

The Key-Note



Harmony, Inc.

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An International Organization of Women Barbershop Singers

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Roulette
2024 Harmony Queens



**HARMONY,
INC.**

Empowering all women
through singing,
education, and
friendship.

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**president's
message**

Each year, Harmony's IC&C feels like a true homecoming. We gather not just for contest, but to reconnect - sharing hugs, harmonies, and the kind of laughter that springs from deep-rooted friendships and new connections alike. It's the late-night hallway tags, the joyful exhaustion, the pride of watching friends and family take the stage, and the quiet realization that you belong to something bigger than yourself. These are the moments that define our annual celebration.

Quartets and choruses deliver breathtaking performances, each one a testament to months of dedication and love for the craft. Our new champions embody the very soul of our organization. Their artistry reminds us that excellence and kindness not only coexist but thrive together, representing the highest musical achievement and the enduring values that make Harmony, Inc. a home.

As we return to our everyday lives after IC&C, we carry with us the memories, the music, and a renewed sense of purpose, until we gather again.

Yours in Harmony,
Gaye LaCasce
International President

editor's note

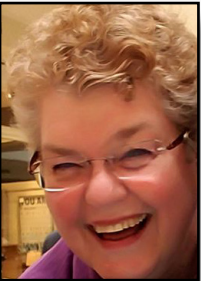
Hello, Harmony! It's a pleasure to greet you all, again, as editor of **The Key-Note**. We hope you enjoy this 2024-25 issue.

Every day, I am reminded of what a very special organization Harmony, Inc. is. It's a sisterhood of strong women who have come together to make music. And along the way, we are empowering all women, with the support of our friendship and through education in both singing and leadership, to lead extraordinary lives. My time with Harmony has changed me — for the better.

How about you?

I am blessed to have the very capable assistance of the rest of the Marketing & Communications Team and the Corporate Office. These ladies spent many hours this year proofing and correcting my editing efforts. Be sure to thank them, please, — as I do — for the time and commitment they bring to our Harmony, Inc. communications.

Yours in Harmony,
Roxanne Powell
Editor, *The Key-Note*



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Come Join our SONG!

2024 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & CONTESTS

By Ann McAlexander, Roving Reporter

What's more fun than a Harmony, Inc International Convention and Contests? Truly nothing, really. Anyone who was at The Galt House in Louisville last November can attest to that!

We never had to leave the complex the whole time if we didn't want to. The Grand Ballroom was the contest venue, and various meeting rooms were used for the classes and the contest-related functions. The vibrant Fourth Street entertainment district was also just a couple blocks away, for those who wanted to venture outside, and it was easy to order a quick meal from DoorDash or a similar service when time was at a premium.

The activities started on Wednesday evening with the Mass Sing and the Opening Celebration. It's always



With pom-poms waving, Harmony celebrates the 2024 medalist quartets. In green, second-place medalists, Legacy, followed by 2024 Champions, Roulette.

fun to attend the Opening Celebration to learn more about our leadership and our activities, witness the installation of officers, and to hear the roll call of all the chapters represented at the convention. Following the ceremony, many exited out to the Exhibit Hall to participate in or watch Singing with the Queens.

In the meantime, those arriving on Wednesday afternoon could also visit the Registration counter to pick up their credentials, visit the New Member table in the Harmony Hub, or shop at the Harmony Mall. If you walked by the Exhibit Area at just the right time in between the Mass Sing and Opening Celebration, you were treated to an impromptu performance by a brand new chorus, **Vocal Moxie**, directed by coach and arranger **Brent Graham**, husband of our own HI mem-

ber, coach, and judge **Theresa Weatherbee**.

Following the Opening Ceremony, as some headed to Sing With The Queens, others headed to the large, beautiful Conservatory area on the bridge between the two Galt House hotel towers to enjoy a drink or late meal. This location proved to be a popular hangout during the evenings, as the large bar area provided much room for singing and socializing. I did a little of both – I watched a couple rounds of SWTQ, then adjourned to the Conservatory bar for a salad and cocktail while I perused by Barbershop Geek Book. (Thanks, **Women of Note Chorus**, for once again offering this great contest reference book! And the mini disco ball attached to it was an added treat!)

[A list of the 2025 International Board of Directors, Advisors, and Assistants can be found on the website.](#)

See **SONG**, continued on next page



One thing Harmony has added in recent years is an area in the back center of the hall just in front of the AV platform that's blocked off for those of us in mobility scooters and wheelchairs. As a member of that community, I love that we can pull up and stay in our scooters to watch the contests, out of the way of everyone else but still with a clear view of the stage. A huge thank you to whoever's idea this was!

Thanks to Louisville being a conveniently drivable location for the many barbershoppers who live in the Midwest and Southern U.S., we were joined this year by a great assortment of barbershoppers representing all of the North American organizations. It was fun to go down the hall and see many friends from all over barbershop-dom in addition to all of our Harmony friends. The word has really gotten out about how fun our conventions are, and there were many first time attendees there to find out what Harmony is all about!

Thursday morning the activities started again, with a choice of several classes over two sessions for those of us who were looking for some education in addition to watching or participating in the contests. The detailed descriptions of

each class and who was teaching them was available in the wonderful IC&C mobile app that we were all encouraged to download and use during the convention week.

I chose a class taught by **Steve Tramack**, a very familiar face in the Harmony world. In the class, *Is This Barbershop?* Steve first explained the fundamental elements that make an arrangement barbershop, then showed us videos of several performances and we all discussed whether we thought they were barbershop and why.

Other classes offered included topics like *How to Go From A to B*, *Calm Your Nerves*, and *How To Teach Tags*. There was truly something for everyone.

QUARTET SEMI-FINALS

For the contest sessions, there were several rows of reserved seats in the front, followed by many rows of open seating and the before-mentioned scooter parking area. There were always plenty of seats available, but those wanting the best seats know to watch for the pre-registration reserved seating form to open up during the convention week and get those limited number of reserved seats.

With large screens on either side of the stage, though, it was easy to see the contest well no matter where you sat.

As always, the quartet semi-finals offer one of the finest shows in barbershop. This year, we were treated to a mic tester quartet, performances by 24 Harmony quartet contestants, and also this year there was something new – a contest-

...the quartet semi-finals offer one of the finest shows in barbershop...

within-a-contest, as three quartets from the **Mixed Barbershop Harmony Association** (MBHA) sang one two-song set each as part of our event. At the end of the day, the Top 10 quartets and an

11th place mic testing quartet were announced. They would sing again in the finals on Saturday night. The winners of the MBHA contest were also announced. Congratulations to **Arranged Marriage**, aka the Nastos and Lewellens, who were named the new MBHA International Quartet Champions!

CHORUS-FINALS

Friday was Chorus Day. It seemed like just about everyone at the convention sang in at least one chorus that day. There were just a few of us in the audience when the contest started bright

and early at 9:00 a.m. But, as the groups sang they slowly filled the hall, until at the end of the day it looked like a large, glorious, brightly colored quilt.

Each year, the chorus contest concludes with a performance by the **International Chorus**, made up of members from throughout the Harmony, Inc. organization, and led by the director of the outgoing chorus champions. This year it was directed by **Jordan Travis** from 2023 champions **A Cappella Showcase**. I always love watching this performance, knowing that these chorus members learn the song on their own, and come together for just one rehearsal before their performance on Friday afternoon. And again, just like the room in which they're singing, they provide a lovely mix of colors with their varied combination of contestants' costumes and individual outfits.

Following the International Chorus performance, it was time for outgoing champions **A Cappella Showcase** to wow us with a brilliant performance. If you haven't been to an IC&C to hear them sing live, you owe it to yourselves to do this. They are a wonderfully musical, highly entertaining chorus.



SONG

Continued from previous page

And now it was time for the announcement of the results of the chorus contest! The room grew silent and expectant as the awards were called off one by one. The excitement mounted by the minute, until the winner was announced as **Northern Blend Chorus**, under the direction of **Katie Taylor**! Congratulations, Northern Blend and Katie, on your great achievement!

PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Afterward we grabbed dinner in The Conservatory before heading back for the Parade of Champions later that evening. Again, if you’ve never been to one of these live, do it in 2025! This is a brilliant procession of past quartet champions, a performance by the outgoing chorus champions, and a performance by the Association of Harmony Queens Chorus.

Then we adjourned to the Exhibit Hall just outside the ballroom that was abuzz with singing and conversation. After listening to a visiting BHS quartet perform, we adjourned to The Conservatory for some more socializing.

Saturday morning saw more education classes. This time I chose a class taught by coach, arranger, and judge **David Wright**, titled *History of Race & Gender*. David’s classes are always excel-

lent – so well researched and presented – and this one was no exception.

