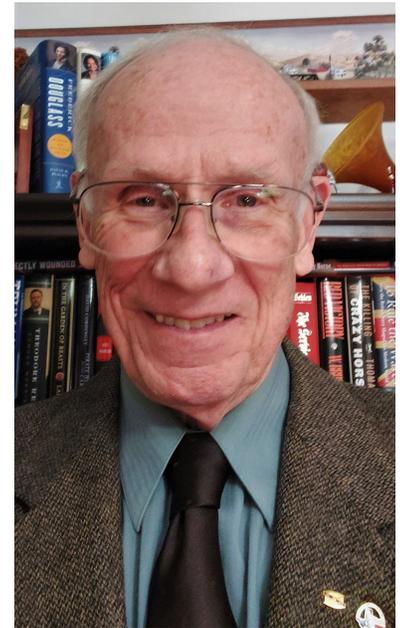


# Michael G. Marsh

ATSSB Hall of Fame Inductee, 2022

Mike Marsh was born August 6, 1939 at Baylor Hospital, Dallas. He is the oldest of three children born to Harold and Elizabeth Marsh. Mike began band in October of his eighth grade year. His band director, Otis Harvey, started him and one other student on French horn during his conference period and in January he was moved into the performing group. Mike played in the band at Greiner Junior High School through his ninth grade year and then at Sunset High School under the direction of Russ Williams in grades 10 and 11. Otis Harvey moved up to Sunset High School and was Mike's director during his senior year. Mike played in both band and orchestra at Sunset. He studied horn privately with Geneva Redwine and with Michael Glass and was a member of the Dal Hi Symphony for three years. His senior year Mike was selected as a member of the TMEA All State Orchestra.



After graduation Mike attended Arlington State College on a music scholarship. He was an electrical engineering major but also took private horn lessons, played in the band, and participated in student recitals. He studied privately with Jack Mahan and Col. Earl Irons. Mike was a member of ROTC and was ROTC band commander his senior year. While at Arlington Mike met and married the love of his life, Elaine Blomdahl, who also played French horn in the band. After discussions with Elaine and with Mr. Mahan, Mike changed his major and began taking music and education classes. Elaine did secretarial work to help support him through college and Mike worked at Sears in the paint department. Mr. Mahan suggested he transfer to Texas Wesleyan College in order to get education classes not offered at Arlington. He also arranged for a tuition scholarship for playing in the band and orchestra and Mike graduated with a Bachelor of Science with teaching certifications in English and math in 1963.

Commissioned a second lieutenant in field artillery upon graduation from college, Mike attended the basic officer's course at Ft. Sill Oklahoma. Upon completion, he was initially assigned as fire direction officer for Battery B, 27<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery stationed at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas, and later at Ft. Bliss Texas where he served on the battalion staff as S-1 and then S-2. After leaving active duty in 1965 Mike spent 22 years in the Army Reserve. He completed the field artillery officer's advanced course at Ft. Sill Oklahoma, the Quartermaster(Petroleum) branch qualification course at Ft. Lee Virginia, and attended Command and General Staff College. His reserve assignments included 383<sup>rd</sup> Quartermaster Battalion Headquarters Company Commander, Field Artillery Surveying Instructor for Army, National Guard and Marine Corps Reserve units, and Adjutant for an Army Reserve Special Forces Company. Mike was promoted to Lt Colonel in 1984 and was assigned as a mobilization designee to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Washington D.C. from 1979 until he transferred to the retired reserves in 1987.

After leaving active duty military service, Mike contracted to teach freshman English at Ysleta High School in El Paso. Ysleta had a all-girl drum corps and their instructor resigned two weeks before school started when her husband was transferred. Mike had already been hired as an English teacher and the district instrumental music supervisor, Louise Little, asked if he would be willing to teach two drum corps classes in addition to his three English classes. Although he had never had a percussion class, Mike accepted the position. He survived the first year with the help of a Haskell Harr book, a practice pad and a pair of sticks. For the next three years he attended the summer percussion camp at Arlington State and sat in and played along with the campers.

In the spring of 1967 Ysleta HS band director John Faraone talked Mike into directing the second band during his conference period. In 1968-69 Mike taught band at Thomas Manor Elementary School in addition to the Drum Corps and English classes at Ysleta HS. The band at Thomas Manor met on the stage in a combination gym, cafeteria and auditorium. The only insulation between the cafeteria noises and the bouncing of basketballs was the stage curtain. There was no budget and no inventory. All music and supplies had to be paid out of the five dollar fee students paid to be in band. In 1969, Mike's Thomas Manor students combined with Ismael Tercero's Cedar Grove and Ascarate Park students entered the El Paso ISD Contest as a composite band with Mike conducting. They had one rehearsal together and were elated when they received a second division rating.

