

# Women Band Directors International

*Annual Summer Conference*

*Sunday, July 27 - Tuesday, July 29*

*Wilfrid Laurier University*

*Waterloo, Ontario, Canada*



## “Following Your North Star”

### Schedule of Events

#### Sunday, July 27

*9:00 am- 12:00 pm - Registration - Savvas Chamberlain School of Music  
Theatre Auditorium*

*10:00 am - Board of Directors Meeting (Executive Board, Past Presidents,  
Committee Chairs) - M4031  
Virtual option available*

*10:45 am - Past Presidents Meeting - M4031  
Virtual option available*

*11:30 am - State Chairs Meeting - M4031*

*Lunch (on own)*

*1:00-5:00 pm - Conducting Symposium - Theatre Auditorium*

*5:15 Optional Dinner Reservation - Crabby Joe's Bar and Grill  
65 University Ave, Waterloo (0.7km/0.5 miles from School of Music)*

*7:30 pm - Wellington Wind Symphony Concert  
Dr. Cynthia Johnston Turner, artistic director  
Wilfrid Laurier University - Theatre Auditorium  
Post concert reception with light refreshments*

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## Schedule of Events

### Monday, July 28

*8:30 am - muffins, fruit, coffee, and tea in Mezzanine lobby*

*8:30 - 10:00 am - Registration in lobby*

*9:00 am- 10:00 - Session 2 - General Meeting - Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*10:15 - 11:15 am - Session 3A and 3B*

*11:30-12:30 - Session 4*

*Light Lunch in Mezzanine*

*1:30-2:30 pm - Session 5*

*2:45-3:45 pm - Session 6*

*4:00 - 5:00 pm - Session 7*

*6:30 Optional Dinner Reservation - Beertown Public House*

*Waterloo Public Square - 75 King St S*

*(1.7 km/1 mile from School of Music)*

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*9:00 am- 10:00 - Session 8*

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*4:00 - 5:00 pm - Session 13*

*6:30 Optional Dinner Reservation - Famoso Italian Pizzeria*

*15 King St S Waterloo*

*(1.6 km/1 mile from School of Music)*

*6:00-10:00 pm - Group Optional Evening Activity*

*Dance It Off Tuesdays (East Coast Swing Dance) in nearby Waterloo Public Square - free!*



# Session 1 - Conducting Symposium

*Sunday, July 27 - 1:00 pm-5:00 pm*

*Theatre Auditorium*

*Clinicians: Dr. Cynthia Johnston Turner*

*Dr. Gillian MacKay*



Dr. Cynthia Johnston Turner earned her Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY and her Master of Education in Music Education from the University of Victoria, B.C.

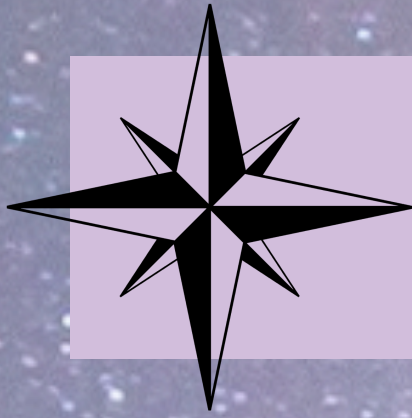


Her professional success is readily apparent on both sides of the border and abroad. Currently the Dean of the Faculty of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University, she was previously at the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia, where she served as the Director of Bands since 2014. She has also been a conductor for the Eastman School a variety of international performing ensembles, and the Wellington Wind Symphony. Dr. Johnston Turner is sponsored by Conn-Selmer in her role as Educational Clinician.

Dr. Gillian MacKay is Professor of Music of the University of Toronto, where she conducts the Wind Ensemble and teaches conducting. Gillian has an active professional career as a conductor, adjudicator, clinician and trumpeter throughout Canada and the United States, and is Associate Conductor of the Jack Long Honour Band of MusicFest Canada. Dr. MacKay enjoys presenting clinics and workshops at provincial and state conferences in Canada and the United States, and is known for her work on the relationship between conducting and mime. Gillian holds degrees and diplomas from the University of Lethbridge, McGill University, the University of Calgary, and Northwestern University. Dr. MacKay is sponsored by Yamaha Canada.







Session 2 - General Meeting  
*Monday, July 28 - 9:00 am-10:00 am*  
*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

QR Link to the agenda will be provided at the meeting.

