



Alfred L. Watkins

Conductor

Mr. Alfred Watkins has been the Director of Bands at Lassiter since 1982. He has established a fine reputation as an adjudicator, clinician and guest conductor throughout the United States. Under his leadership, the Lassiter Band has grown from its original 78 members to its present size of 350 music students. The program now includes five symphonic bands, two separate marching bands, a jazz band and numerous performing chamber ensembles.

Mr. Watkins, a native of Jackson, Georgia, received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Florida A&M University, with honors in 1976 where he was a conducting student of Dr. William P. Foster and Dr. Julian E. White. Prior to his arrival at Lassiter, he served for six years as Director of Bands at Murphy High School in the Atlanta Public School System. While at Murphy, his symphonic bands earned consistent superior ratings in Grade VI. As much a teacher as he is a musician, Mr. Watkins was named "Teacher of the Year" in 1978 and Star Teacher in 1982, 1983, 1989, 1994 and 1997.

Under Mr. Watkins' leadership, the Lassiter Marching Band has performed for the following: President Ronald Reagan (twice), 1984 World's Fair, 1986 and 1995 King Orange Jamboree Parade, the 1988 Tournament of Roses Parade, and will perform in the 1997 Citrus Bowl Parade. The band was featured in the full length motion picture, "The Leader of the Band," starring Steve Landesberg. The marching band placed 5th in the 1990 Bands of America Grand National Championships and third place in 1994. In the 1994 BOA National Championships, the band earned the Esprit de Corps Award and earned first place honors in Musical Performance.

The Lassiter Symphonic Band Program has also acquired a fine reputation of musical excellence while under Mr. Watkins' direction. Previously organized into four symphonic bands, the program has entered 54 symphonic bands into district festival since the school's inception in 1981. In March 1987, all four symphonic bands earned superior ratings in Grade III, IV, V, and VI. The upper two bands perform Grade VI Literature while bands three and four perform Grades IV and III, respectively. They have performed for the 1986 Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference, 1988 National Band Association Biennial Conference, and in concert symposiums on the campuses of the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Georgia, Florida State University and the University of South Carolina. In 1989, the Symphonic Band earned the prestigious Sudler Flag of Honor, presented by the John Philip Sousa Foundation and later that same year performed at the Mid-West International Band and Orchestra Clinic. The Symphonic Band received a second invitation to Mid-West in 1996 and performed at the inaugural Atlanta International Band and Orchestra Clinic that same year. Mr. Watkins is a member of Kappa Kappa Psi Band Fraternity, Phi Beta Mu, National Band Association, Black Music Caucus, Music Educators National Conference and World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles. He is on the Band Selection Committee of the John Philip Sousa Foundation. In 1987, Mr. Watkins was inducted as a charter member into the Florida A&M Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. Mr. Watkins has served on the Educational Advisory Board of Bands of America. He currently serves as an adjudicator for Drum Corp International (DCI) and Bands of America. In 1996, Mr. Watkins was an Associate Director for the Atlanta Olympic Marching Band that performed in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta. He is married with two sons, Christopher and Jonathan. Alfred Watkins is a YAMAHA Clinician.