ACDA of Minnesota – 50th Anniversary
Congratulatory Messages
(in alphabetical order by writer)

Congratulations to ACDA-MN on celebrating 50 years of inspiring and encouraging Minnesota's choral musicians to think creatively, work collectively, and sing passionately!
Bret Amundson, Editor, Star of the North

Congratulations on your 50th Anniversary! What your men shared with me at the All-State this summer reflected what I already know to be the excellence and quality of your teaching, as well as your care for their development as whole people. Many thanks to you for your continuing efforts and congratulations on fifty years of excellence! Here's to the next fifty!
Be well,
Christopher Aspaas
Associate Professor of Vocal/Choral Music, St. Olaf College
Artistic Director & Conductor, Magnum Chorum

As a proud and grateful member of the Minnesota ACDA community, I congratulate this wonderful organization on its 50th Anniversary! We celebrate the glorious legacy that continues to inspire us, and we share an unbounded optimism in our continued impact and relevance in shaping and enriching the lives of countless people, both young and old, through the choral art.
Greg Aune
Board Member 2011-13

On the occasion of ACDA-MN’s 50th anniversary, I wish to thank and celebrate three groups of people who played an important role in the development of our organization: First – to the group of early Minnesota choral pioneers who believed and acted upon an idea that such an association would be useful to promote and serve the choral music profession in our state.
Second – to the group of leaders and members who expanded the original vision of the organization by offering exciting new activities and events that continue to serve our constituency today.
Third – to the group of future leaders and members who will continue to nurture and develop our association into a vibrant future.
Our 50th anniversary motto says it best: Our Legacy: A Distinguished Past...A Vibrant Future!
Bruce W. Becker, Executive Director
Past President, 1989-1991
Recipient, F. Melius Christiansen Award, 2007

Best wishes to ACDA of Minnesota as you celebrate your 50th anniversary. It's no secret that Minnesota is a veritable hotbed of choral excellence and as your neighbor to the south, I'm grateful for your leadership in the choral art as well as in ACDA. The North Central Division is stronger because of you. Thanks and congratulations!
Aimee Beckmann-Collier, president
North Central Division
American Choral Directors Association, 2010-12

Bravo and thank you to friends and colleagues in the Minnesota Chapter of the
American Choral Director's Association. Be it the Lutheran choral tradition, the worldclass professional organizations, the beautiful body of choral composition, or rich heritage of music in worship, Minnesota is an essential part of our choral history and artistic fiber. Today your state leads our way in promoting the joy of singing, the building of community through music, and the honor and privilege that it is to be a steward of this most personal and communal art. We have all been touched by your music, and today we celebrate with you. May you be faithful keepers of the song for the next fifty years.

Geoffrey Boers
2011 All-State Mixed Choir Conductor

I send greetings and congratulations for 50 years of dynamic leadership in choral music in your state. My recent time spent in MN reinforced what I already believed: Minnesota is a state filled with wonderful young singers learning musical independence and expressive performance from very dedicated teachers. What I did not know was the role played by ACDA in supporting and nurturing those dedicated teachers. Making choral music sustainable is a tremendous challenge faced in every state, and I say with great confidence that ACDA in Minnesota does a magnificent job of providing education and musical growth opportunities for the teachers and students involved. Wishing you 50 more successful years!

Judy Bowers
Clinician, 2011 State Conference

It is a fortunate happenstance that my current teaching position is in Minnesota - the state with the best chapter of ACDA in the nation. Many thanks to all the leaders and members of this organization, past and present, who have shared their passion and talent to further our choral art.

Angela Broeker

On behalf of all of us at VocalEssence – singers, staff and board – congratulations to ACDA of Minnesota for achieving 50 years of service to Minnesota, its choirs and its conductors. Minnesota is definitely “choral country” and this name remains important because of the work that ACDA of Minnesota has provided for all of its choral conductors in grade schools, high schools, colleges and universities. Congratulations on this accomplishment and best wishes for the next 50 years!

Philip Brunelle
FMC Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, 1998

Congratulations, ACDA MN for 50 excellent years of growth and service to choir directors in the great state of Minnesota! I am proud to claim an association with this organization for the past 27 years. ACDA MN is very much like a family dedicated to lifting the human race through the choral arts. With respect and dedication:

Steve Deitz,
Recipient, Outstanding Young Choral Director Award, 1990

I want to offer my most sincere congratulations to ACDA-MN on its 50th anniversary! I know I speak on behalf of many of my constituents in the Metro East when I say how grateful I am for all that ACDA-MN has done for me as a professional in the field of Choral Music. Thanks again, ACDA-MN, and here's to your next 50 years!