Session 3A - How Opening a Restaurant has Made  
Me a Better Band Director: Parallels,  
Connections, and Considerations

*Monday, July 28 - 10:15 am-11:15 am*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Dr. Brittan Braddock*

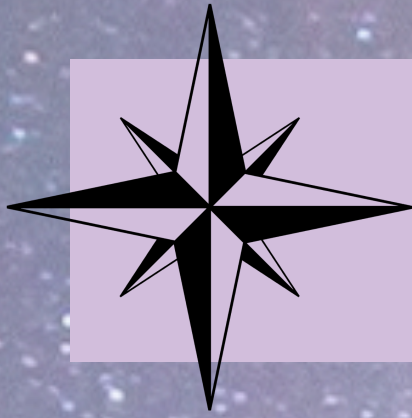


Braddock's Cask & Table opened in July of 2024 in Macon, GA. Ingrid Davis is Co-Owner and Executive Chef; I am Co-Owner while serving as Director of Bands at Mercer University. In the process of opening the restaurant, I have drawn connections and parallels between the culture of a restaurant and the culture of a band program. This session aims to connect those parallels and show how different parts of your life can reinforce what we do every day in the band room.



Dr. Brittan Braddock is assistant professor of music, director of bands, and coordinator of music education at Mercer University. She conducts the Mercer University Wind Ensemble and teaches courses in instrumental music education, wind band literature and conducting. She guides the graduate instrumental conducting program. Prior to her appointment at Mercer University, she was the director of bands at the University of West Florida.





## Session 3B - Ears, and Shoulders, and Your Voice, and Your Voice!

*Monday, July 28 - 10:15 am-11:15 am  
M2007*

*Clinician: Amy Rever-Oberle*

Does your whole head ring after a day of teaching? Does your unappreciated conducting leave you unable to pick up your morning beverage cup the next day? Are you an instrumentalist who doesn't know how to stop being hoarse all the time? Unfortunately these are issues many music educators deal with and learn to manage the hard way. But there's hope! You can learn from someone who's unfortunately done many things the wrong way and can share experiences, tips, tricks, and resources to help you avoid the same problems.

Amy Rever-Oberle is a veteran music educator of 17 years. After earning her bachelor's degree from Wayne State University, she spent the early part of her career as a K-12 band and music director, and had the opportunity to fall in love with teaching beginning band and middle school students. Amy gets to do that every day as the band director at Hart Middle School in Rochester Hills for nearly ten years. She has been a regular presenter at the Michigan Music Conference, hosting sessions on utilizing technology in band, Genius Hour, selecting music by historically excluded composers, and maintaining physical health as a band director. She is a proud member of Women Band Directors International and is president-elect for the Michigan chapter. She was honored to co-present at the 2024 Women Band Directors International Conference about helping students to develop independent musicianship. She has guest blogged for Band Directors Talk Shop, Flute Specialists, and SmartMusic and was a guest on the Passing the Baton Podcast in 2022. Amy is also an active member of the Michigan Band and Orchestra Association, currently serving as a solo and ensemble adjudicator and the Fifth Vice President for Band and Orchestra for District XVI. In March, Amy was thrilled to conduct one of the ensembles for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra Middle School Honor Band Days. When not teaching, Amy enjoys spending time with her family, gardening when the Michigan weather permits, rearranging her aquariums, and enjoying couch time with her two senior rescue mutts.





## Session 4 - Exploring the Thematic Landscape of Jodie Blackshaw's Symphony No. 1, "Leunig's Prayer Book"

*Monday, July 28 - 11:30 am-12:30 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Dr. Dana Mandell*



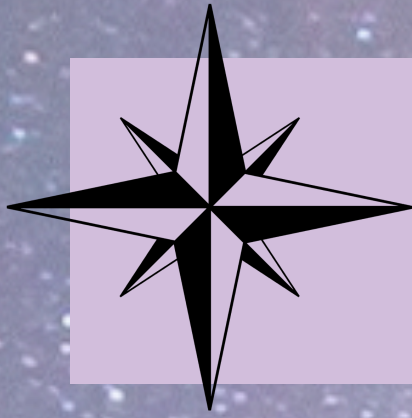
This session explores Jodie Blackshaw's Symphony No. 1, 'Leunig's Prayer Book', a four-movement work inspired by the writings of Australian poet and cartoonist Michael Leunig. The movements, framed around the cycle of seasons (Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring), draw from Leunig's reflections on life, faith, and the human experience. We'll take a close look at how Blackshaw uses thematic material to shape each movement and how those ideas connect across the symphony. Musical examples will highlight primary motives and compositional choices, with a focus on how the music brings Leunig's texts to life. This presentation is designed for conductors, educators, and performers interested in digging deeper into the expressive and structural layers of this major work.



