

“WE’RE HARMONY, WE’RE STRONG!” 1984

WHEN THE stirring lyrics of our 25th Anniversary song were introduced to the membership at the Annual Meeting in Providence, as sung by the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS, there were tears in the eyes of both singers and audience. Hearing the ideals and goals of Harmony, Inc. set to music was a moving experience, to be relived again and again during the years ahead as old and new chapters sing “We’re Harmony, We’re Strong!” The winning song, chosen from several contest entries, was composed by Beth Ramsson, with lyrics by Nancy Foris, arranged by Russ Foris.

Our musical progress was apparent on many fronts. There were now twenty songs in the “Here’s Harmony” series, with the first ten being taped for members to use as an educational tool. Our Judges Training Program had borne fruit, with three of our own members having achieved the heady distinction that comes with the title “Certified Judge.” Training programs covering every aspect of our hobby were being offered both at International and Area level, with more members

taking advantage of this education every year.

Knowledge of Harmony, Inc. was growing, as the RHODE ISLAND SOUND Chapter convention publicity included an appearance on nationwide television. This appearance added their name to those of THE HARMONETTES Chapter and quartettes KEEPSAKE, JOY and CHICAGO CHORD COMPANY, all of whom had also been featured recently on nationwide television or magazine.

Progress in other areas was apparent, as well. It was becoming obvious that a permanent office to handle Harmony, Inc. business was sorely needed. A committee was established to study the means of achieving this goal as quickly as possible. The International Board was busy at the Mid-Year Meeting reviewing and revising contest and judging rules to keep pace with Area development. Harmony members were proving themselves to be flexible, as well as strong, in adapting to the changes in procedure brought about by new programs.

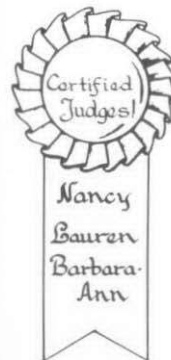
Our hard-won democratic form of government was alive and well, as always, as members continued to

take a vigorous interest in all major decisions. At the Mid-Year Meeting, the Board approved an increase to three judges in each of the performance categories in International contests, effective in 1985. This was not a popular decision with the delegates, some of whom asked that it be put to a chapter vote.

Another unpopular decision concerned the International Chorus. The Board had reluctantly decided that the ever-growing size of this chorus made it a very real danger and that staging a chorus of over 200 members put an impossible burden on any hostess chapter. The final appearance of this colorful and thrilling event was to take place at the Providence convention. The members, however, had other ideas! Protest was so strong that it was agreed the matter should be reviewed and that some means of continuing the International Chorus should be found. Several options are currently under consideration and it appears that some form of this exciting chorus will continue indefinitely! Harmony members do not give up their beloved traditions easily!

Members showed their devotion to Harmony, Inc. in another positive way by purchasing \$4,000 worth of properties at the 1984 convention. The new line of properties introduced, including the beautiful commemorative plate, met with great enthusiasm and proved that our members are always eager to “show our colors.” This deep and sincere pride in their organization is another thing that sets our members apart, while bringing them together in our special blend with friendship.

The RHODE ISLAND SOUND Chapter outdid itself in providing the proper atmosphere of nostalgia, excitement and hope for the future at our 25th Anniversary “party.” It



Harmony, Inc.'s first Certified Judges proudly displayed their certificates after the Annual Membership Meeting on November 9, 1984. From left: Lauren Lindeman, Barbara-Ann MacIntosh, and Nancy Foris.



1984 International Chorus Champions — *CAPITAL CHORDETTES* (Ottawa, Ontario), Jerry Dunlop, Director.

was, for the older members, truly like going home to revisit the scene of Harmony's beginnings.

Adding to the excitement was the attendance of four members of the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers (LABBS). The ladies were warmly appreciative of the welcome they received, presenting Harmony, Inc. with a beautiful silver tray to be used as an award of our choice. After serious deliberation, the International Board decided this would go to the highest-scoring non-medalist chorus which had not competed the previous year.

BLACK MAGIC, the quartette that had won the novice Findlay Plaque award the previous year, went all the way to the top and took the crowns home to Ontario, much to the delight of their home chapters, *GEORGIAN BAY BELLES* and *MELLO BLENDS*. Their fascinating story, told in the Winter 1985 issue of *THE KEY-NOTE*, reveals that although they were a relatively new foursome, each member had a solid musical background, including many years as barbershoppers. They also offered added proof of the theory that it pays to start young in this hobby. Lead Bonnie Drever, daughter of bass Marge Drever, first sang barbershop at age 11. Baritone Gloria Dubeau harmonized with her mother and sisters when she was a child. Perhaps we can look forward to seeing tenor Judi Johnston's beautiful twin daughters, age 5, be-

1984-85 Harmony Queens, *BLACK MAGIC*, Barrie and Midland, Ontario, (left to right): Bonnie Drever, lead; Judi Johnson, tenor; Marge Drever, bass; Gloria Dubeau, bari.



ing crowned some day! Each member of this admirable foursome has also served her chapter in many different capacities — as founders, committee chairmen, officers and directors. No novices, these!

Chorus competition was exciting as only a really close contest can be. With both the *VVCs* and *HARMONY FIRST* — alternate winners for the past five years — sitting out, all competing choruses were on their mettle, vying to improve their posi-

tions. Only five points separated the top four choruses, with the *CAPITAL CHORDETTES* edging out the *CHAMPLAIN ECHOES* by only one point! The improvement in the quality of all choruses was amazing; stage presence and costuming breathtaking.

The *CAPITAL CHORDETTES* scored more than one victory when they received their blue ribbons. They also demonstrated their remarkable improvement by winning the Tait

Trophy. It was an emotional moment for director Jerry Dunlop, too, when he accepted the Turcotte Memorial Award, since he and Bob Turcotte had been close friends. And of course the new champions had already won the prize of being our 1985 hostesses, which could only ensure that 1985 would be the busiest year of their lives.

There were many memorable moments at the 1984 convention. RHODE ISLAND SOUND provided one with their rendition of the well-known tune "Thirty-Five Years Ago" with clever, original lyrics that captured the progress of barbershop and Harmony, Inc. over the years. Those who missed this hilarious performance could get a belated chuckle by reading the lyrics in the Winter 1985 issue of THE KEY-NOTE. All who applauded this chapter's performance as gracious hostesses were delighted to see them capture the new LABBS Award, as well — a silver award for a sterling performance.

Another highlight of the convention, especially for those former Sweet Adelines among us, was the reading of the gracious congratulatory telegram from Bev Sellers, President of Sweet Adelines, Inc. We took this as a sign that old animosities have faded into oblivion and that Harmony's special blend with friendship has, indeed, bridged a gap that should never have existed in the first place.

Our 25th Anniversary was thrilling for all 1,000 Harmony members in attendance. It provided an added dimension for those involved in Harmony's beginnings: the feeling of pride in having overcome insurmountable obstacles to reach this momentous occasion. We know that for us barbershop harmony was, and is, much more than "show biz." Our members accept the responsibility of building an organization in which we take pride in every respect. How satisfying to know we were not misguided,

twenty-five years ago, in believing it possible to enjoy this hobby without sacrificing our personal code of ethics, as stated so clearly in the Harmony Creed.

For all Harmony members, old and new alike, it is exciting to envision the future based on the firm conviction stated in Article IV, Section 2 of our Corporate By-Laws:

**"The duration of
Harmony shall be
perpetual."**