Marie Spar Dymit
Metro East District Chair, 2010-12

Hearty congratulations to ACDA of Minnesota at this time of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the state chapter. It has been exhilarating to observe the growth of the organization into the dynamic entity that it is today which has such a powerful influence on choral conductors in Minnesota and, as a result, how choral singing every year is uplifting the lives of thousands of students who have the privilege of working with excellent choral leaders across the State.

Having joined ACDA in 1960 while in my first year of teaching in St. James, MN, just one year after its inception, and having left the State for 18 years, I had the special
opportunity to return in 1980 and witness an organization that had grown tremendously in size and professional influence, thanks to all the outstanding leaders who charted the course for ACDA of Minnesota during its entire history.

Bravo, bravo! ! !
Karle Erickson
Recipient, F. Melius Christiansen Lifetime Achievement Award, 2002

Fifty years!! I doubt that any of us who were involved from the modest start of ACDA of Minnesota could have predicted the size and stature of this organization today. All who have been in leadership roles down through the years are to be heartily congratulated. I'm particularly pleased with the growth of the FMC Endowment Fund and the financial assistance it makes available to the young choral directors of our state.

Murrae N. Freng,
Charter Member, ACDA-1959
Member, FMC Endowment Fund Committee
Recipient, FMC Lifetime Achievement Award

Congratulations to ACDA of Minnesota as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary. Our members wonderfully represent singers across this great state and because of you, choral music thrives in Minnesota. Our choral family remains as important to me in retirement as it did throughout my professional career. Happy Anniversary!

Barb Geier
ACDA-MN Executive Assistant, 2009 to present
FMC Endowment Fund Committee

It's your big 5-0, ACDA of Minnesota! Because of this outstanding organization I am the beneficiary of deep and lasting friendships, needed and welcome inspiration, and countless opportunities to grow through service. It has been and continues to be a key component of my life, professionally and personally. Kudos to the many fine people who have made and continue to make this ACDA of Minnesota what it is. Heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for another fifty years of excellence.

Mary Kay Geston (ACDA-MN president 2005-07)

Greetings ACDA of MN: Congratulations on 50 years as an established organization! Growing up in a household with a member of ACDA of MN, I remember stuffing envelopes in our basement to ACDA members. That was my first recollection and exposure to the organization. I now know how lucky I was to be exposed to such a marvelous group of people at such a young age. I can’t imagine doing what I do without ACDA of MN. The members are my colleagues, my friends, my supporters, and my family! Thank you and congratulations!

Sarah Boehlke Gilbertson
Recipient, Minnesota Young Conductor of the Year, 2000

Congratulations ACDA-MN on 50 years of nurturing the participants, directors, and lovers of choral music throughout the state of Minnesota! May the purpose of this organization remain strong and relevant for another 50 years!

Chris Harris
Southeast District Chair, 2010-12

In the early days of my career I remember going to ACDA events and appreciating so much all that I learned. The network and friendships was such a vital part of any success I achieved, and I am grateful for having had an opportunity to serve the organization.

Fifty years ago a handful of visionaries had an idea that has grown to benefit so many. We are all part of an incredible organization and I want to extend my hearty congratulations to all those involved any sort of leadership role. Thank you for serving us so faithfully and offering so much value to our profession.

Al Hawkins, Past President, 1995-97
Congratulations to ACDA of MN on achieving 50 years as an organization. The growth of ACDA of MN is truly amazing!!
Chuck Hellie
Treasurer, ACDA-MN, 1999-2010
Member, FMC Endowment Fund Committee

CHEERS to ACDA on its 50th anniversary! Join ACDA members and it's leaders as we acknowledge the vision of our founders, the propelling action of its members, and our service to singers across Minnesota... “a distinguished past – a vibrant future”!
Paula Holmberg
Metro West District Chair, 2011-13

What can I say but "Thank You" to ACDA of Minnesota. It was ACDA that mentored me in those early years of my career and helped fine-tune the God-given gifts given to me. The friendships that I've been blessed with and the camaraderie I've experienced through the years have always been there when I needed help and advice. There has been no other professional organization that has helped instruct me, influence me or guide me during these past 42 years of teaching, directing, composing and arranging more than ACDA-MN. I'm sure the choral directors present and future will continue to be blessed by this wonderful professional organization.
Elwood "Woody" Johnson
Minnesota Choral Director of the Year, 1988

