

# Robert S. Vetter

ATSSB Hall of Fame Inductee, 2024

Robert “Bob” Vetter was born April 19, 1956. He was the third child of David and Ruth Vetter. The oldest, Donna, with Mike next and then younger sister, Patti. They had a great family life that was full of faith, music, and love. Bob’s mom played cello, piano and guitar. Donna and Patti played the flute and Mike played the baritone and piano; dad enjoyed listening to them all! Bob’s parents would attend every concert and contest they possibly could. They were at many football games as well.

At the age of 15, Bob became a follower of Jesus Christ. He loved music and wanted to serve his Lord Jesus with music. He also loved young people and through the vocation of band directing he was able to serve his Lord and work with young folks.

Bob got his first trombone when he was in first grade. He had a second cousin that had played trombone and handed it down to “Bobby.” That trombone had played for President John F. Kennedy with the Southwest State University Band during Kennedy’s inauguration. Bob started band in the fourth grade. He did not “learn” how to play until sixth grade. When he started band, they needed trombones in the top band, so they put him in that group. He was clueless and did not learn how to play until the sixth grade when he received lessons from a high school student.

By the end of high school Bob knew he wanted to major in music. He was offered a nice scholarship to Houston Baptist but never told his parents. He wanted to attend North Texas State University, now The University of North Texas. He earned his bachelor’s degree and started band directing. After his first year of teaching, college roommate and close friend, Jim Koch (Phi Beta Mu Hall of Fame), encouraged him to go to summer school to work on a masters. After a few summers and a lot of racquetball, they both had masters degrees. Some of his influential music ed professors were Robert Winslow, John Stansbury, David McGuire and Roger Warner.

Bob started his career in White Deer in the fall of 1979. It was a one director job but there was a wealth of experienced directors close. In Panhandle, there was Gerald Smith (PBM HOF) at Pampa HS, Jeff Doughten (PBM HOF) and Pampa JH, Joe DiCosimo (PBM HOF). Tulia had Roger Edwards and Cody Myers, both members of the PBM HOF. Dr. Gary Garner (PBM HOF) would clinic the White Deer Band. Bob would spend as much time as possible learning from these master teachers.

In the fall of 1983, it was time to move to Big Lake and take over as the head band director for Reagan County ISD. Bob spent twenty-five years in Big Lake and his greatest accomplishment was marrying Jaye Leann Barnes! She was a senior his first year at Reagan County. They did not date until she was a freshman in college. There were many trips to San Angelo to see his true love. They married June 7, 1986. Leann finished her degree at Angelo State and has just completed year 36 of teaching. She has been Bob’s biggest supporter, especially when their children were involved!



The Reagan County Band had fallen on tough times. There had been several director changes and the numbers were low. The year before Bob came, there had been 27 in band. Through Bob's leadership, the HS program grew to over 100 students. Reagan County had only 190 students in the entire HS. During the years at Reagan County, Bob was blessed to work with several good directors. The last 17 years were with Jesse Randle. Bob and Jesse had a great chemistry and together they had a lot of success.

The Reagan County Band appeared at the UIL State Marching Contest 4 times, placing 4th their first appearance. The band played at the UL State Wind Ensemble Festival numerous times and had recordings make it to the TMEA Honor Band finals and the ATSSB OPS state taping session. A lot of this success was helped by clinicians such as Harris Brinson (PBM HOF) and Dan Gibbs (PBM HOF). Reagan County placed numerous students in the All-State Band including Bob's daughters, Allison and Ashton! Reagan County also had several students named Outstanding Soloist at the UIL State Solo & Ensemble Contest, including Allison and Ashton.

The Reagan County Band traveled extensively, going to Washington DC, Orlando, FL (numerous times), Los Angeles, CA, (numerous times), Branson, MO and all over Texas. Bob loved taking his young people to different destinations. He wanted to show off his band as well as give the young people the opportunity to see the United States.

In the winter of 2008, the Robinson band position came open. Tony Clines (PBM HOF), former director came back to finish the year for the Pride of the Blue. At TMEA, Tony and Bob sat down to talk about the position. After much prayer and thought, Bob applied for and was named director of the Robinson Band.

