

***I Remember Glenn Cliffe Bainum: Musician, Teacher & Master Showman***  
***by***  
***Don Hassler, Northwestern University, grad. 1950***

I decided to go Chicago in June of 1946, after my graduation from Classen High School in Oklahoma City, and work for my grandfather in the Loop for the summer and also to take sax lessons. I studied twice a week at Chicago Musical College. My teacher was Domenic DeCaprio. He really worked me. He gave me new study books and I practiced like a fiend.

In August I happened to pick up the Chicago Tribune and in the Sports Page was an ad asking for musicians to play in the marching band for the annual College All-Star/Pro football game at Soldier Field. Tryouts were in Evanston and the "All Star Band" was created and conducted by none other than Glenn Cliffe Bainum, Director of Bands at Northwestern University.

Even though I had to go way up to Evanston for my audition I was anxious to do it. So I went to the audition, made the band and further enhanced my lifetime odyssey with music and with Chicago and Northwestern University. During the rehearsals for this gig I got acquainted with another musician named Earl Mortensen, also to be a Northwestern grad, and we formed what is now a 62-year friendship.

The show that Mr. Bainum planned for that game was totally original and unlike almost anything people expected for halftime on a football field. For one thing, the band was huge---about 300 players. And the formations, music and instrumentation were mind boggling. For instance, Mr. Bainum had a huge group of percussion on the sidelines for the big finale. That included chimes, gongs, tympani, tom-toms, etc. He also had arranged "The Bells of St. Mary's" and the bombastic Franz Liszt concert piece, "Les Preludes", for the finale. And he had set up battery operated lights attached to most of the instruments on the field so at the end of the last piece, the stadium lights went out and the players all turned on their instrument lights. It was something astounding and perhaps never seen before that night.

In the summer of 1948, after two years of college, I went back to the Chicago-area and enrolled at Northwestern University Music School for my Junior year. I call it the Fantastic Fall of Forty-Eight. My musical career was moving very well as I was playing all the time and also studying.

The biggest deal in the Fall of Forty-Eight was the NU football team. They had a fantastic winning season under coach Bob Voigts and tied with Illinois for the Big 10 championship. Because Illinois had just been to the 48 Rose Bowl, NU was picked for the 1949 Rose Bowl game, to face Cal-Berkeley. And, of course, the Band also went.

It was a great Band that year and we supplemented some fine football games with our halftime stuff under Director Glenn Cliffe Bainum. We traveled to Madison and to Anne Arbor for away games. I'll never forget the gigantic stadium in Ann Arbor (seating for

104,000). It's mostly below ground and doesn't look like much from ground level. But as you march in, the entire space just unfolds, and most of the crowd is rooting for the OTHER team. An awesome experience!! If you read alumnus Glenn Opie's "Recollections" of Mr. Bainum you'll have a wonderful idea of just a part of the experience. Our band was the premiere band in the Big Ten. Only the Michigan Band was as good and that was due to the great Director, William Revelli. And Michigan had a student body 3 or 4 times larger than Northwestern to draw from.

Northwestern's Rose Bowl selection may be hard to understand based on recent teams. But we had a few returned WW2 vets (old guys!!) and a great coach. That game is the one and only time NU has ever played in Pasadena and won. In the 1940's NU still had the football tradition left over from Pappy Waldorf and Otto Graham of the late 1930's.

Because there were limited funds for the taking University groups to California, the school was only going to send the football team---and they would go by airplane. But Mr. Bainum got the wheels in motion and, before we knew it, he had arranged a round trip by train for the Marching Band and the Cheerleaders from the Northwestern Railroad.

To prepare for the Rose Bowl half-time show Mr Bainum rented a huge unused bomber plant at O'Hare Field and we took buses out there several times a week in November and December. The weather in Evanston was too cold and unpredictable to drill outside. The entire football field was laid out inside that gigantic building. All the preparation had to be done in two months. I should mention that the Band Staff, headed by Ed Gangware and John Paynter (my classmate) and with Bob Krueger and Dave Shaw and others to back it up, worked like demons. And what a show it was!!!

Opening up with a moving formation of a football player kicking a ball, then a "California Bear", a salute to all the Big Nine schools (Penn State wasn't part of it then), etc. etc. And everything was done at the well known "Bainum cadence" (about 150 plus bpm).

The band traveled by train to California; marched in Las Vegas at 2 AM on the way, marched in the Rose Parade and the Rose Bowl and took the train back. On the return trip there was a blizzard in Wyoming and our train, plus several others, was stuck in Cheyenne, WY for three days. The trip on the train was a major highlight but the three day party in Cheyenne was even bigger!! What a great experience for a 19 year old just starting out in life. I have a small collection of Rose Bowl mementos that can tell most of the rest of the story. The train actually parked on a siding in Pasadena and that was our "hotel" in California.

NU beat Cal 20-14 in the game. Our band totally outclassed the Cal band. I have the newspaper clippings to prove it. When we arrived back in Evanston, after our 3 day blizzard delay, the team actually MET US at the station. It's usually the opposite, but the team got to fly out and back.

For Homecoming in October, 1988, Northwestern featured a 40th Reunion of the Band &

Football team. I was there, along with about 40 other Band members. We all had a great time and a very nice dinner party one night. I formed friendships from the Rose Bowl trip that have endured. Friends and great musicians like Bob Krueger, Dick Davis, Floyd Peterson, Don Whitaker and Dale Anderson (dec.) were all in that band. John Paynter, who was on the Band Staff and my classmate eventually was Director of Bands at Northwestern for over 40 years.

But Glenn Cliffe Bainum was more than just a Master Showman. He managed the entire Band program and created many fine concert bands over the years. During my time there we premiered new concert band pieces by composers of high stature, such as Vincent Persichetti and Norman della Joio. And Mr. Bainum always conducted the annual Waa Mu Show with a group of top players from the Music School.

The four years of my life that Mr. Bainum touched have left lasting memories. I am still a member of the Northwestern University Marching Band Alumni, NUMBALUMS, and can scarcely watch a football game without eagerly anticipating the halftime show and thinking of my experiences and the lasting legacy left by a great musician, teacher and master showman, Glenn Cliffe Bainum.