As I was leaving the room I ran into our Harmony, Inc. Social Media Coordinator extraordinaire **Anita Prather Harvell**, looking a little tired but with a huge smile and sporting her shiny new chorus gold medal. It was great to have a moment to congratulate her and grab a photo. Until then I think I’d just seen her in passing, as she ran from place to place taking care of all of her official duties.

QUARTET FINALS

I went from there straight to the Quartet Finals. This event is always an amazingly exciting presentation of the best talent in Harmony. For these ten groups, it’s the culmination of their many months of hard work, and it’s apparent in each of the excellent performances. If someone asked me what event most draws me to these



2023 HARMONY QUEENS FIERCE RECEIVE THEIR PERMANENT CROWNS — 2023 Harmony Queens Fierce are joined on stage by 30 of their friends and family members singing their swan song. Sparkle on, Fierce!

conventions, I’d say it’s the quartet finals. There’s just something about the buzz in the room, the feeling of excitement and anticipation, and the brilliant performances, that makes this event unlike any other during an IC&C.

Each performance built on the one before it, and we were left in breathless anticipation of the results as the under-25 **Minor Chords** youth chorus cooled the mic for us, followed by the amazing swan song performance by the outgoing champions, **Fierce**. The swan song was especially notable in that Fierce was joined by a chorus made up of about 30 of their friends and family members for a final song before they received their perma-

nent crowns.
As a little background on the crowns, when the members of a quartet win the quartet contest and are awarded the title of Harmony Queens, they each receive a traveling crown to wear until the next convention. These crowns are passed from quartet to quartet, year after year. At the end of their reigning year, they’re presented with their permanent crowns, which have been designed and made specifically for them.

There’s a crowning ceremony each year just before the quartet contest results are announced, where the queens relinquish the traveling crowns and are given

SONG

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their permanent crowns, placed on their heads by their chosen members of their friends and family. I can remember being a part of this when my daughter Maggie’s quartet received their permanent crowns in 2014, on this same stage at The Galt House. We were the first to get to see the crowns, and had a moment to ooh and aah over them backstage before carrying them out on stage behind our backs to start the ceremony. That’s one of my most cherished moments as a member of Harmony and as the mom of a Harmony Queen.

Fierce’s crowns were beautiful, stunning really, and perfect for them. It’s always a highlight to see the crowns placed on their heads then watch them look at each other to see what they look like. Another

fun moment takes place a little later when they’re led to a mirror and get to see their own crown on their own head for the first time.

After the crowning ceremony, Fierce treated us to one more song, then it was time to hear the quartet contest results! A hush fell over the room as we collectively held our breath while the quartets sat in eager anticipation. The countdown began as first the special awards, then the medalists, were announced. 5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... and the winner, with a score of 80.4, is ... **Roulette!** Outstanding! These singers have given so much to the organization, and it was such a pleasure to see all the love given back to them when they were announced as the 2024 Harmony Queens! Congratulations Morgan, Jess,

Katie, and Lynn – a well-deserved championship! Wear those crowns proudly!

CELEBRATIONS

At the conclusion of the contest is another tradition that I always look forward to eagerly – the Medalist Fanfare, where each of the medalist quartets, followed by a past Harmony Queen quartet waving pompons, process down the hallway outside the ballroom, as we line up on each side to cheer them on. Following this, they each take the stage in the Exhibit Hall outside the ballroom for a few words of thanks and a song. The event concludes with all of the past Harmony Queens in attendance surrounding the new Queens and serenading them with their signature song. What a great day, what a great event!

The evening wrapped up with the Showcase of Champions, where the medalist quartets and choruses, plus the MBHA champion quartet, perform. It’s always a terrific celebration, a chance for us to see them doing a variety of contest numbers and other show numbers. At the end of the evening International President Gaye LaCasce declared the convention officially concluded. After stopping to listen to a new quartet perform in the back of the ballroom, we all headed to The Conservatory and a variety of hospitality rooms to celebrate.

It’s always sad when it’s over for another year, but it won’t be too long now before we gather in Hershey, Pennsylvania for IC&C 2025 Until then ...

**We’re Harmony, We’re Strong
– come join our song!**

Future IC&C Dates and Locations

2025	Hershey Lodge, Hershey, PA	November 5-8
2026	Galt House, Louisville, KY	November 11-14
2027	Niagara Falls Conv. Ctr, Niagara Falls, ON	November 10-13
2028	Hershey Lodge, Hershey, PA	November 1-4
2029	Halifax Convention Ctr. Halifax, NS	November 7-10

Harmony Queens Travel Fund

What is the Harmony Queens Travel Fund? So glad you asked!

The Harmony Queens Travel Fund consists of money raised each year by the Association of Harmony Queens at the annual Parade of Champions at IC&C. This money is raised for your benefit and we hope you will take advantage of this fund. Your chapter is eligible for up to \$1,500 US towards travel and accommodation expenses when you hire a Harmony Queens quartet to appear on your show. at an educational event or youth event. Please check out the Harmony, Inc. [website](#) for details or contact:

[Travel Fund Chairman Judi Johnston](#)
705-835-3402



Meet Roulette Tenor Morgan La Croix

Harmony, Inc.,
thank you, thank you
and thank you! I am
grateful and forever
humbled to be featured in

The Key-Note for a third time. This organization
has been there for me for 30+ years, and I am
very fortunate to be able to share my life with all
of you, you are my family!

My Life, past to present

I have always had a love for music, playing
piano at the age of seven, participating in high
school musicals during my teens, and getting
my Bachelors degrees from McGill University
in Music and Education in 2008. I am currently
the Music teacher at Maple Grove Elementary
in Lachine, QC. I'm closing in on 20 years of
teaching now, and though there have been
challenges and turbulent times, I still absolutely
love my job and wouldn't change it for the world.

I got married in 2015, and divorced in 2020.
I have learned a great deal about myself and
to prioritize what truly matters to me in life,
my independence, my family and friends and
my fur babies. I believe in long term love and
partnership, and I know my story will continue
with a special person and maybe some kids
along the way. I'm working on it, and whatever life
has in store for me, I know Harmony Inc. is right
by my side.

Montreal City Voices

I came to a Montreal City Voices rehearsal when
I was 12 with my mother **Linda Hayes**. I joined

at 13, and started singing tenor at
age 15. Within the chorus, I served
on the music team and board for many
years and was the front line director from 2013-
2018.

Thank you, Montreal City Voices, for being my
introduction to barbershop. These ladies have
taught me a great deal, and I am very proud that
this chorus has been a part of my journey. I am
currently their permanent coach and am happy to
be giving back once more.

Quartets

I haven't always sung tenor. From 2003-
2005, I sang baritone with a SAI quartet called
Commonly Unique with **Laura Holmes**,
Elisabeth Mance (Blue Champagne, 1998), and
Kristin Drummond-Mance, (Take 4, 2022).

A number of years later I took the leap to sing
Lead, first in **UNIQUE** and then in **Balancing Act**,
2018 4th place medalist. As Lynn and Katie have
often expressed, it is a wealth of information to
sing other voice parts. Maybe someday, when I
grow up, I'll sing bass in a quartet, but I'm pretty
sure the other three singers would have to have
tenor ranges, pitch it up! Hmm, possible quartet
name!?

In January of 2011, I joined Maria Stolz
Gabriella, Nanda Landers, and Amanda Holloway
in a quartet called **Foreign Exchange**. I was
living in the USA at the time pursuing my Masters
in Music Education. We competed at IC&C in
Hershey, Pennsylvania and to our absolute joy

were
crowned
the 2011 Harmony
Queens.

I can proudly say that I have been a
Harmony, Inc. International
Champion since 2000 when I joined
a Montreal-based quartet called
After Hours. I was 18 at the time
and had no idea what I was getting
myself into. I quickly learned that this
foursome was a force, in personality,
musicality and above all, singing.
Although we live far from each other
now, we can still come together, have
fun and ring chords. This year marks
our 25th Anniversary as champions.
I can't believe it! Maria, Lindsay and
Stacy, we have made awesome memories
together, here's to another 25 years!

Northern Blend Chorus

I joined the baritone section in the summer
of 2019 and I have never looked back. I
have idolized this chorus since 1996...yes...
fangirling for 29 years! I love this chorus
inside and out and am so grateful for their
love and support of Roulette!

See **MORGAN**, continued on next page



*TOP: Morgan with her parents,
Mike and Linda.*

*MIDDLE: After Hours celebrates 25
years as Harmony Queens.*

*BOTTOM: Morgan cuddles with her
fur baby, Matty.*



Special Thanks

MORGAN

Continued from previous page

My Roulette Queens!

