

## CORNERSTONE AWARD HONOREE

**Robert Kessler**, was the Director of Bands for Gahanna-Jefferson Schools from 1955 to his retirement in 1985. A graduate of Capital University, Kessler majored in music education and history. He received his M.A. in music education from The Ohio State University (OSU) where he played with the OSU concert band and studied conducting with Dr. Donald McGinnis and Dr. Leonard Smith.

Kessler served in the Army during the Korean War, landing his first teaching position with Elm Valley Schools in Delaware, Ohio, where he taught music in all 12 grades, directed the marching and concert bands, and founded the high school choir

In 1955, Kessler was hired at Lincoln High School (population 240+) as director of the high school marching and concert bands as well as the choir. As the high school grew, so did the music program to three bands. In 1965, he founded the orchestra and jazz band programs and added a class in Harmony-Theory. The high school had over 300 students participating in the instrumental music organization by 1975.

Kessler's accomplishments are numerous, but some highlights from his career include: the high school bands and orchestra earning Superior ratings at contests; the marching band performing in the 1966-1967 Orange Bowl Parade and at half-time; and the marching band appearing at Browns and Bengals games in the Ohio Stadium.

Jeff Shellhammer, current Gahanna-Jefferson instrumental director, has this to say, "Bob built a large and vibrant program from modest beginnings to one recognized throughout Central Ohio and the State. He molded, shaped and influenced thousands of young lives and continues to possess a tremendous pride for and interest in our school--a pride he helped build."