

## WKU Honors Band 2015 Conductors



### **Dr. Mark Walker**

Dr. Mark J. Walker serves as Director of Bands, Coordinator of Winds and Percussion and Associate Professor of Music at Troy University where he conducts the Troy University Symphony Band, the nationally renowned "Sound of the South" Marching Band, teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in conducting, marching band techniques, measurement and evaluation, and wind literature

In addition to his teaching duties, Dr. Walker serves as Chairman of the Southeastern United States Clinic and Honor Bands, Executive Director of the Middle School Southeastern United States Band Clinic and Honor Bands, and is the Director of the "Sound of the South" Summer Music Camp and Director's Clinic. He also serves as Co-Chair of the National Band

Association's Hall of Fame of Distinguished Band Directors. Dr. Walker is a published author, whose articles appears various music education publications and is the principal editor of the book *The Art of Interpretation of Band Music* published by GIA. He is a contributor to *The Euphonium Source Book*, published by Indiana University Press. Additionally, Dr. Walker is the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Band Research*.

Dr. Walker earned his bachelor's degree in music education at Tennessee Technological University, where he studied euphonium with R. Winston Morris, conducting with Joseph Hermann and composition with Robert Jager. He received his master's and doctorate degrees in music education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign during which time he studied euphonium with Mark Moore, conducting with James Keene and research methods under Drs. Deborah Sheldon and Gregory DeNardo. Dr. Walker is also the recipient of the prestigious A.A. Harding Award from the University of Illinois Bands.



### **Mr. Ricardo Vargas**

Mr. Vargas is the current Music Director of the Cartago Concert Band in Cartago, Costa Rica. He is the founder and first General Director of the National System of Music Education – SINEM-between 2007 and 2010, and has held the position of General Director of bands of the Ministry of Culture and Youth in Costa Rica. He was also the General Director of the National Music Center of Costa Rica, the institution that encompasses the National Symphony Orchestra, symphonic choir, the Lyric Company, and the National Institute of Music.

Vargas earned a master's degree in orchestral conducting and trumpet performance from Northwestern University, and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Louisville.

He has served as Professor of trumpet at the National University, University of Costa Rica, and National Institute of music.

He has served as a guest conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica. In 2012 he directed the Municipal Symphonic Band of Seville as guest conductor for a program of Costa Rican and Latin American music in the Auditorium of the theatre Virgen de los Reyes. Vargas was also a guest conductor for the Orchestra Manuel María Gutiérrez, of the national system of music education, on tour in Mexico and he led a concert tour to Córdoba, Argentina, with the concert band of Cartago in October 2012. He has been Director of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, the Advanced Band of the National Institute of Music on tours of Central America, the Orchestra of the University of Costa Rica, and the advanced band of the University of Costa Rica.



#### **Mr. David Starnes**

David Starnes joined the School of Music at Western Carolina University in the summer of 2011 as Assistant Professor/Director of Athletic Bands. He directs the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band and the Symphonic Band. A native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Mr. Starnes graduated magna cum laude from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1988, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education. Prior to coming to Western Carolina, Mr. Starnes was the founding Director of Bands at Kennesaw Mountain High School in Kennesaw, Georgia, where he served for eleven years.

Mr. Starnes is sought out nationally and internationally as an adjudicator, clinician, guest conductor and creative designer. He serves as an adjudicator for several state, national, and international organizations including Bands of America (where he is a member of the Advisory Board), Winter Guard International, and Drum Corps

International, where he served as an adjudicator and Percussion Caption Head from 1998-2002. He was the Program Coordinator for Spirit Drum and Bugle Corps from 2003-2007 during which time they were four-time world-class finalists. Mr. Starnes is a member of the Yamaha Educational Artist program and an educational artist for Innovative Percussion and Evans Drumheads. He also serves as an Education Consultant at Music for All in Indianapolis, Indiana, and was appointed program director for the Honor Band of America, which appeared in the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California in 2005 and 2009.



#### **Mr. Tom Stites**

Tom Stites is a native of Hopkinsville, KY, completing his Bachelor degree in Music Education at Western Kentucky University and his Master's degree at East Tennessee State University. Beginning his career as an assistant band director at Sylva-Webster High School in Sylva, NC, he was part of the staff that won the 1979 National Championship at Marching Bands of America. After assuming the band director role at Sylva in 1979, his band performed in the Orange Bowl Parade in Miami, FL. At Marist School in Atlanta, GA he built a fine arts program involving seven new faculty members in seven years. Joining the staff at Science Hill High School in

Johnson City, TN he created a band program recognized for outstanding concert bands, large numbers of successful graduates, and outstanding marching band performances. Highlights at Science Hill include twenty years of Superior ratings in Concert performance, performances in the 1996 and 2000 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, the 1999 and 2009 Tournament of Roses Parade, two concert performances at the TMEA State Music Convention, the Waikiki Holiday Parade, and the Hollywood Christmas Parade.

In addition to his career as a high school band director, he has served twenty years as a fine arts department chair; eight years as assistant conductor for the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra; two years as Music Director and Conductor of the Johnson City Symphony; and now serves as Assistant conductor of the OSO and Owensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra conductor. Honors have included Science Hill Teacher of the Year, Directors Award from the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, and director of the US Army All-American Marching Band in 2008. Serving currently as Coordinator of Fine Arts in Owensboro Public Schools, he works closely with 29 arts teachers in all disciplines and all schools. Recognized as a leading district in the arts, OPS arts programs have been chosen as a model in the state reform models for arts assessment.