

ALFRED SKOOG
Director of Choral Activities
Arkansas State University

Alfred R. Skoog, a West Virginia native who migrated to Texas, received his BME and MM degrees from North Texas State University, now the University of North Texas. After teaching high school choral music in Borger, Texas, for eleven years, he settled in Arkansas in 1963. "Skoog," as he was known to his colleagues and students, had a tremendous impact on choral music. In his thirty-three years as Director of Choral Activities at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas, Skoog's influence was felt in all facets of choral music, especially in the promotion of the male chorus in the university and public schools in Arkansas, and in the preparation of choral music educators.

A charter member of ACDA, Al Skoog was also active in the Texas Choral Directors Association and served as state chairman of Arkansas ACDA. He was chair of the ACDA publications committee from 1964-1968. This group aided in the supervision of the *Choral Journal* and developed policies for the publication. He served for a time as southwest division chair of the Repertoire and Standards Committee for women's and men's choirs.

During Skoog's long tenure at Arkansas State, his choirs performed at several state, regional, and national conventions of music educators and in New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Under his direction the ASU choirs toured Germany and Romania, the latter culminating in a private performance for then Russian President **Nicolae Ceaușescu**. Upon his retirement from ASU in 1996, Skoog was honored by his former students with the initiation of the Alfred R. Skoog Choral Music Scholarship.

One of Skoog's closest friends and colleagues, Professor of Voice David Niederbrach said this about Al Skoog:

He developed the sense and understanding that to produce a beautiful choral sound, he had to employ the vocal concepts being taught in the voice studio and encourage his singers to work hard to control the trained sound. Result: Choirs that sang wonderful pianissimos as well as solid fortissimos. I could go on much longer, but I think what I am trying to say is the man was an icon of the art of choral singing, and there are many people in the field who owe their own choral success to him and who will remember him for a long time.

Mr. Skoog passed away in May of 1998 after a lengthy fight with lung cancer. His wife and frequent choral accompanist, Patty, died within a few weeks of his death from lymphoma. They had four children, three of which are still living: Lisa Kardel of

Christiansburg, VA, Jenny Wood of Waco, TX (who passed away in 2002), Bjorn Skoog of Paragould, AR, and Andrew Skoog of Knoxville, TN.