences and to share several of her personal remembrances of Mary K. It would be a wonderful tribute to Mary K if Region 14 could provide several items for this year's YSF Silent Auction. If you have any ideas, please let me know (PO Box 14728, RTP, NC 27709). I am going to do all I can to help Toula make this year's YSF Silent Auction a memorable success.

### Another Century of Harmony

Three Region 14 choruses are teaming up with two SPEBSQSA from the same area to put on a barbershop extravaganza, "Another Century of Harmony".

The Roanoke Valley Star, Hill City Harmony and Wilderness Road Choruses are joining with the Harmeneers of Smith Mountain Lake and the Virginia Gentlemen of Roanoke to strut their stuff on February 20, 2000, at 3 PM at the Roanoke Civic Center. The show is being underwritten by Bell Atlantic and Channel 13-WSET/ABC. The object is to spread the fun of barbershop harmony in the Roanoke Valley.

There are 2,400 tickets available for free! Call (540)774-4430 and leave a message. Or get in touch with a chorus member.

We are looking forward to having our Sisters in Harmony come celebrate with us as we "Harmonize the World"!

### Retention - The Key to Sustained Growth

Dorothy Jurs  
Published in Lake Michigan, Region 3, "Voices 'round the Lake"

Retention of members is a necessary part of sustained growth for any organization. We have to keep our present members in addition to gaining new ones if we wish to remain strong and healthy. It is not only the responsibility of the membership team to work on retention. Each of us as a chorus member has that responsibility too. We do that best when we relate to other chorus members in ways that shows appreciation for who they are and what they bring to the chorus. Listed at the side are a few key words for each of us to keep in mind. How many of these do you include in your relationships with other chorus members?

### GRC is Whistling Dixie!

The Greater Richmond Chorus is thrilled to announce that Dixie Dahlke is it's new director.

Dalhke is a 30-year member of SWEET ADELINES INTERNATIONAL. She is an international quartet champion (tenor, Front Office Four), a Certified Sound Judge and an Approved Candidate Expression Judge. She has been a member of the International Faculty since 1984 and has held many chapter and regional administrative offices including DMA of Region 2. She is an assistant director of the Ramapo Valley Chorus in Region 15, co-chair of Queens College 2000 and a much sought after chorus and quartet coach.

We are just delighted to bring her to Region 14! Dixie can be reached by e-mail at: [dixied@inna.net](mailto:dixied@inna.net).



Lori Lyford (right) who provided excellent classes at FallFEST, shares alma mater of Patuxant Pearls' new member Melissa Flutler

- ENCOURAGE
- TEACH
- THANK
- LISTEN
- RECOGNIZE
- MOTIVATE
- UTILIZE
- SUPPORT
- INVOLVE