Congratulations to ACDA of Minnesota! What a great milestone this is! As a national organization, ACDA was founded in 1959. State organizations around the country were set up 50 years ago, in 1962, and in each state a president was appointed. Then, in 1972, 40 years ago, Minnesota set up its first organization with officers, a state board, districts and our first state convention. Believe it or not at that time we had only 66 members. Look how far we have come!
As a choral conductor, whether it be in an house of worship or an educational institution at any level, ACDA is your prime professional organization. I urge you all to not only join and attend activities, but to lead and to share. It is the sharing that makes us unique and vital.
Wayne Kivell, Executive Secretary 1997-2009
Past President, 1972-74
F. Melius Christiansen Lifetime Achievement Award, 2000

Since I became a member of ACDA-MN in 1975, this organization has been a very important part of my life. ACDA has had a very powerful influence and significant impact on many Minnesota choral directors and their singers during the past 50 years. Opportunities to share and learn at state, division and national ACDA conferences have been boundless. Countless ACDA members have also developed personal friendships and lifetime relationships with one another that are highly valued. We are fortunate to live in a state where excellent choral music is extremely vital to the fabric of our life. Happy 50th Birthday, ACDA!
Diana J. Leland
Past ACDA-MN, Past North Central Division and National Past President

CONGRATULATIONS to ACDA-MN on its 50th Anniversary! I just returned from a trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico. I have a granddaughter there who had sung in the ACDA All-State elementary school choir at the New Mexico state convention. The recording of the All-State Choirs was excellent which shows the far reaching influence of ACDA -- and ACDA-MN is the leader of the the "pack".
Well done!
Howard C. Lerohl
FMC Endowment Fund Committee Member

Congratulations, ACDA of Minnesota, on 50 years of service to our beloved profession
and art, and best wishes for many years of choral fellowship to come!
Dr. David L. Mennicke
Coordinator, Choral Arts Finale

ACDA is 50 years old! Congratulations to an amazing organization. I am thankful for all of the opportunities ACDA has for my students and for my professional development. I'm looking forward to ACDA greatness for many years to come.
Bonnie Nelson
Northwest District Chair, 2010-12

It is with pleasure that ACDA is able to celebrate 50 years of sharing and encouraging choral directors in Minnesota and beyond. What a joy it has been to meet choral directors who have helped me become a more refined choral director. Let's be welcoming and challenging professionally to young directors wishing to gain more abilities. Happy 50th ACDA!
Mark Nelson, Annandale, MN
FMC Endowment Fund Committee
Southwest District Chair, 2007-2009

May I as a fellow Iowan reach across the border and congratulate the Minnesota ACDA for exceptional leadership, dynamic creativity, and an enviable spirit de corps. Thank you for including me as one of you as my heart vibrates with you!
Weston Noble

It is with a great deal of pride that I offer my congratulations to Minnesota ACDA for 50 years of providing choral directors and singers outstanding opportunities in the choral art. As an active member (35 years) and a Past-President, I am extremely proud to be a member. My closest professional friends have come from this organization. The greatest choral concerts I have ever heard have been at state, regional and national ACDA conventions. As a young choral director, ACDA provided me the opportunity to develop my skill as a conductor/teacher by attending conferences and workshops. ACDA of Minnesota provided my a "proving ground" for my research in solo repertoire for young voices, leading to a PhD in music education.
Sincerely,
Bob Peterson
ACDA-MN Past President, 1987-89
Recipient, Minnesota Choral Director of the Year Award, 1994

Happy 50th Anniversary ACDA-MN! What a blessing it is to be a part of such a wonderful community of choral colleagues and friends. Not a day goes by that I do not give thanks for working in this field; it is made all the more special by doing it in this fantastic state. Here's to another fifty...and another...and another...and...
Mark Potvin
Editor, Star of the North, 2008-2011