Dana Mandell is an Assistant Professor of Music at Kutztown University, where she co-directs the Kutztown University Marching Unit (KUMU), conducts concert ensembles, supervises student teachers, and teaches courses in music education.

Dr. Mandell completed a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Wind Conducting from Rutgers University, studying with Dr. Kraig Alan Williams. She served as director of the Rutgers Concert Band, regularly guest conducted the Rutgers Wind Ensemble, and worked with the Marching Scarlet Knights and the Rutgers pep bands. Her doctoral research has been presented at state, regional, national, and international conferences. Previously, Dr. Mandell held the position of Assistant Band Director at the University of Notre Dame. She earned a Master of Music degree in Music Education from Arizona State University, where she worked as a graduate assistant for the athletic band program and instructed the Sun Devil Marching Band. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Dr. Mandell is an experienced educator whose background includes a combination of several specializations, contributing to a multi-faceted approach to teaching music. She has been an educator in the marching arts for many years and actively serves as an adjudicator, clinician, and consultant for marching bands across the country.





## Session 5 - Conducting Calisthenics - A Fundamental Focus from the Ground Up!

*Monday, July 28 - 1:30 pm-2:30 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Dr. Shayna Stahl*

Are you in need of a conducting refresher session? Join us to brush up on your conducting skills and focus on the fundamentals from the ground up. Do not forget to bring your baton!

Dr. Shayna Stahl is the Associate Director of Bands / Director of Athletic Bands at the University of Kentucky. In this role, Dr. Stahl serves as the Director of the "Wildcat Marching Band," the UK Pep Bands and as the conductor of the UK Symphony Band. Prior to her appointment at the University of Kentucky, Dr. Stahl was Associate Director of Bands and Director of Athletic Bands at UNC Charlotte, the conductor of the Symphonic Band and taught courses in conducting and marching band techniques. Prior to UNC Charlotte, Dr. Stahl served for three years as the Director of Athletic Bands at Stony Brook University and seven years as the Coordinator of Athletic Bands and music educator in the Middle Country Central School District where she taught Wind Ensemble, Concert Band and Jazz Band.



Dr. Stahl holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Temple University, a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Stony Brook University, a Master of Music Education / Wind Band Conducting from The Hartt School at the University of Hartford and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Instrumental Conducting from the University of Washington. While at the University of Washington, Dr. Stahl was awarded first prize in the American Prize in Conducting - Band / Wind Ensemble (Community Division) in 2017 – 2018 and 2018 – 2019.

Dr. Stahl is active across the United States as a guest conductor, clinician, judge, and drill writer. She is currently a member of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), Women Band Directors International, Sigma Alpha Iota and an honorary member of Kappa Kappa Psi.



## Session 6 - Confessions of a Burnt Out Band Director

*Monday, July 28 - 2:45 pm-3:45 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Kaylie Hutcheon*



In this session, I will share my personal journey through the challenges of burnout as a band director, delving into the intersections of my professional and personal life that ultimately led to this overwhelming experience. I'll discuss how the demanding nature of the job, coupled with feelings of isolation, contributed to burnout and how this affected my well-being and effectiveness as an educator.

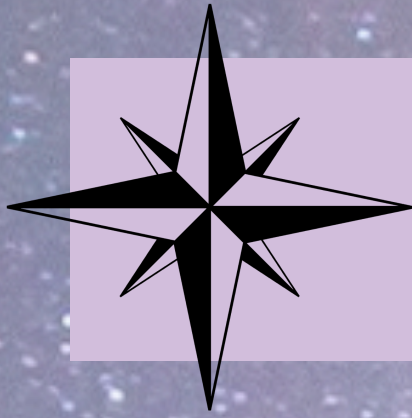


Through storytelling and reflection, I will highlight the pivotal moments that led me to seek therapy and offer insights into how I regained balance. I'll also discuss the lessons learned in hindsight, focusing on strategies for preventing burnout and building supportive networks.

Kaylie Hutcheon is a seasoned educator holding both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Music Education and Education from Central Michigan University. Kaylie spent over a decade teaching K-12 music in both Walkerville Public Schools and Suttons Bay Public Schools in Michigan, where she worked to develop music programs that fostered technical skills and a lifelong passion for music among her students. Currently, Kaylie is employed by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians' Education Department, where she focuses on academic interventions and attendance support for Tribal students. Though certified to teach K-12 music in Michigan, she has shifted her focus to supporting educational initiatives within her community.