♣ Queen of Clubs Lynn Blakeney

It is safe to say that we have had a shared admiration for each other's abilities over the last 20 years. You are skilled and talented and freakin' awesome! You have a keen eye for song and costume selection, and it's pretty darn cool that you're a performance judge! I consider us family and it brings me a lot of joy because it's what I have wanted from the start. Clubs have three sides, and you have three championships in three different voice parts, how amazing is that!?. It's a privilege to sing with you and I am beyond proud of you!

♥ Queen of Hearts Jess Leigh

You are genuine, kind and include everyone in your love of singing and performing. Your humble confidence is something I admire and that has inspired me. Jess, in the beginning you were the barbershop student, but I guarantee

you've taught all three of us that it's ok to be 100% ourselves. You allow us to feel safe to be us no matter what. I see you, for your skill, your talent, your giant heart, and your beauty inside and out. It's a privilege to sing with you! SO PROUD!

♦ Queen of Diamonds Katie Taylor

You are a Harmony G.O.A.T.! and the reason you are is because you continue to learn, and grow as a singer and musician. It's down right inspiring, and I am in awe! Thank you for opening your family's home to me through all the traveling and I cherish that we GET each other's need for certain musical nerdy things. The diamond suit has four points and you have four crowns in all four parts. I don't know what could be more fitting for you Katie, I am proud of you and I am privileged to sing with you!

Thank you Lynn, Jess and Katie for asking me to sing with you, for standing by me during my vocal injury and for providing me with some of the most beautiful musical and emotional moments I have ever had in this hobby! My ladies, my sisters in song, I love you!

Vocal Injury

I share this part of my journey to help and support all those who have had to navigate through the demands of using one's voice as your passion and vocation.

Due to teaching through two masks with no amplification during the pandemic for the better part of 18 months, I had a rupture of the blood vessels on my right vocal cord and a small nodule on my left vocal cord. Two weeks after Roulette had competed in our first IC&C in 2022 with a 4th place finish, I was put on six weeks of vocal rest, no talking, singing...ZIP! I went back to work after the holidays and once again I was put on another six weeks of vocal rest.

In the spring of 2023, I underwent a laser procedure to cauterize the blood vessels that had ruptured. Were there risks? Yes! I had to be completely awake for the procedure and listen to instructions like, "Please stay absolutely still because if you move, you might not sing ever again! Also, you might smell smoke or a burning smell, please don't stress, it's just the laser..."

I'm pretty sure I had an out of body experience, where I forced my mind to go blank and become numb so that I wouldn't move. The things we do for our passion and profession! Dr. Kost, an ENT specialist of voice was fabulous, and the procedure was a success. (Duh! I'm writing in *THE KEY-NOTE*!)

After the procedure, I did many weeks of vocal therapy through the McGill University Health Center. I am a changed singer now and will always put my vocal health first.

Knowing this procedure was the only way for me to save my voice and continue singing long term, Roulette asked a very special someone — Tessa Walker — to sub for me at Area 3 contest in May of 2023. She said, "Yes," and brought all her amazing musical artistry and infectious personality to this quartet. Without her, Roulette would not have been able to compete at IC&C in 2023.



Family, coaches, and close barbershop friends

First, the biggest thank you to Linda Hayes, my mother, for bringing me into this hobby/way of life! I love you, Mom, and I wouldn't be where I am today without your support and encouragement.

Our coaches:

Anthony Colosimo, you were there at the start and helped us with vocal techniques.

Patrick McAlexander, you were there to remind us of the importance of duets and using your magical music theory skills to help us perform a not so lengthy Billy Joel tune.

Alan Gordon, you were there to remind us that everyone in this quartet is singing lead (high lead to low lead)

Cary Burns, you were there to teach us all about the little amount

of air that is actually needed to make all our vocal and musical dreams come true.

David Wright, you were there to cheer us on and keep us focused with the best advice..

Sandi Wright, Gene and Wendy Spilker, you all were there when we needed you (Gene flying up to coach us in September 2023), showing us that we are the ones who need to decide to be vulnerable in order to truly be as musical as possible!

Richard Lewellen, you were there to give us a new stance and higher singing scores!

The Lewellen Family, you were there to make this girl's dreams come true by asking Roulette to compete with **Bella Nova**. What a wonderful chorus! I am thrilled with our 5th place finish.

Thank you all for your generosity and love, I consider you all family!



Meet Roulette Lead Jess Leigh

I still live in upstate New York. This is where I was raised. I have learned to make the most of small town life for the past 40 years.

I'm the proud mom of two children, Brandon (21) and Samantha (8) who have taught me many of life's most important lessons on love, kindness, creativity, inspiration, and hope.

My musical journey was sparked by the many songs and karaoke-style performances I enjoyed with my younger brother, Ben, and older sister, Lisa, as well as the day-to-day music often played by my parents and late grandmother. I have always held an appreciation for many styles of music and craved performance opportunities, but didn't gain the courage until I became a freshman high school chorus and select choir student.

Through my first concert solos, early karaoke memories, family gatherings, and local singing competitions, with support of my family, teachers, and friends, I found my voice. Dur-

ing these late teenage years, a local school talent show opportunity, suggested by my aunt, connected me to that school's music teacher, **Katie Taylor**.

Life continued on its winding course and a few years later, I searched for a way to incorporate singing back into my life as a young, single mom. I found myself in a local church basement, sitting on risers among some of Harmony's long-time members at a **Northern Blend Chorus** rehearsal. While I felt a sense of instant belonging and passed my audition a few weeks later, I decided to put off the barbershop commitment to focus on motherhood. Over a decade later, in late 2018, with Katie's continued encouragement, I returned to their rehearsals to become a proud baritone.

Within six months, I experienced my first Area 3 competition and my first quartet, **Roulette**, was born. Getting to sing with three Harmony, Inc. champions in one's first quartet is a pretty great opportunity! Through their support and

guidance, I discovered a sense of confidence and learned to let my lead personality shine.

When I'm not singing, I'm supporting local community college students as the Student Affairs secretary and volunteering for a local organization that offers LGBTQ+ youth programming.

I enjoy good food, coffee, live music, and traveling with my kids.

For the past 6+ years, I've been inspired by my Blender sisters in song every week, experienced Harmony University (2019), been the Harmony, Inc. Quartet Development Coordinator, enjoyed many Equity & Diversity Committee Roundtable discussions, had incredible coaches, and made many friends along the way. I'm grateful to be in such a welcoming organization and look forward to the future of Harmony, Inc.



TOP: Jess's extended family.

BOTTOM: Jess poses with Boomer, the Jefferson Community College mascot at the June 2024 Watertown, NY Pride event.



Meet Roulette Bari Katie Taylor

I am still pinching myself that this happened, and that I am here again, writing my fourth "Queen Bio!" It is an honor to join the ranks of four-time Queen, Betty Gunterman!

I've been in HI for almost 40 years, and when I think of barbershop, I think of FAMILY. Joining HI in 1988 at age 12 was something that I didn't know would forever affect the trajectory of my life. My dad, my mom, my sister...we all sang 4-part a cappella in the car as far back as I can remember, and we eventually became a family quartet, singing on shows and afterglows for decades.

Dad always cheered us on in all of our HI quartets and in Northern Blend Chorus, and his, "YEAH!" at the end of our performances was always present. I am grateful for the gift of music that our parents bestowed upon us! My dad was there to see me win three of my crowns, and although he wasn't here to cheer for me in the crowd this time, he was most certainly here with me in spirit!

I am also grateful for the love and support of my husband of almost 29 years, who is not a barbershopper, but certainly knows and respects the commitment I have to our organization, my chorus, and my quartets. I won with **For Heaven's Sake** four months after we got married, so he's been through it all with me! He is a saint, and I adore my Ricky!

My boys grew up on barbershop and all things music (I was their music teacher) and are both impacted by my barbershop world in positive ways! Love you, Gavin and Zach!

I was involved in music in high school, but was also a jock, and planned to major in Physical Education. An ankle injury at summer basketball camp leading to my senior year kept me out of soccer in the fall, so I decided to try out for the musical, **Jesus Christ Superstar**—and I fell right in love with musical theatre. I decided to go for Music Ed instead, and was accepted at the Crane School of Music in Potsdam, NY.