Congratulations to Minnesota ACDA for reaching the wonderful milestone of 50 years. Having been president of ACDA Minnesota for a time during our growth I know from the inside and the outside the fabulous commitment of ACDA members in making this organization grow and thrive. As a professional organization, ACDA of Minnesota is the leader in the USA for the furtherance of the choral arts. What a joy it is to be a member of a community which holds excellence as a high standard, nurtures young and mature conductors, honors choral traditions and composers from the past and present and encourages us all to do and be the best we can be in our profession. I can only imagine the influence ACDA Minnesota will have over the next 50 years - but I am confident it will be grand!
Thomas Rossin
State President, 1985-87
Congratulations on your 50th birthday! So many of us are grateful to you for being the choral "village" that raised us, teaching us to love beauty, and for providing us meaningful work to do that can make our world a better and more beautiful place. The future looks bright. Long may you wave, ACDA!
Timothy Sawyer
Two Rivers Chorale

ACDA of Minnesota has long been recognized for their expertise in the choral art. Their leadership is a hallmark within our profession today. The Star of the North is not only the name of their official state publication, ACDA of Minnesota also represents a standard of excellence within the American Choral Directors Association.
Gary R. Schwartzhoff
North Central Divisional President, 1992-1994

The National Office of the American Choral Directors Association wishes you the very best on the occasion of the Minnesota State ACDA Chapter's 50th Anniversary and celebration in 2012. ACDA is so very proud of the choral legacy and ongoing accomplishments of your great state chapter, and we congratulate you for your efforts in bringing about a finer performance of a finer quality of choral music in Minnesota and throughout the region.
Tim Sharp, Executive Director
American Choral Directors Association

The great Robert Shaw is said to have remarked to his choir in rehearsal, “music is the most moral of the arts.” Paraphrasing his explanation, I recall 2 essential points: unlike a work of visual art, music is re-born at each singing, seeking again a new life amid an assembled commitment to authentic re-creation. This seeking occurs within a “community of expression” found most fully among people who sing together with a common devotion to the music and respect for one another’s efforts. The ACDA of Minnesota community’s legacy in keeping faith with Mr. Shaw’s observation and challenge has been a source of pride for me together with feelings of gratitude throughout my nearly 40 years of membership. Heartfelt thanks and congratulations one and all for what has defined ACDA of Minnesota’s leadership through 50 years.
Bob Sieving, Past President 1999-2001
Minnesota Choral Director of the Year, 1993

ACDA-MN continues to be an exemplar for service to choral teachers, singers, and the choral art. Minnesota's consistent output of talented singers, composers, and teachers is an inspiration to many and a reflection of the value of choral singing in Minnesota towns and villages. ACDA-MN is an integral resource for the choral activity in the state. Happy Anniversary and thanks to those professionals who are dedicated to the work of the organization in support of choral music.
Sandra Snow, Professor
2012 Conductor, MN All-State Women's Choir

In the early seventies I was working on a degree at the University of Colorado. Two of my committee members were very active in ACDA. They encouraged the graduate students to become members. Upon my return to Minnesota, I became active in the organization and served two terms as state president. The thing I remember about being in the position of president, was the musical and personal contacts that I developed in ACDA. Even back then with only sixty members, we all could see the tremendous potential of the organization. This potential has been realized as our state organization has flourished. Congratulations to you and the board who have done an outstanding job of promoting choral music through ACDA.
Chet Sommers, Past President, 1976-79

During the 40 (or so) years of my membership in MN – ACDA, I have had the privilege to observe - and be part of - many changes, that have enhanced all our lives as professionals, changes that have contributed to increased communication and dialogue.
between colleagues and acceptance of the many ways we can approach music and music making.
If the relevance and vitality of a professional organizations is based on the services and support it provides to its members, as well as its ability to change and transform itself to reflect the changes in ‘our’ world, then we, MN – ACDA, can truly call ourselves leaders in the choral profession and I am honored (and proud) to be an active member of MN – ACDA. And I am looking forward to many more years of learning, sharing, mentorship and forming lasting friendships.
Happy 50th !!
Axel Theimer
FMC Lifetime Achievement Award 2011
MN Choral Director of the Year 2001

ACDA of Minnesota is more than a professional organization to me. It is a community of caring, talented individuals who support each other and the art of choral music throughout the state, nation, and world. This “community” atmosphere is what allows us to grow. I feel deep gratitude for the ACDA members who got me interested in the profession as a student, the members who mentored me in my first years in an isolated part of the state, and the members who continue to mentor and dialogue with me!
Congratulations to ACDA of Minnesota on 50 years of community building – and many more!
Susan Zemlin
Minnesota Choral Director of the Year, 2011
Treasurer, 1997-99
Webmaster 1996-98