

A glance at Dr. John M. Long's resume reveals a myriad of accomplishments in the field of music and band directing. A member of the National Band Association's Hall of Fame and the Alabama Bandmasters Hall of Fame...recipient of the Alabama Outstanding Music Educator award...Sudler Medal of Honor presented by the John Philip Sousa Foundation...Buildings that bear his name. And, the list goes on and on.

What is not immediately evident is the influence the longtime high school and college educator and director has had on the lives of young people through the years. Literally hundreds of Long's former students have gone on to careers as band directors or music instructors, and many, like University of North Alabama Chair of Music, Dr. Jimmy Spencer, give the credit for his career choice to the man who was his band director at Montgomery's Robert E. Lee High School.

"He is the reason I am in music," Simpson once said about Long. "He has the ability to make you want to be the best you can be in any situation. He had a profound influence on my life."

One familiar theme among many of Long's former students is his leadership both in and out of the band room. "He was much more than just a teacher," one former student once said of Long. "He taught some music along with some good values, and those values are still with me to this day."

Still another recalled Long's lessons for life. "The thing about him is that it's not only the leadership he gives you as a student, but it's the leadership he provides forever afterwards."

Long's love for music began early in life and, at least in part, can be attributed to his family. Born in Guntersville, Ala., he began at age six taking piano lessons from his mother. A graduate of Athens College, she also studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and put her musical abilities to work to bring in money after the Great Depression wiped out the family lumber business.

As Long grew, so did his musical talents. Entering Marshall County High School, he joined the band, playing the trumpet under the direction of Mrs. Maxine Couch and later under the watchful eye of James L. Cowart.

Taking notice of Long's abilities, Cowart asked him to join his dance band known as "Cowart's Clowns." It was the first of many such invitations Long would receive.

In 1943, as Long entered his senior year, he found himself in a unique position. Cowart was drafted and entered the Navy, leaving the school without a band director. Long was asked by the school's principal to serve in the position until another candidate could be found. However, no one was found to fill the position, and Long was left to lead the band throughout his senior year.

In December of that year, Long turned 18 and was eligible for the draft. However, due to his position as band director, he was allowed to remain in school and graduate. After graduation, Long joined the Army. His musical talents were recognized in the Army as well, earning him an assignment to the touring band the "Southernaires."

At the end of World War II, Long was discharged from the service and enrolled in the University of Alabama to study Pre-Law. His stay in Tuscaloosa was short lived. After only one quarter, his love of music called him away to Jacksonville State College to become the assistant band director.

He enrolled in Jacksonville State and for the second time in his young life became both a student and a band director. During this time, Long also worked as band director at Jacksonville High School.

After receiving his bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State in 1949, Long moved to Oneonta, Ala. and became band director at Blount County High School. Although he stayed at the school only one year, it was there that his innovative nature began to blossom. He decided the band should have a flag line, something that was rare in southern marching bands. The flag line proved to be a very popular addition to the band, and it also allowed the young band leader to meet Mary Lynn Adams. The two were married the following July.

From Oneonta, Long moved on to Fort Payne and DeKalb County High School where he stayed from 1951-1955. His influence really began to grow during this time. Other band directors both at the high school and

college levels begin to take notice of the interesting marching styles and unique halftime shows being produced by this brilliant, young band leader. These styles began to be mimicked by others throughout the southeast.

In 1955, Long accepted the challenging position of building a band program at the newly-opened Robert E. Lee High School. It was while at the Montgomery high school that Long began to gain a reputation on the national level. Under his direction, the Lee Band won five national band contests. The Lee Concert Band also was the only Alabama band at that time to be selected for the Sousa Foundation's Historic Roll of Honor of High School Concert Bands from 1920-1960.

While Long had his hands full building the Lee program into one of national prominence, he also was completing work on a master's degree in music from the University of Alabama. He also was sharing his love of music with the Montgomery community.

Long organized the Montgomery Youth Orchestra in 1955, and served as the group's conductor for much of his 10-year stay in Alabama's capitol city. He also became involved with the Blue-Gray Football Classic as music director, a position he would hold for 41 years.

Long's community service and dedication did not go unnoticed in the Montgomery area. In 1959, he was nominated by the Montgomery Jaycees as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Men in America, and in 1964, he was presented the Distinguished Service Award by the city of Montgomery.

In 1965, Long left the high school ranks to become the band director at Troy State University where he began immediately to build a program of national reputation.

Continuing to pass along his knowledge and love of music to young people, Long established a high school summer band camp in 1965 that ran throughout most of his tenure at the university. Later, in 1973, Dr. Long established the Southeastern United State Concert Band Clinic, which has grown and continues to thrive. This year, the clinic drew more than 1,500 band students, directors and parents to the Troy State campus in February.

Under Long, the Troy State University's "Sound of the South" Marching Band represented the state of Alabama in four presidential inaugural parades – two for President Richard Nixon, one for President Ronald Reagan and one for President George Bush. The TSU band also was the official band for President Nixon during his 1971 visit to Mobile and for President Reagan during his 1987 visit to Dothan.

Long became chair of the Troy State music department in 1972, a position he held until 1996, and was dean of the School of Arts and Sciences from 1974 to 1991. He also served as assistant to the president from 1982-1996, and dean of the School of Fine Arts from 1992-1996.

As with the other communities in which served, Long adopted the city of Troy and became a vital influence. He served from 1973-1977 on the Board of Education of the Troy City School System, including one year as the group's president. He also served a one-year term as the president of the Troy Chamber of Commerce.

Long's national reputation continued to grow after coming to Troy State University. In 1969, Long was selected by the School Musician Magazine as one of the Ten Outstanding Band Directors in the United States and Canada. Three years later, he received the Citation of Excellence by the National Band Association, and in 1977, became the first active bandmaster elected to the Alabama Bandmasters' Hall of Fame.

In 1973, he was elected to membership in the prestigious American Bandmasters Association (ABA), and later led the organization as its president in 1987. It was during his tenure as president that the ABA successfully lobbied Congress to pass a resolution making John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" the official march of the United States of American.

Long's highest honor came in 1994 when he was elected to the National Band Association's Hall of Fame of Distinguished Band Conductors, making him the youngest active bandmaster to be so honored.

Long retired as the Troy State marching band director following the 1995 football season and ended his duties as dean of the school of fine arts and director of the concert and symphony bands in 1996. Still very active in retirement, he maintains an office on the Troy campus. His influence on Troy State University is evident in the two

buildings on campus that bear his name – John Maloy Long Hall, which houses the university’s Music Department and the Hawkins-Adams-Long Hall of Honor, which is home to the National Band Association’s Hall of Fame, the TSU Museum and the library of former Troy Chancellor Ralph Adams.

Upon his retirement, Long downplayed the numerous accolades and said he had only one hope. “People often ask me how I would like to be remembered,” he said. “I would like to be remembered as a teacher and a band director who made a difference.”

Indeed, Dr. John M. Long has and continues to make a difference in so many ways.