

## Personal Reflections on Days Gone By....

*by Dave Earling*

We all have favorite remembrances from days gone by, favorite family members and those special occasions and people that remain close in our memories. That is to say, all of us have built our own personal history which we cherish, sometimes share, and sometimes keep to ourselves, or share with a few special friends.

We can all recall and make special lists of events and people which have inspired and shaped our lives. Those few people who have dramatic influence on our thinking and provide important lessons which influence us long after the time we have contact with them.

For me, it would be my music teachers; Sherm Rhodes, my first trumpet teacher, C. Oliver Fuller, my high school band director, Howard Deming who directed the best college brass choir in the Northwest and in which I was privileged to play principle trumpet, or Bill Cole, my final trumpet teacher, my true inspiration in conducting and who taught me how John Phillip Sousa really wanted his marches played!

They all taught me the importance of ensemble balance, to listen top to bottom of the instruments in the conductor score, the importance to have all instruments "sing" through their instrument, to be in total command of the stage when conducting and to give the students in the ensemble and the audience the best musical experience possible.

My second and final list is pretty short... my parents, George and Marie Earling! Ah yes, and I am an only child. As with many of you, my parents profoundly shaped my life.

Both of them were from blue collar backgrounds. My father did not finish the 8th grade, and yet was one of the wisest people I have ever known. A commercial painter, standing 6' foot 4" and well-muscled, he was an imposing figure and highly principled.

My mother was a traditional "house wife", with a high school education, who worked part time at a grocery store and was totally devoted to her family. As an example, she lived for the moment when my father would walk through the door from work. Yes, far from the evolving role of today's women, but she had a very strong personality.

As many parents want, my parents wanted to provide opportunities for me to improve over what they perceived were their "place". They encouraged me in music in spite of a rocky start. You see I wasn't very good in the beginning. But with private lessons and a newer trumpet, things dramatically changed. They wanted me to pursue higher education and helped financially as they could. In all of those opportunities, they were there.

If there was a musical performance, whether elementary through university or when I taught at Shoreline Community College, they were always there. Always! They cared and wanted me to know it. I shall always treasure the memory of my father coming to his final concert before he died, even though he was very ill. Their sheer devotion was and is a constant inspiration to me.

All of you have those special relationships, as I have suggested above, which inspire and give definition to your lives. You could and may have developed thoughts along the same lines as I have shared.

I believe we better understand ourselves if we reflect on those who have influenced us, to help move us if you will, to become the person we are today. The people listed above, as I have also suggested, are pieces of my history. Putting names and faces to those important pieces of history remind us of who we are and who we might be.