

## HALL OF DISTINCTION

**Class of 2022**

### **INDUCTION CEREMONY**

**Thursday, October 6, 2022**

#### **Lee J. Bowman**

It is my privilege to stand before you representing thousands of students and parents to honor one of Canton South's elite, Mr. Lee Bowman. Mr. Bowman has distinguished himself by being a dedicated professional, developer of students, and innovator.

Mr. Bowman was a dedicated professional. He earned a bachelor's degree in music from Bowling Green State University in 1966 and a master of science in education degree from the University of Dayton in 1985. He used his strong educational background to teach music at Buckeye High School in Medina County from 1966 to 1967, and then taught at Canton South High School from 1967 to 2001. He spent many hours outside of the classroom. He literally had all-day marching band practice in the summer several weeks before school started. During the academic year, practice began after school and ended at dark.

An incredible feat, Mr. Bowman's marching bands learned a new show for every football game. He required his students to memorize the music, and at the end of the year, the band performed all the songs without sheet music—up to 30 songs from memory. The time he invested to develop the band shows alone demonstrates his commitment. He went above and beyond expectations for his job, putting in countless hours after school. His students and community recognized this and respected him for it.

Under his leadership, Canton South's Band became a source of pride, not just for the school but also for the community. The band was chosen to march in the Macy's Day Parade. It was selected, after review of audition tapes of the participating high school bands, to be the feature band at the grand opening of Macy's for Christmas, quite a remarkable accomplishment. The band also participated in the Cherry Blossom Festival Parade in Washington, DC, made three trips to perform at Disney, and entertained local citizens in countless community parades, homecomings, and concerts.

To Mr. Bowman, leading the music program at Canton South was not just about musical excellence but also about developing his students for life beyond graduation. As an example, as a senior, I approached him about starting a Pep Band for the basketball games. He approved my idea but told me he wanted it to be student led. As a result, we had to get permission from administration, put a team together, gather and learn the music, and work together. All of us learned leadership and management skills, which I still use today in my profession. Mr. Bowman saw potential in people. He sought out a student to be the public address announcer for the band, and to my knowledge, that student was the first to do so. The student, Ray Hexamer, went on to be a radio broadcaster early in his career. All band members learned personal responsibility and commitment to something bigger than themselves.

Finally, Mr. Bowman was an innovator. He grew the Band Boosters into a strong organization. The parent, student-led organization purchased new band instruments, equipment, and uniforms; refurbished and built a one-of-a-kind instrument bus; and financed numerous band trips, giving the band financial flexibility and taking financial pressure off the local school system. Mr. Bowman also started a Variety Show, where he encouraged all the high school students to audition and participate.

I believe what distinguished Mr. Bowman was that he made the most of his position to influence those whose lives he touched. He brought great pride not only to his school but also to his community. We are proud to have him join the Hall of Distinction.