I am a founding member of **A# Arrangement**, the first ladies a cappella group at Crane (and of course we sang barbershop when I was music director), was lucky to get ONE semester together with **Lorie**, who later became music director as a math major, and now — 31 years later — I have students of mine as members of the group. It's pretty awesome! I taught at Alexandria Central School for 27 years, directing 26 musicals, teaching PK-8 General Music, 5-12 Choral Music, Special Ed music, and was Gender and Sexuality Alliance Advisor for the club I co-founded in 2016. My job there became overwhelming, and I made the decision to move to my alma mater, Watertown City School



TOP:
Proud parents
Chuck & Mary Ann
Wert with Katie
and Laurie in 2015
Queens Livewire.

MIDDLE: Sons Zach, 24 & Gavin, 26.

BOTTOM: Amazing hubby Ricky

See **KATIE**, continued on next page

KATIE

Continued from previous page

District, where I now teach middle school music enrichment to some amazing 7th and 8th grade musicians.

For Heaven's Sake

I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by talent, which came in the form of many amazing humans. For Heaven's Sake won our crown in 1996. Mom, Lorie, Laurie O'Donnell and I could not believe our ears when they announced us as Harmony Queens! Laurie has since moved away and we have been lucky to have Lynn Blakeney become our new lead. We are *still* singing and performing together, and this year marks our 30th anniversary as a quartet! Singing bass is my "happy place," so it's always like putting on a warm pair of pajamas when I sing with these amazing ladies!

U4X

In late 2007, Jeanne O'Connor, Lynn Randall, and Lauren Lindeman invited me to sing with them in a quartet and I was super honored. I have looked up to them since I was a kid, so getting to sing with them was such a treat. The three of them were in Chicago and I flew there for rehearsals... nuts, but we did it! I was the tenor for U4X, and with my big mouth,

I was so afraid I was going to stick out. Fortunately, these three are power houses! We won the gold our first time out in November 2008. I learned so much, and had so much fun with these amazing, kind and generous souls!

LiveWire

In 2015, I began singing lead with **LiveWire**. I went through a difficult time with vocal cord damage, and we almost scratched from the contest at Turning Stone, but decided, even with my issues, we would jump in. No expectations. No pressure. It was that freedom that allowed me to sing from my heart, with the support of Lorie Autote, Lynn Blakeney and Jessi Nasto behind me. It turned out ok, as we were crowned Harmony Queens that weekend, me receiving my third crown on my third part.

Roulette

When Roulette began in 2019, I was super excited. I have known Jess since she was in high school and came to sing in a Talent Show I was hosting. I fell in love with her voice then — over 20 years ago! Lynn and I knew we wanted to try singing a new part for fun (and she had WANTED to sing bass in LiveWire... but Jessi on tenor just did NOT work! Hehehe!) soooo... she NOW got to sing bass, I got to try baritone, and with a seasoned

and energetic Morgan LaCroix popping in on tenor, we knew we could walk Jess through learning how to bring her spectacular sound and spirit to barbershop without sacrificing who she was as a performer, but rather celebrating it.

When COVID hit we were devastated, but all continued to work independently. When we had our first rehearsal back afterward, we cried! Singing and growing with these three has been such a dynamic and crazy journey. Singing bari was not something I thought I'd ever do... but I absolutely adore it, and feel so much more appreciation for what it takes to sing every part and how I can contribute in different ways to each ensemble I am part of. It helps me as a singer and also as a director, a coach, and an admirer of all things barbershop.

I am so grateful to Lynn, Morgan and Jess for taking this journey with me. I am also so grateful for their love and celebration of my "4 crowns on 4 parts" at IC&C in Louisville. I am humbled and I could not have done it's without you all!

Thank yous

So many people that have supported me/us in our journey! First, to Northern Blend, thank you for supporting us and being our family! I am so blessed to get to direct this amazing and talented group of

humans. I mean. REALLY. Thank you so much to our fam in **Bella Nova**, as well. Your love and support and the invitation for us to jump into your contest set was so FUN!

Thank you to our coaches and barber-shop chosen family: Anthony Colosimo, Doc & Wendy Spilker, Sandi & David Wright, Richard & Christina Lewellen (and the whole Lew Crew — Morgan, Bryn, Avery, Kaitlyn, Kenzie!), Tessa Walker (our 5th member) and John Sifuentes, Cary Burns, Alan Gordon, Chad St. John... and for our entire judging community for the fantastic evals and mini-coaching sessions, feedback, encouragement and support. You are outstanding people and we love you so!

To all of my HI friends, I so appreciate your love, kindness, and positive energy. The amazing and empathetic members of this organization make me so proud. I love being part of HI, and all that we stand for. It is a pretty incredible thing to be part of. I am fortunate, indeed!

I love to sing and perform, but I also have a passion for sharing my knowledge of barbershop and greatly enjoy coaching, teaching, giving private voice lessons, and making learning trax for my BBS friends!.

Check out [TaylorTrax.homestead.com!](https://taylortrax.homestead.com/)



Meet Roulette Bass Lynn Blakeney

Grateful and blessed...these are the two words that best describe my life and the impact that Harmony, Inc. has had on it.

I'm married to the love of my life, James Blakeney and we live in Evans Mills, NY. I have a son, Josh, who lives in Bloomington, IL, a bonus daughter, Steph, who lives with her husband in Vicksburg, MS and a bonus son William, who lives outside of Pensacola, FL. We also have a cat named Buzz who currently resides with Grandma, and Moya the trucker kitty who travels with Jim.

Outside of barbershop? Well, I barbershop! I coach both in person and online and usually have some chorus visual idea running around in my brain. I also do the paperwork for my husband's trucking company.

How it began

I am the only child of Marcia and Roger Trick. I grew up in tiny Van Hornesville, NY, where I was a massive tomboy riding my horses and showing cattle. I went to a little school with fewer than 300 students, K-12. My mom was my homeroom teacher 7-12, English teacher, cheerleading coach, soccer coach, and played piano for every chorus concert.

Music was my super happy place. I played saxophone, flute, and piano. But singing...well, that was something

I had done from birth. I loved when Mom would be playing, I would be singing, and Dad would chime in with the harmonies. We lost Dad in 2019 and even as dementia was taking him away, music, barbershop in particular, was always the link that allowed us to hang on just a little. I miss him, his humor and his voice every day but I know that he is still mine and my Mom's biggest fan.

I have an Associates Degree in Music from Onondaga Community College and went on to Ithaca College as a voice major. Unfortunately, during spring break I became very sick and discovered that I had stripped my vocal chords and lost the hearing in my left ear. The doctor told me that singing was no longer in my future. To say that I was devastated is an understatement. I ended up getting a Legal Assistance Degree in Syracuse and when my parents moved up to Watertown, I soon followed. My hearing came back and occasionally I would hum to the radio but didn't sing like I used to.

In 1989 my Mom dragged me "kicking and screaming" to a **Northern Blend** rehearsal. Barbershop wasn't cool, I thought. I knew about it because my godparents, Jan and Nan Muddle, did it and I had won a Sweet Adelines Scholarship in college but it was NOT something I wanted to do. Right?

Wrong.

See LYNN, continued on next page

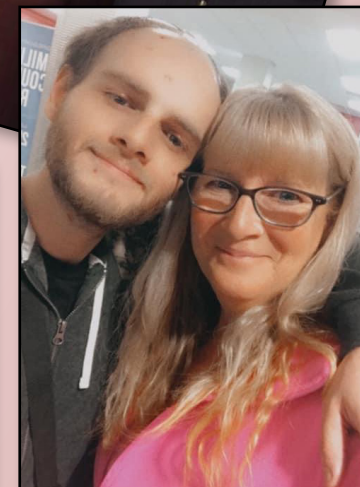
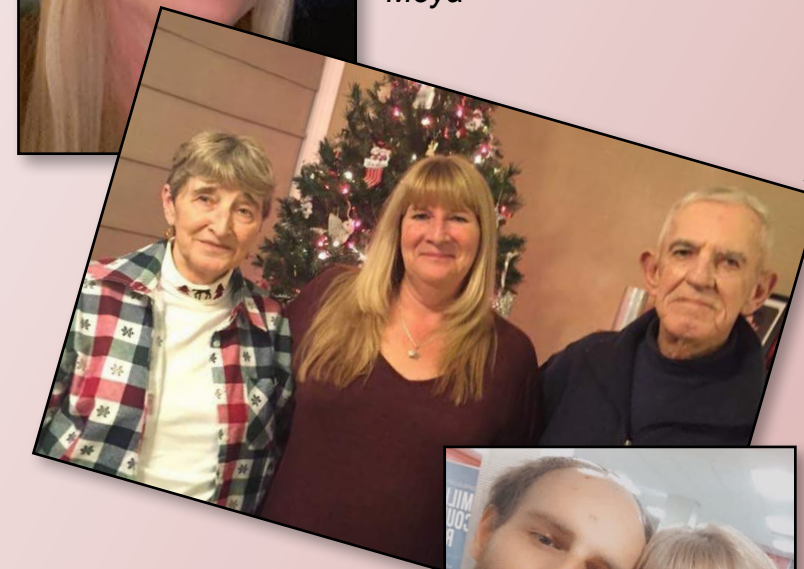


TOP: James and Lynn

MIDDLE: Lynn with her parents, Marcia and Roger Trick.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Son Josh

BOTTOM LEFT: Buzz and Moya



LYNN

Continued from previous page

To my surprise, that first night visiting NBC after two years not singing, I did, and I loved it. I never looked back.