That same year, the Ysleta Drum Corps, sponsored by the El Paso Lions Club, traveled to Dallas and won first place in the Lion's Club International Convention Parade.

In the fall of 1969 Mike was named the director of the Clint High School Band where he remained for ten years. Students started band in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Clint and the high school marching band included 5<sup>th</sup> grade students(marching 6-5). Clint went to its first UIL contest in 1974 and received the only second division rating in a UIL concert contest during Mike's career. The first UIL marching contest was in 1975 and the band received sweepstakes awards that year and each year afterward. In 1975 Mike talked his superintendent into hiring an assistant by agreeing to team teach K-4 music classes. Mike had met Jesse Lotspeich when they played together in the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. Jesse was an outstanding teacher and musician and with his help the band won state solo and ensemble sweepstakes awards in 1977 and 1978. In 1975 the band had placed fourth in Class A Honor band competition and in 1977 was selected as the Class A Honor Band. Four members of the band were selected as members of the All State Band that year. Also that year, as it did every year, the band traveled 286 miles to Odessa for all UIL events, marching, concert, and solos. The marching contest that year had to be postponed due to a heavy snow storm, but the decision to postpone was made after the band was already on the road in a chartered bus(pre cellphones). The band was snowed in and had to spend two nights in an Odessa motel before roads were safe enough to return home. The band returned to Odessa the next week, spent another night in the motel and brought home what my superintendent said was a very expensive trophy.

In the spring after the band's honor band performance at TMEA, Clint ISD was audited by the Texas Education Agency which noted that Mike was not certified to teach music. His superintendent called him in and told him that they would have to show him as the assistant on paper since he

was not certified. Mike attended classes at Sul Ross State University that summer to work on certification, but by fall TEA had ruled that since he had been already been teaching music classes for fourteen years he would be grandfathered in.

In August of 1979 Mike received a call from his good friend Ralph Zamarippa telling him that Ft Stockton was open. He said that he had been hired as the high school assistant, and suggested Mike apply for the head job. Mike was hired as the Director of Instrumental Music for Ft. Stockton ISD. Mike stayed three years and in 1982 moved to Eldorado, Texas, where he taught the next thirteen years. Eldorado was a TMEA honor band finalist in 1987 and 1991 and won the UIL Solo and Ensemble Sweepstakes trophy in 1992. Eldorado received first divisions in concert for thirteen consecutive years and advanced to the State Marching contest three times. Mike taught by himself until 1987 when he persuaded his superintendent to hire an assistant by offering to teach 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. He was fortunate to hire an outstanding young director, Manuel San Luis. When Manuel left in 1990 Robin Konop (Winter) filled in for a year and then Mike hired a former student from Clint, Gina Muela, who stayed until his first retirement and then replaced him as head director.

In 1995 Mike retired and moved to Oklahoma to teach high school band at Heavener High School. The band won the first sweepstakes trophy in the history of the school in 1996. In 1997 the Marsh family moved back to Texas.

While on a trip interviewing in Texas Mike received a call from his long time friend Elmer Schenk offering him the middle school position at Howe. Mike stayed at Howe for the next eighteen years working with Elmer, Chris Burk, Angie Liss, and Julie Cook. During that time Howe Middle School was a five time TMEA Honor Band finalist, a ten time OPS finalist and Ops winner in 1999. Mike was named Howe Middle School Teacher of the Year in 2010.

In 2017 Mike was inducted into Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame for Alpha Chapter, Phi Beta Mu. Mike was a founding Charter member and the first president of ATSSB and served a total of nine years as TMEA region band Chairman and two years as TMEA region chairman. He has been a French horn instructor at the Angelo State, Sul Ross, and University of Texas Band camps.

Mike is thankful to have been assisted by outstanding teachers and clinicians throughout his career. He is grateful to the many talented students who were a part of his bands. He is most thankful for the love of his life, Elaine who has encouraged and supported him throughout sixty years of marriage, and for his daughter Michelle, her husband Wade Frost, and grandchildren Aaron, Trevor, and Paige. He is grateful that God has blessed him by allowing him to keep teaching even in retirement.