Kaylie is passionate about music's role in self-discovery and believes in tailoring her approach to meet the individual needs and goals of each student. Her former students have gone on to pursue musical opportunities at both regional and collegiate levels, and she continues to stay involved in music as a private lesson teacher at the Martha Meek Music Studio in Suttons Bay, her membership in Women's Band Directors International and the Northport Community Band. Outside of her professional work, Kaylie enjoys the natural beauty of Suttons Bay and is actively engaged in her community, including volunteering with Scouting America and supporting local youth arts, music, and sports programs.





## Session 7 - Reaching Out through Collaborative Conducting

*Monday, July 28 - 4:00 pm-5:00 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Dr. Leah McGray*

Have you ever hit "the wall" of sound? Explore the roles of physical presence and gesture to learn to break through and become more involved with the sounds in your ensemble. Listening and communication concepts will allow you to develop your personal leadership to encourage responsively in the band, choir, or orchestra!

A dynamic conductor of both wind band and orchestral ensembles, Leah McGray is currently the Conductor of the Wind Orchestra at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Previously, she was the Director of Instrumental Studies for the State University of New York at Geneseo, and Rhodes College in Memphis TN, conducting the Geneseo Symphony Orchestra, Geneseo Wind Ensemble, the Rhodes College Orchestra and Wind Ensemble, and teaching classes in conducting and musicianship. Dr. McGray earned her degrees from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, the University of Toronto, and Acadia University. She is in demand internationally as an adjudicator and has been a guest conductor for youth orchestras and honour bands across the United States, South Korea, and Canada, including the 2023 National Youth Band of Canada. Twice awarded major research grants, her scholarship explores techniques of non-verbal leadership, and wind ensemble repertoire by traditionally underrepresented composers.





## Session 8 - Beyond the Page: Using Technology to Reinforce Music Literacy in Ensemble Settings

*Tuesday, July 29 - 9:00 am-10:00 am*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Shemeka Nash*



Discover how technology can reinforce music literacy in your band and orchestra rehearsals. This hands-on session explores research-backed strategies for improving rhythm, pitch, and transcription skills using digital tools like Flat for Education. Walk away with adaptable activities and practical ideas to support student independence and musical growth.

Shemeka Nash is a dedicated music educator, conductor, and arts administrator with extensive experience leading diverse music programs and ensembles. She currently serves as the Program Coordinator and Conductor of the Living Word Christian Center Youth Orchestra, where she supports the growth of young musicians through orchestral training and performance. She also teaches music notation software as part of the instructional staff at VanderCook College of Music in Chicago.



In addition to her teaching roles, Shemeka is the Artistic Manager for Sistema Ravinia, a community-based music program dedicated to social impact through ensemble music-making. Recently, she was appointed as the Orchestra Conductor for Sistema Ravinia, furthering her leadership in youth music education. Prior to these roles, Shemeka served as the Fine Arts Department Chair at an International Baccalaureate high school in Chicago, where she directed multiple ensembles, including Concert Band, Jazz Band, Modern Band, and Beginning Band.

Shemeka's commitment to professional growth and instructional excellence is reflected in her National Board Certification for Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood (EAYA) Music, with one of her video entries in band pedagogy selected for ATLAS (Accomplished Teaching, Learning, and Schools). Beyond the classroom, Shemeka is active in leadership roles. She has served as an Academic Advisor for Modern Band Journal, a committee member for the Illinois Music Educators Conference Music Education Division, and as Co-Chair of the DEI/Microgrants Committee for Women Band Directors International (WBDI).

She earned her Bachelor of Music Education degree from DePaul University and a Master of Music Education degree from Northwestern University. An active saxophonist, Shemeka maintains memberships in professional organizations including NAFME, ILMEA, Jazz Education Network, WBDI, National Band Association, Tau Beta Sigma, and Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity.



## Session 9 - Music Playcations: Gamification for Everyone

*Tuesday, July 29 - 10:15 am-11:15 am*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Krystal Williams*



Gamification for Everyone is a session that uses Gamification-the process of adding games or game-like elements to something (such as a task) so as to encourage participation. This session will engage participants into games designed to introduce, teach and or refine foundational music skills in a fun and meaningful way.

Participants will play their way through several games that are focused on Air Support, Articulation and Rhythmic Accuracy, to name a few.



Krystal Williams is a dedicated and passionate music educator with 18 years of experience shaping the musical journeys of students and future educators. A Maryland native, she is a proud graduate of Morgan State University and the College of Notre Dame of Maryland.

