

Play It Again! at Harmony University/Quartet College

Rod, Jim, Bill and Andre,
Play It Again!

Arriving at Harmony University/Quartet College (HU/QC), *Play It Again!* (PIA!) and 12 other quartets were assigned to coaching pods for the entire week. Each pod consisted of four men; a singing, music, presentation and performance specialist. In our case that consisted of **Bill Myers, Mel Knight, Barry Towner** and **Gary Stamm** respectively.

What a marvelous concept! Rather than trying to be all things to all quartets, each coach could concentrate on their primary expertise. Then by comparing notes each evening, the coaches could work up a plan for the next day for each of their quartets. Consequently, all the coaching sessions complimented each other, and the continuity was great.

We in fact had a total of 23-45 minute sessions. Each coach displayed wonderful creativity, and there were some truly magical moments during our sessions. With our performances at the Thursday night bash and Friday night quartet parade, both receiving standing ovations, we knew we were on the right track.

As the *Larry Ajer Scholarship* winners, *Play It Again!* (PIA!), arrived at HU/QC with some trepidation. We knew that other quartets there had also applied, but

we needn't have worried. In typical barbershop fashion, the other quartet members were among our biggest supporters.

Adding to the experience is of course,

however, each felt that we were performing as a transformed quartet.

We departed on the Sunday as a cohesive unit. We realized that to go home and drop the ball would be very sad and plans were made, on the spot, to carry over into our subsequent practice sessions all that we had learned at HU/QC. There would be no "Wiping the slate clean," as Bill Myers so aptly put it.

Without reservation, PIA! believes in, and recommends, this quartet coaching experience to any quartet, regardless of their level should they sincerely wish to improve. The coaching and support that PIA! experienced at HU/QC created deep and lasting bonds. Any quartet prepared to make the commitment can only realize a quantum leap in skills improvement. How much fun would that be?

In conclusion, PIA! arrived at HU/QC with a focus, albeit fuzzy at first, but came prepared to learn. We maintained a positive attitude and commitment, all the while having a great deal of fun. Those components, coupled with the skill of our coaches, sent us home with the solid tools to continue our journey of growth.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who were instrumental in us being granted the Larry Ajer scholarship. We will be forever grateful especially to all the Ontario Barbershoppers who joined us in St. Joe's. What a cheering section! WOW!



Play it Again!
at Harmony University/Quartet College
(L-R) T: Rod McGillivray; Bs: Bill Vermue
L: Jim Whitehead; Ba: Andy Carriere

being a part of the entire HU/QC scene. Missouri Western State is a fantastic facility. Staying in a quad, in the dorms, allowed for togetherness but privacy as well if needed. The food as usual was great (did we hear someone say ice cream)!

Despite our past successes, to some extent, PIA! arrived at HU/QC as four individuals. By the end of the weeks,

Mr. Barberpole Cat—Floyd Connett

During the Society's first two decades our members had no common repertoire—different choruses and quartets sang different songs, or the same songs in different arrangements. Many men could sing common arrangements of "Coney Island Baby" or "Shine on Me" or "After Dark," but that was about it.

Connett's first collection of songs intended for every Barbershopper, "Just Plain Barbershop," provided a common repertoire for the first time, in the late 1950s. But more was to come.

In 1971, Connett, with two other Society leaders, the legendary **Mac Huff** and then president **Ralph Ribble**, formulated the first *Barberpole Cat Program*, originally six songs.

Currently there are 12 songs in the Barberpole Cat collection. Five of them are Floyd Connett arrangements, all in the key of B-flat: "My Wild Irish Rose," "Down Our Way," "Honey/Little Lize Medley," "Sweet, Sweet Roses Of Mom," and "Shine On Me."

The legacy of one of our Society's greatest figures, **Floyd Connett**, lives on every time Barbershoppers harmonize these songs and feel the close fellowship they bring.

—Tom Pearce, Richmond, Virginia, Chapter, adapted from *Heritage of Harmony Songbook*, Burt Szabo, Editor.—*Big D Bulletin*, October 1998, Grant Carson, Editor. [ED: Taken from the PROBE web page]