I am now a proud 36-year member of this amazing organization and it has given me more than I can adequately put into words. It has given me education, laughter, and more sisters than anyone could ask for. I have been NBC President a few times as well as Lead section leader. I am currently the Bass section leader and Visual Team leader.

I sang in a few quartets with my Mom and in 1998, Donna McKay and Anne Leinen asked if I wanted to sing in a quartet with them. Ummm, yes please! In 2001 **Upstate Rhythm** was honored to become Harmony Queens. I am always and forever grateful for everything I learned while singing with these incredible people. It is the foundation of everything I do today. We retired in 2003 when I moved to Chicago for a short time.

I sang in a couple of other quartets but in 2012, Katie Taylor, Lorie Autote, and Mary Ann Wert asked if I would sing with them in **For Heaven's Sake** as their lead, Laurie O'Donnell had gotten married and was moving. With Laurie's blessing, I said, "Yes!" I had actually been their chauffeur many times after they won and knew all of their music so the transition

was seamless. We still sing together and since Lead is my very happy place, I love it! They are my family.

Katie, Lorie and I really missed competing and decided to put a new quartet together but the deal was, we had to sing different parts. I had planned to sing bass but when Jessi Nasto stepped into the picture, up to tenor I went. Now singing tenor is not always one of my favorite things to do (it's high!) but singing with these ladies is. In 2015 we were blessed and shocked to be named Harmony Queens. We don't get to sing together as often as we would like but we love it when we do.

In the middle of all of this, with encouragement from my family, Lynn Randall, Lauren Linderman, and Jeanne O'Connor, I joined the judging program in the, then, Presentation Category. In 2017 I certified in what is now the Performance Category. I often get asked why I wanted to become a judge and the answer is easy, to give back. I have so many who have taught me so much and I want to honor them by sharing what I have learned. In the same respect when I get asked why I want to sing so many other parts. Well, to learn! If I am going to judge, and coach, I want to talk to people from a place of knowing.

In 2019, Katie asked if I wanted to actually give Bass a try, and sing in a new

quartet with her. Duh, she's my ride or die! So, one night, Jess Leigh, who was fairly new to barbershop, Morgan La-Croix, who was already a two-time amazing tenor champion, Katie, and I met for what turned into an almost 12-hour rehearsal! We sang and laughed a lot.... then COVID hit!

We spent many nights chatting about the future, figuring out songs, having zoom parties, and waiting. We didn't always see eye to eye on things but vowed that no matter what, we would always be open and honest with each other and work through any difficulties. That has been us in a nut shell. What you see is what you get. Big hearts, absolutely crazy, fun, loving, encouraging women. We laugh and work hard at the same time and becoming Harmony Queens this year was amazing!

I know that I wouldn't be doing any of these things without the people in my life who deserve extra thank yous, so here we go...

Thank yous

Mom, thank you for always being my best friend and my biggest cheerleader. I owe all of this to you!

Chris Parker and Ellen Flynn, you are my chosen sisters and I am more grateful for you both than words can say.

Lorie and Mary Ann, forever my family

by love and I thank you for always being there.

Jessi Nasto, I don't know what I would do without you in my life but I'm grateful for your encouragement, coaching, tough love and everything in between. I love you!

Tessa and John, thank you both for the love and coaching and help you have given me and Roulette along the way.

Wendy and Gene Spilker, oh I could probably take up a page alone with all of the ways you have helped the quartet and me personally! Thank you for just being you.

Sandi Wright, you had been an inspiration to me long before I met you. I'm so grateful to now call you a friend. You have helped me, even when you didn't know you were doing it. Thank you for being in Roulette's corner.

Northern Blend Chorus, I'm so grateful for you all. Thank you for listening to our songs even though you've heard them a million times and thanks for just being amazing.

Last but not least, Morgan, Jess, and Katie, it's appropriate to just say, because of you, I have been changed for good! I'm so grateful for the friendships we have and the music we make. Here's to the future!

Out and about with Roulette

So, what happens after the travelling crowns are pinned on and the Fanfare ends? It's time for our Queens to get on with reigning. This involves headlining Chapter shows, teaching classes at Area conventions and Education Days, emceeing Area contests, and representing Harmony, Inc. in the wider barbershop universe.

Roulette has had a busy year on all these fronts. Katie says, "We are doing our best to to give back, volunteer, and get to know more of our HI peeps! For Area 2 we taught six classes (Diversity & Inclusion/Jess, Care of the Voice/Morgan, Through the Looking Glass PER class/Lynn, Beginner Conducting/KT, and we did a Music Team Round Table and a Quartet Master Class. Lynn and I emceed the quartet and chorus contest, Jess and Morgan worked backstage, we mic tested and mic cooled, and sang at the Glow.

"At Area 3 Morgan and Jess emceed, we mic tested, sang at the Glow, and

we mic tested with NBC! We also did a quartet and chorus Master Class! We are volunteering at the SLD Convention, working backstage and at the doors for the contests and mic testing for the quartet contest

portion. They welcomed us in last fall and we were able to get scored and had great evals and we wanted to give back and say thanks!

"We did the Crystal Chords show in March, the White Sands A Cappella show in

August, plus the BHS convention in Denver in July! Next up are coaching and a show with Sing Niagara in September and a show with South Shore Saints (BHS) in November.

"We are keeping busy!"



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SHOWS · EDUCATION
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2024 ROULETTE

Wishes all who cross the stage the BEST of luck!

REACH OUT NOW TO BOOK YOUR EVENT!
Contact: Jess @ sunflower24269@gmail.com

2024 HARMONY QUEENS OF HARMONY, INC.

QR Code: Roulette Merch! Scan to order!



Roulette discovered their server sings in her school a cappella group so they roped her into a tag. She said it was "the most awesome thing she's ever experienced!"

4th Place **Blue Phoenix**



2nd Place **Legacy**



5th Place **Just Sayin'**



3rd Place **High Gear**





ONYX

A Cappella Showcase

Kelly Thomas, Amy Chop, Michelle Odendahl, Jenn Haines

SWEET LIFE • Sounds of the Seacoast
Samantha Wiggin, Andrea Bossie, Wendy McCoolle, Karen Rourke



DAPHODYLS

Sisters of Sound & Unaccompanied Minors

Hallie Reimschiessel, Hanan Geda,
Daphne Gunasekera, Olivia Fontana



RETROSPECT • Area 4 Associates

Peggi Starkey, Mirinda Krueger, Kelsey
Braiden, Lou Ann Bobrovetski

[2024 Quartet Finals Official Scoring Summaries](#)
[2024 Quartet Semi-Finals Official Scoring Summaries](#)



SASSAFRASS • Liberty Belles

Kristina Thompson, Anne Bureau, Monica
Walsh, Charissa Wilson



LIMITLESS • St. Louis Vocal Project
Rachel Lundberg, Emily Oppenhuizen, Sara Gay, Nanette Peters



ANGEL'S ENVY • Atlanta Harmony Celebration! & Bella Nova
Judy Rector, Sharon Ehrisman, Amanda Cornaglia, Kristina Adams



THE NO DRAMA LLAMAS • Music City Sound
Kat Greene, Jennifer Palus, Denice French, Sheryl York



ZEST
Crystal Chords & Harmony Falls
Karla Terry, Brooke Robinson, Ann Wilcox, Jessica Rhodes



4/4 A TIME • Atlanta Harmony Celebration & Coastal Voices
Kathy Rall, Ellen Messer, Suzanne Settles, Kim Johnston



SWEET ADDICTION • Area 4 Associates
Kathleen Harris, Carol Christiansen, Brenda Krueger, Mindy Juedes



THE SHORT LIST
Niagara Frontier Chord Authority & Area 6 Associates
Rhonda Payton, Britney Hoch, Juliet Collins, Betsy Walits



SERENADE
Sisters of Sound
Cindy Hunt,
Shannon Shelton-Muller,
Katie Rosenblad,
Diana Anderson