Currently, Ms. Williams serves as a Music Education Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), where she mentors and prepares the next generation of music educators and serves as a departmental guest conductor. Additionally, she holds the role of Band Director at Suitland High School's Creative, Performing, and Visual Arts Program, part of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). Under her leadership, Suitland's band program thrives as a hub of artistic excellence, inspiring students to develop their musical talents and leadership skills.





## Session 10 - It's not me, it's you: Finding Joy after Leaving a Toxic Workplace

*Tuesday, July 29 - 11:30 am- 12:30 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Dr. Shannon Shaker*

Have you ever felt that no matter how much you try to change your behaviors, how hard you work, and how much you do, you still aren't good enough for your job? Me too! Have you questioned whether or not you're even cut out for this career, or teaching in general? Same. Have you been gaslighted into believing "this is just how our profession is?" Been there. After experiencing complete burnout, feeling like a disappointment and a complete failure, I realized a secret: Even the Most Beautiful Flowers Won't Bloom in Toxic Soil. With a good therapist, I was able to make a series of difficult decisions, and believing this profession could be as beautiful as I imagined, I have gone from barely surviving to thriving. In this session, we will look at potential red flags in a workplace, strategies on how you might be able to thrive in your current environment with adaptations, and strategies for transplanting yourself if the environment is untenable. We will consider research that shows why women are more susceptible to burnout in this field, and space will be held for attendees to share their experiences, collaborate, and problem solve in ways we might all move forward to a truer, more beautiful version of ourselves and our careers.

Dr. Shannon Shaker holds the position of Assistant Professor, Director of Bands at Grand Rapids Community College. She leads the Wind Ensemble, Campus Band, and Jazz Ensemble along with other music classes in the department. In addition to her work at Grand Rapids Community College, Shannon is the founder and artistic director of a summer community band, Beer City Winds based in Grand Rapids. Shannon served as Director of Bands and Music Education at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, Maryland from 2018 - 2020. During her time at Frostburg State University,



Shannon holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Wind Conducting from Arizona State University where she was a conducting student of Gary W. Hill, and served as a teaching assistant in the wind band program. In 2016, Shannon earned her Masters of Music in Wind Conducting with John E. Williamson. Before pursuing graduate studies, Shannon completed her Bachelor of Music Education at Central Michigan University, and taught music to students of all ages in Eagle County, CO and Ypsilanti, MI.

Shannon is active in the professional music community. She is a member of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), College Music Society, National Association for Music Education, World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE), the National Association for Music Education, and Women Band Director International (WBDI). Shannon is an active guest conductor, clinician, and presenter.



## Session 11 - More Music, Less Hassle: The Case for Professional Tour Planning

*Tuesday, July 29 - 1:30 pm-2:30 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Tim Wright from Guardian Travel Group*



Planning a student music trip can be exciting—but also pretty overwhelming! In this session, we'll show why working with a tour company like Guardian can make the whole process easier, safer, and more fun for everyone involved. We'll walk you through how Guardian handles the tricky stuff like insurance and emergency situations, so you don't have to worry about what-ifs while you're focusing on your students.

We'll also share how our fundraising products can take a lot of the stress out of paying for the trip. From easy-to-run campaigns to tools that help you reach your goals, we'll explain how fundraising can actually support your planning instead of slowing it down.



Plus, we'll talk about how partnering with a tour company can open doors to great performance opportunities and smooth logistics, making your trip not just a trip, but an unforgettable experience for your students.

At the end, there'll be time for an open Q&A where you can ask anything—from insurance details to fundraising tips or how we handle emergencies on the road. Come ready to learn and get your questions answered! Tim Wright is a dedicated travel consultant with Guardian Travel Group, specializing in creating exceptional group travel experiences for music educators and their ensembles. Drawing on a rich background as a former band director, Tim brings a unique perspective and deep understanding of the needs and challenges faced by music programs on tour.

During his time as a band director, Tim led student groups to many different locations, fostering educational and cultural growth through travel. This extensive hands-on experience with his students laid the foundation for his current role at Guardian, where he now helps other educators plan and execute memorable, well-organized trips that balance performance opportunities with immersive travel experiences.

At Guardian Travel Group, Tim leverages his teaching expertise and professional network to design customized itineraries that meet the unique goals of each music group. Over the course of his time with Guardian, Tim has designed over 100 specialized trips and has successfully coordinated tours to a wide variety of destinations, ensuring smooth logistics and enriching experiences for hundreds of students and directors alike.