He started June 2, 2008. There was much to be done. The thriving program had gone through a small low and Bob worked hard to bring the program back to the "glory days." In the summer of 2014, the Robinson Band was named the TMEA Honor Band! February 2015, the Pride of the Blue Symphonic Band presented their Honor Concert at TMEA. In January of 2016, the Robinson Symphonic Band played for the Superintendents at their Mid-Winter Conference in Austin. Robinson Superintendent, Dr. Michael Hope was like a proud "dad" as the band represented Robinson ISD.

During his career, he had numerous outstanding student teachers. Several of his former students are now music educators. At both Reagan County and Robinson, Bob had numerous All State students. He also had several students named Outstanding Performer at the UIL State Solo and Ensemble Contest. At Robinson, his son Austin was a three year All State Tuba and also named Outstanding Soloist at the UIL TSSEC! All four years of his undergraduate, Austin played in the prestigious Texas A&M Wind Symphony under the direction of Dr. Timothy Rhea. Bob is proud of the music he had commissioned. Throughout the years, he had several marching shows arranged for his groups. Arrangers include Timothy Rhea, Barry Hurt, Michael Pote, and Robert Tucker. Commissioned pieces include "The Big Lake Wildcat," a concert march by Robert Tucker; "Be Thou My Vision," arranged by Robert Tucker; "Books With Blank Pages," by Samuel Hazo (Premiered on Honor Band Concert); "Iron Sharpens Iron," by Michael Pote (Premiered on Honor Band Concert); and "Within My Heart, A Hymn Setting of 'There's Within My Heart A Melody'," by Michael Pote. On his final concert at Robinson, Bob and his three children played a brass quartet with band accompaniment; Ashton on trumpet, Allison on French horn, Bob on trombone and Austin on tuba (Be Thou My Vision) conducted by Tony Clines.

Through the years, Bob worked with some amazing administrators. Dr. Michael Hope, Robinson ISD, stands at the top of his list. A close second must be his principal at Robinson HS, the late Dr. Jeanie Johnson. Another superintendent that stands very high is the late Mr. Ron Mayfield from Reagan County.

Bob is a Charter Member of the Association of Texas Small School Bands. He was unable to attend the meeting in Abilene where ATSSB was formed but did as much as he could to

help the young organization. Through the years he served as a Region Representative and Area Representative. In 2007, he was elected as President. Bob served ATSSB for six years as President Elect, President and then Immediate Past President. He wears his Past Presidents' pin with pride. Bob is thankful for the leadership of Kenneth Griffin, ATSSB Executive Secretary (ATSSB & PBM HOF), Michael G. Marsh, ATSSB Founding President (ATSSB & PBM HOF) and Elmer Schenk, ATSSB Founding Member (ATSSB & PBM HOF).

He is also a member of the Texas Music Educators Association, The Texas Band Masters Association, Texas Music Adjudicators Association and Phi Beta Mu. His PBM nominating sponsors are Harris Brinson, (PBM HOF); George Strickland, (PBM HOF); and the late Louis Thornton (ATSSB HOF).

He has served on the UIL Prescribed Music List Committee as well as the TMAA Sight Reading Revision Committee. He served the Texas Bandmasters Association as a Region Representative for numerous years and currently serves on the Phi Beta Mu State Board as the ATSSB Central Representative. During his years at Reagan County, Bob served on staff at the Angelo State University Band Camp. He has presented clinics at both TBA and TMEA.

The past ten years, Bob has served The Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools, TAPPS. He secures adjudicators for their music contests; Vocal, Orchestra and Band. He has served as a clinician at their summer convention, "TAPPSCON."

During retirement, Bob enjoys serving as a Region Band Clinician, helping local groups prepare for competition and adjudicating both marching and concert bands across the great state of Texas.

Bob and Leeann are extremely proud of their children, Allison and husband, Bradley Sell, Ashton and husband Brice Campbell and Austin. Allison is an Elementary Music Teacher in Plainview, TX and Bradley runs a coffee shop, "The Broadway Brew" in downtown Plainview. Brice and Ashton live in Central Asia and Austin works for Samaritan's Purse in the Middle East. Bob and Leeann are the proud grandparents of five: Adilynn, Hudson, Elliott, Haddon and Samuel.

Bob is humbled and honored to join the Association of Texas Small School Bands' Hall of Fame. He would like to thank all past and present members of ATSSB.