IN A CHORD • Sisters of Sound
Kristin Gunasekera, Tiana Sandh, Daphne Gunasekera, Alex Riehl



SAPPHIRE
A Cappella Showcase
Mary Gareau, Nicole Negus, Susanne Hasulo, Amy Patterson



SPARX • Vocal Moxie
Paige Sgrignoli, Dayle Ann Kerrigan,
Kathy Barnett, Andi Rostel



VIVACE!
Crystal Chords,
Northern Blend Chorus
& Area 3 Associates
Donna McKay,
Amy DePerna,
Lorie Autote,
Jessica Nasto



INTONATIONS
New England Voices in Harmony
Katrine Dickau, Maria Gabriella,
Nanda Landers, Deanna Dean

BLUE PHOENIX
Lake Ridge
Legacy Chorus
Rilea Lombardy,
Tina Lowe,
Beth Miller,
Shanno Wilson



CONTINENTAL CRUSH
Vocal Moxie &
Area 5 and EA Associates
Tracey Larder, Claire McMartin,
Stacy Hugman, Anne-Miek de Nijs





JUST SAYIN' • Atlanta Harmony Celebration! & Music City Sound
Ginny Corradino, Jen Cooke, Kathe Schellman, Emily Christman



HIGH GEAR • New England Voices in Harmony
Ariana Schmidt, Christina Tramack, Jen Selby, Deb Green



Mic Testers 2023 HARMONY QUEENS FIERCE • Bella Nova, Bluegrass Harmony & Area 4 Associates
Kelly Peterson, Susan Ives, Joy Suellentrop, Kris Wheaton



LEGACY
Bella Nova & Coastal Voices
Gaye LaCasce, Bryn Lewellen, Alexa Beal, Christina Lewellen



ROULETTE • Northern Blend
Morgan La Croix, Jess Leigh, Katie Taylor, Lynn Blakeney

WELCOME, 2024 MBHA CONTESTANTS!



LIMITLESS
Pamela Ringo, Britney Hoch, Juliet Collins, Nicholas Collins



ARRANGED MARRIAGE
FIRST MBHA INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONS
Christina Lewellen, Jessie Nasto, Richard Lewellen, Anthony Nasto



WHAT'S THE DEAL
Helen D'Avanza, Dean Davis, Betsy Walits, Joe Kane

CONGRATULATIONS, 2024 Chorus Medalists!



2024 CHAMPION CHORUS
Northern Blend Chorus
Area 3 • Watertown, New York
Director - Katie Taylor

22



2024 SILVER
MEDALIST CHORUS
New England Voices in Harmony
Area 2
Nashua, New Hampshire
Director - Renee Tramack



3rd PLACE MEDALIST

Vocal Moxie

Expansion Area

Sun City West, Arizona

Director - Brent Graham

4th PLACE MEDALIST
St. Louis Vocal Project
Area 4
St. Louis, Missouri
Director - Sandi Wright



5th PLACE MEDALIST

Bella Nova Chorus

Area 3

Herndon, Virginia

Director - Richard Lewellen



Atlanta Harmony Celebration! • Area 6
Norcross, Georgia
Director - Ashlynn Blaha



The Barre Tones, Inc. • Area 2
Barre, Vermont
Director - Carol Hollenbeck



Bluegrass Harmony • Area 4
Louisville, Kentucky
Director - Kris Wheaton



Covered Bridge Harmony • Area 4
Greencastle, Indiana
Director - Sara Stone

Harmony Heritage • Area 2
Southern New England
Director - Bob O'Connell



Crystal Chords • Area 3
Corning/Elmira, New York
Director - Donna McKay



Liberty Belles • Area 3
Lansdale, Pennsylvania
Director - Anne Bureau

Harmony Magic • Area 4
Central Indiana
Director - Janet Foster



Music City Sound • Area 6
Nashville, Tennessee
Director - Jennifer Cooke



On Q Chorus • Expansion
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Director - Tony Sparks



Rochester Rhapsody • Area 3
Webster, New York
Director - Sue Melvin

Seaside A Cappella • Area 1
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia
Director - Judy Comeau



Shades of Harmony • Area 5
London, Ontario
Director - Anne-Marie Campbell



Sisters of Sound • Area 6
Clermont, Florida
Director - Tiana Sandh



Sounds of the Seacoast • Area 2
Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Director - Wendy McCoolle



Sunshine Harmony • Area 6
Central Florida
Directors - Marcia O'Neill, Joy Paulter



Unaccompanied Minors • Area 6
Clermont, Florida
Director - Tiana Sandh



Women of Note • Area 2
Hudson, Massachusetts
Directors - Nanda Landers & Maria Gabriella



Village Vocal Chords • Area 4
Glen Ellyn, Illinois
Director - Lynn Randall



2023 Champions A Cappella Showcase from Milton, Ontario, under the direction of Jordan Travis, served as mic-testers for the contest.

The International Chorus, composed of Chapter and Associate Members representing all of Harmony, led by champion director Jordan Travis, served as mic-coolers.



**Support
Harmony's
future**

**The melody
lingers on ...**

What is the 1959 Society? It's a community of thoughtful Harmony, Incorporated supporters whose generosity will ensure that Harmony, Inc. continues to grow and nurture barbershop singing and singers. At the 2023 IC&C, we inducted the first group of individuals into the 1959 Society. All of those honored had informed us

of their intention to remember Harmony, Inc. in their estate plans.

The 1959 Society, Class of 2025, will be invited to receive their society pins at this year's IC&C. If you wish to support Harmony's future, we welcome you to join this important group. Complete the brief form re-

garding your plans – we don't ask for dollar amounts, just for your intention! You may do this anonymously if you choose, but we'd love for our members to be able to thank you appropriately.

If you have already included Harmony in your will, please let us know. We understand

that such generosity is not a request for recognition but rather a desire for your support to continue after your time on stage has ended.

Harmony, Inc. is honored to accept gifts of money, bequests, required minimum IRA distributions, and trust designations. If you are considering

remembering Harmony in your will, please discuss your plans with your professional financial advisor or attorney and then let us know.

Join the 1959 Society, Class of 2025.

[1959 Society Commitment Form](#)

[Harmony, Inc. Donation Form](#)



2024 Chorus Champion Northern Blend Chorus shares their souls

By Taralee Lashway and Jessi Nasto

Coming off the high of a whirlwind 2022 International Championship year, **Northern Blend Chorus** was extremely busy learning new rep, singing in the community, hosting guest nights, and enjoying the honor that we had worked so hard to achieve. We had the privilege of working with **Patrick McAlexander** and **Tony Colosimo** to help perfect our reigning year performance set.

After passing the baton to **A Cappella Showcase** in Grand Rapids in 2023, the 40 members of Northern Blend immediately hit the ground running, preparing for the next contest cycle. Choosing music in Northern Blend is a purposeful exploration, focusing on which pieces best represent what we stand for: empowerment, inclusion, strength and connection. NBC has always focused on the value, unique attributes, and talents that each member brings to the collective group; therefore, our music choices become the story of us.

Our strength also comes from individual responsibility and drive, which is highlighted by our vast quarteting involvement. We are amazed to have six active quartets as well as three Harmony Queen quartets, including the reigning 2024 Champions, **Roulette**. (We are so proud!) In addition, we encourage and highlight quartet exploration among our membership.

In 2024, our Chorus goal was to take our carefully crafted compositions and capture each member's deepest vulnerabilities and offer them up to the world. Our amazingly brilliant coaches **Mo Field** and **Alan Gordon** worked with us to personify themes of independence, resiliency, devotion and hope in ways that exemplified the incredible power of music and capture the true es-

sence of Northern Blend.

This unified vision is lifted by each member and spearheaded by our musical leadership. Our inspiring director, **Katie Taylor**, says, "Having strong musical leadership in NBC has been such a driving force in the success of our chapter as singers, musicians and performers. Having two certified judges, **Lynn Blakeney** and **Jessi Nasto**, to be our sounding board at rehearsals, as well as our dynamic section leaders and musical team in **Lorie Autote**, **Mary Ann Wert**, **Jodi Gibson**, **Jeannie Greenwood**, **Morgan LaCroix**, **Anita Prather Harvell**, **Taralee Lashway**...

we are extremely lucky! I am honored to work amongst these amazing people and have the privilege of directing my family!"

...our Chorus goal was to take our carefully crafted compositions and capture each member's deepest vulnerabilities and offer them up to the world.

Walking onto the stage in Louisville, each member grabbed the spotlight and poured her heart and soul into the audience. Well, it paid off handsomely! Northern Blend Chorus was thrilled to be announced as the 2024 Harmony, Inc. International Chorus Champions, with an average score of 83.7%, and an average performance score of 84%, our highest yet!