Outside of work, Tim enjoys staying involved with music by instructing private lessons and performing in orchestras around the state of Michigan. During the summer, he can be found on the golf course or enjoying a hike in the woods with his wife, Nikki.





## Session 12 -Breaking the Glass Podium

*Tuesday, July 29 - 2:45 pm- 3:45 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Clinician: Karen Dowdy*

This session will explore the anticipated research on the lived experiences of female band directors in a traditionally male-dominated field. This study aims to examine women's challenges, successes, and resilience in instrumental music education. Female band directors often face gender biases, limited mentorship opportunities, and the pressure to balance professional and personal responsibilities in ways their male counterparts may not. These factors can impact career advancement, job satisfaction, and representation in leadership roles within music education. As this research is still in the early stages, the session will outline the study's objectives, anticipated themes, and the importance of gathering firsthand accounts from female band directors. Key focus areas will include professional identity, work-life balance, leadership development, and advocacy for gender equity in band directing.

Karen Dowdy is a dedicated educator and doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas. She currently serves as an Assistant Band Director at Jonesboro ISD in Jonesboro, Texas, where her leadership has contributed to a remarkable tripling of enrollment numbers in the band program at this 1A school. With nine years of experience in education, including four years specifically in music education and three years as a Color Guard Director, Karen has developed a deep understanding of the dynamics within music education programs.



Karen's doctoral dissertation, "Breaking the Glass Podium: The Lived Experiences of Female Band Directors in a Male-Dominated Field," examines women's unique challenges and experiences in music education leadership positions. Through her research, she aims to highlight the systemic barriers female band directors encounter and identify potential pathways toward more significant professional equity.

As someone who has navigated multiple demanding roles simultaneously, Karen brings a unique perspective to her research and teaching. Her experience as a military spouse and pilot's wife has equipped her with exceptional adaptability and resilience. She has consistently balanced her professional responsibilities with her academic pursuits while embracing her role as a bonus mom to two pre-teenagers. Karen's ability to overcome obstacles and excel in multiple domains exemplifies the determination and multifaceted leadership capabilities many women in male-dominated fields must develop. Her research and advocacy work are informed by scholarly inquiry and lived experience, positioning her to make meaningful contributions to conversations about gender equity in music education and beyond.

## Session 13 - Past Presidents Panel

*Tuesday, July 29 - 4:00 pm-5:00 pm*

*Maureen Forrester Recital Hall*

*Moderator: Dr. Shannon Shaker*



## Past Presidents Panel

*Dr. Shannon Shaker, moderator*

Panelists:

Dr. Courtney Snyder

Val Sherman

Virtually:

Linda Thompson

Susan Creasap

Fran Shelton

Bethann Adams

Kathy Harbuck



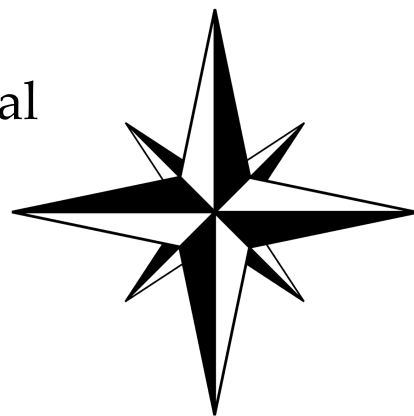
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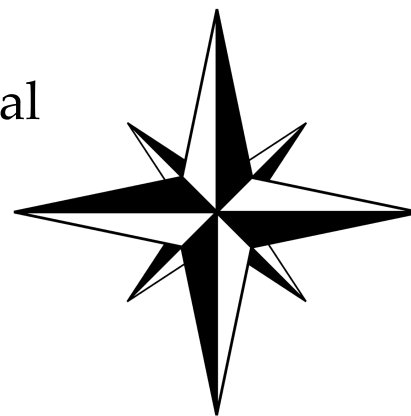
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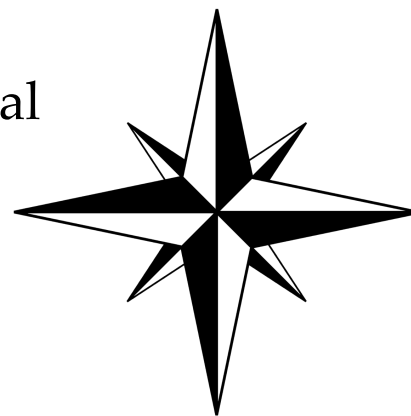
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