We continue to stand by our belief that being together and sharing our love for each other can be felt in our performances.

Our championship year comes at a very special time as Northern Blend Chorus celebrates its 40th Anniversary this May. We are over the moon to continue to grow and thrive as a part of Harmony, Inc. We are currently working on our gold medal set and have some spectacular coaching planned. We can't wait to share our souls again with our Harmony family in Hershey this November.



Northern Blend Chorus harmonizes for 40 years: A Legacy of Song and Sisterhood

By Anita Prather Harvell, PR Chair

Forty years ago, as *We Are the World* united voices across the globe for famine relief and *Back to the Future* soared at the box office, a different kind of harmony began to form in the North Country. It was 1985, a year of iconic pop culture and significant global events, and in Watertown, a group of enthusiastic singers, drawn by the unique challenge and joy of barbershop, came together to form what would become **Northern Blend Chorus**. This year, the chorus proudly marks its 40th anniversary, a testament to their enduring passion, dedication, and the unbreakable bonds of friendship forged through song.

The much-anticipated 40th Anniversary Celebration and Show was a resounding success, drawing nearly 80 enthusiastic attendees, including former members, family, and friends. The evening was made even more special by the presence of distinguished guests, including **International President Gaye LaCasce** and **Area 3 Director Sarah Thorne-Miller**, whose attendance underscored the significance of this milestone for the chorus.

The heart of the evening was a joyous celebration of the individuals who have shaped Northern Blend's rich history. The Musicianship Award went to **Hazel Coughlin**, the Dazzle Award was proudly presented to her sister, **Jade Coughlin**, and the coveted Banana Award for a silly and memorable moment went to **Kathy Youmell Wiley**.

A highlight of the night was the well-deserved recognition of **Mary Ann Wert** as the 2025 Barbershopper of the Year. A true cornerstone of the chorus, Mary

Ann is also a charter member and was honored with her 40-year pin, a testament to her remarkable dedication.

The celebration was also a time to honor the long-standing commitment of many members with membership pins:

5-year: Maloree Daily

10-year: Taralee Lashway & Jeannie Sherman Greenwood

15-year: Nancy Coughlin

20-year: Kathy Wiley

40-year: Mary Ann Wert

The evening also saw the official installation of the new Northern Blend Board of Directors, with assistance from Gaye LaCasce and Mary Ann Wert, signaling a vibrant future for the chorus.

Musically, the night was a feast for the ears. Beyond Northern Blend's own captivating performance, the audience was treated to harmonies from several quartets: **BACKSTAGE PASS**, Vivàce (featuring special guest Anthony Nasto on tenor), **For Heaven's Sake**, **LiveWire**, and **Roulette** (with the NBC tenor section stepping in for Morgan's absence), who all entertained with their unique flair, contributing to a truly wonderful night of music. A special thank you goes to the dedicated Anniversary Committee – **Dorene Dickerson, Lorie Autote, Amy Baker, Maloree Daily, and Katie Taylor** – for their tireless hard work in bringing this memorable event to fruition.



In addition to the 40th anniversary celebration, Northern Blend continues their musical engagement with a variety of performances around the community during their championship year. In December, the chorus performed for several holiday events, in May, the chorus performed as mic testers for Area 3 AC&C and taught a master class, and in June, the chorus performed at 1000 Islands River Pride for an enthusiastic audience. The next few months include more community performances, with a coaching retreat weekend as well – whew!

From its roots in the iconic year of 1985 to its vibrant present, Northern Blend Chorus continues to embody the power of music and community. The 40th-anniversary celebration was a testament to their enduring spirit, the strong bonds among members, and the joy they bring to audiences. Here's to 40 years of unforgettable melodies, unwavering friendship, and countless more memories to be made!

2024 Award Recipients



G. Ruth Geils Memorial Award
Seaside A Cappella



Jerry Dunlop Memorial Award
Director Ashlynn Blaha
Atlanta Harmony Celebration!



L.A.B.S.S. Trophy
Sisters of Sound



Montreal City Voices Tait Trophy
Liberty Belles Chorus



MacIntosh Award
Bluegrass Harmony



Audience Entertainment Choice
Serenade



Jeanne O'Connor International
Chorus Championship Trophy
Northern Blend Chorus



Skidge Heath Memorial Award
Director Katie Taylor
Northern Blend Chorus



Harmony's Future Award
Daphodyls



Accord Award
Blue Phoenix



Findlay Plaque
RetroSpect



Young at Heart Award
Continental Crush



2024 Award Recipients

Each year during our International Convention and Contest we recognize individuals and ensembles who have distinguished themselves through service to Harmony, Inc. and the broader barbershop and/or a cappella community. At our 2024 Convention in Louisville, we recognized:

Sandi White International Membership Award The Over Tones, Inc.

This award recognizes the Chapter that attains the highest percentage in membership growth during the previous membership year.

The Over Tones, Inc., based in Guelph, Ontario, increased their membership by 50%, growing from 13 to 26 members between IC&C 2023 and 2024 thanks to a culture that balances achievement and enjoyment and a pair of dynamite marketing campaigns.

"We're a tight-knit, warm and welcoming group that takes our craft seriously — but never at the expense of fun! Our rehearsals are filled with laughter, celebration, and a sense of camaraderie that ensures every member is included in the joy of singing," says **Chapter President Karen Atkinson**.

Reflecting on the successful recruitment campaign, Karen says, "The key to this remarkable growth is the warm, supportive environment fostered by our members and leadership teams. New members were seamlessly integrated into chorus life, encouraged to contribute based on their musical or other talents — whether by joining the Music Team or helping with tasks like running the 50/50 draw. They were quickly placed on the risers, with weekly director's notes sent to keep them in the loop, and the first hour of each rehearsal was dedicated to their integration. The audition process, carefully guided by our director, was both thorough and considerate, ensuring a welcoming experience. Prospective members saw firsthand that there was a place for everyone, and that all were embraced with open arms."

As they approach their 60th Anniversary next year, The Over Tones are excited to celebrate this remarkable milestone with an exciting lineup of activities to mark the occasion. Be sure to [follow along on social media](#) as they regularly post on their activities!



The Over Tones, Inc. — Sandi White International Membership Award;

Sam O'Neill — Youth Member of the Year;
Linda Muise — President's Award; and
Steve Tramack — Harmony Distinction Award

I'm delighted to share the award recipients' unique HI-Stories and their perspectives on Growing Harmony through growing our members, our organization, or the Growing Harmony fund.
— By Teri Allred, Marketing Team Manager

Harmony for Young Women Youth Member of the Year Award Sam O'Neill



This award is given to a youth member in recognition of their involvement in chapter, Area, and/or Harmony, Inc. as a whole.

"Sam is one of those people who has a passion to learn and grow, has a genuine love for singing our style of music AND loves to share that passion with others. Whether it's helping, through volunteering at AC&C and IC&C, leading by teaching and singing tags with members at rehearsal and anyone and everyone at conventions, or inspiring by actions that push past her comfort zone, Sam has made a real impact. Her dedication and hard work makes her a role model for other young members. Sam doesn't just participate — she inspires, and that's what makes her so deserving of this recognition!" says

A Cappella Showcase Director Jordan Travis.

The Key-Note asked Sam to share a little about how she came to be involved in Harmony and what motivates her to throw herself so enthusiastically into growing Harmony:

TKN: Receiving the Youth Member of the Year award recognizes the many hours you've devoted to Harmony. Do you have a special memory from a Harmony event you'd like to share?

SAM: *In Michigan 2023, I was backstage for the whole contest and I remember when we started singing What a Dream Can Do, I was standing there with all of these Harmony Queens that I admire so much like Katie Taylor, Lynn Blakeney, Jean O'Connor, all of Take 4, and lots more. Getting to stand in a circle and sing with all of these incredible people was so freakin' cool and just reminded me why I love barbershoping so much.*

TKN: What's your favorite song performed by the Minor Chords and why?

SAM: *Go the Distance. I was around BHS long before Harmony and loved Vocal Spectrum as a kid and this was their arrangement. It was also the the first song I ever sang with Minor Chords and my first ever IC&C. My grandfather was also at that contest; it was the only time he was ever in the audience while I was singing. I remember sitting with him through the whole contest, watching my mom competing and seeing the biggest smile on his face for both of us.*

TKN: As we Grow Harmony, what would you like others to know about our organization?

SAM: *I think for me barbershoping has been my whole life. It's a way to meet so many amazing people. It brings me so much joy to be active in barbershop and to see so many people, especially youth, find lifelong friends and an incredible support system through barbershop.*

TKN: Any other thoughts you'd like to share about Harmony, Inc.?

SAM: *Being around BHS for my entire life I always watched my male family members and friends on stage and always wanted to be able to do that. When I was introduced to Harmony, Inc., it was so exciting to see I could be that person on stage in contests and shows and that I could have a chance to do something I'd watched my entire family love so much.*

2024 Award Recipients

President's Award Linda Muise



This award is given at the prerogative of the International President as a token of appreciation to an individual they feel has made a major contribution to Harmony, Inc.

"She's loyal, creative, generous, a great sport, and did I mention that sense of humor?!?!?"

– International President Gaye LaCasce

Says **International President Gaye LaCasce**, "Linda Muise is one of those people who simply steps up to get the job done — whatever job that might be. She's comfortable in the spotlight, but a lot of the incredible work she does has been behind the scenes.

"She is a barbershopper, through and through. Her focus on member experience at contests is unparalleled. She's got a great sense of humor, but when she's serious, especially when it involves the quality and equity we expect from our conventions, there's no one more strong-minded and competent.

"I chose her for the President's Award for those reasons. She's flexible and principled; happy to operate in the background if it means getting a higher quality result; the epitome of "getting it done" - never do you worry when something is delegated to her. She steps up (and into) situations that may well be outside her comfort zone, but she's always ready to jump in!

And now for the rest of the HI-Story....

Linda has been a member for 43 years and is a charter member of **Sounds of the Seacoast**. She has served as Assistant Director, VP Music, and as Chorus Manager for all 43 years. Additionally, Linda has more than 28 years of service to Harmony, Inc. Her service includes six years as Area 2 Director, four years on the IBOD, six years as the International Parliamentarian, and 25 years on the Area 2 Council.

In 2005, she became a Certified Administrative Judge (Chairman of Judges) and served as a category specialist for twelve years. In 2019, she became one of seven pioneer women certified as judges for BHS.

A retired civilian administrator for the US Navy, she is currently doing part-time bookkeeping. Besides her service to Harmony, Inc., she is a volunteer at the polls and for several non-profit organizations. As a Justice of the Peace, she officiates weddings, including eight current or former members of Sounds of the Seacoast. When not actively engaged in her volunteer efforts, she dotes on her ten nieces and nephews, three of whom are music educators.

Linda's HI-Story demonstrates her dedication as a volunteer not only with Harmony, but several organizations. Asked what inspires her to volunteer she responds, "My parents were great examples of selflessness and giving back. It's been my modus operandi all my life. I'm lucky to have retired early. I have the ability to pick and choose what I want to do every day. For everything Harmony, Inc. has given me (and other members), and my desire to help keep it going, I gladly choose to give the bulk of my time to HI."

Asked what she loves about it, Linda responded, "Most importantly, the sisterhood, the life-long friendships, and the fact that every voice matters. I have been singing since I could talk (maybe before) and our organization is such a great platform for keeping that joy in my life."

Harmony Distinction Award Steve Tramack



This award is given to honor special individuals who have contributed significantly to our organization and/or the barbershop community at large.

One of the premier coaches and arrangers in the barbershop universe, Steve Tramack cheerfully shares his talent with individuals, quartets, and choruses. As a result, barbershoppers around the world enjoy performances of the highest caliber.

Catching up with Steve is no easy task as he is often on the road spreading his love and appreciation for all things barbershop. We are grateful for this chance to share his unique HI-Story!

The son and grandson of barbershoppers, Steve's first experience was in October 1981 when his father's chorus, the **Nashua Granite Statesmen**, invited **The Harrington Brothers** to be a featured quartet. The year before Steve had flatly refused to attend the Granite Statemen's show as he "wasn't interested in my Dad's music." So, his dad cleverly offered to host the quartet.

"When my dad told me, 'The quartet has members your age. I need your help hosting them.' I couldn't turn him down," says Steve. "Not only was I wowed by the quartet, when the curtain opened on the chorus, I saw several members who were my high school classmates. I thought, 'well, maybe this could be my chorus, too.' I went to my first rehearsal the following Wednesday and never looked back."

Since that fateful night Steve has flourished within the barbershop community. "I love so many things about the barbershop style. First, barbershop isn't a genre of music; it's a style of arranging music which can be applied to multiple genres. I love Broadway songs, Big Band and Jazz Standards, Rat Pack era performers, Billy Joel, The Eagles, The Beatles, and Kurt Elling. We get to sing the same songs from all of these performers and styles in the barbershop fashion.

Second, there's something about the close harmony, chord vocabulary and variety, chord progressions, and the strong voicing of barbershop coupled with just intonation that creates this sense of lock and ring where you feel like you're part of something bigger than just the individual components. It's about more than just singing or listening; there's a "feel" to barbershop that creates an endorphin rush.

Third, I'm not aware of any other style of music that you can literally do anytime, anywhere, as long as you have three other parts. I've sung with people from age five to 105 from all over the world — some of them my family and dearest friends, some of them I've only met once, and the only common language we speak is barbershop. It's amazing."

As Harmony, Inc. implements our strategic plan, *Harmony. Stronger*, Steve shares his thoughts on growing our organization, "For years, Harmony Inc. was 'the best kept secret in barbershop.' I say, 'Why is it a secret?' The Harmony, Inc. experience has so much to offer women of all ages. The vibe at a Harmony AC&C, particularly Saturday night after the contests are over, is the best convention experience in all of barbershop. I'd love to see the organization grow. I think the roots are strong enough that the DNA will persist, and the organization will benefit from increased membership and reach."

Opening Ceremony Recognition

In Memoriam

Win J. Andrews - The Over Tones, Inc.
Valerie Clowes - A Cappella Showcase, Toronto Accolades
Georgette Coleman - Barre-Tones, Inc.
Sheila Connolly - Newfound Sound
Gwen Cowieson - Women in Harmony
Theresa Giddings - Sea Belles
Joanne Green - Seaside A Cappella
Dorothy Hannaford - Harmony Heritage
Mary Hartman - Sing Niagara
Nelle Hill - Harmony, Inc. member and wife of Charlie Hill
Betsy Kohmescher - Rochester Rhapsody Chapter
Mary M. Levasseur - Harmony Heritage
Sandy Lewis - Barre-Tones, Inc.
Sheena McGuigan - A Cappella Showcase
Barbara McKeever - Northern Blend
Pauline Morehouse - ScotianAires
Nan Muddle - 1979 Harmony Queens The Spirit of Harmony
Dianne Pethick - International President 1978-1979,
Peterborough Harmony Singers
Jean Snow - Barre-Tones, Inc.
Helen Wilson - Newfound Sound
Meg Wrigley - Liberty Belles



Judge Emerita Sandra Morris

This status was created to recognize an honoree's positive impact on the judging program, through length of service, leadership, innovation, or other accomplishments.

Sandra served as a Secretary/Timekeeper from 1986, subsequently certifying in the Chairman of Judges category in 1990. She supported our contests as a certified Chairman of Judges for 18 years before retiring. She served 14 years of those years on the International Contest & Judging Committee in various roles, including nine years as Category Director. Importantly, she led our training and transition to the computerized scoring program that served us well for over 20 years until it was retired last year.

Years of Service Recognition

Bev Jackson, Retiring New Chapter Development Coordinator (35 Years)	Linda Briggs, International Convention & Contests Registration Manager (10 Years)
Roxanne Powell, Editor The Key-Note/HI Note (10 Years)	Teresa Weatherbee, Performance Category Specialist (10 Years)
	Sue Novosad, Training Coordinator (10 Years)

Years of Membership

50 Year members

To mark our gratitude for the devotion of Harmony's 50+ year members, the following members are awarded Gold Status:

Mary Marek
Ellyn Hakomaki
Sandra Venditti

New Friends

New Chapters

Spirit of Michigan

Prospective Chapters

Tri-State A Cappella



Parade of Champions 2024



ASSOCIATION OF HARMONY QUEENS CHORUS



LIVEWIRE (2015)



CHANGE OF HEART (1999)



TAKE 4 (2022)
w/Tessa Walker HOT PURSUIT (2019)



FIERCE (2023)



SHOWCASE(2009)



SYNCHRONICITY (2004)



TAKEN FOR GRANITE (2016)



FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE (1996)



MOONSTRUCK (2014)



2023 CHORUS CHAMPS A CAPPELLA SHOWCASE

COMING SOON! IC&C 2025 in HERSHEY, PA

Convention Corner



Hershey, here we come!

Time to make those to-do lists and prepare for our 2025 International Convention and Contest!

- Want to hear from our Convention Team? Mark your calendar for the *Know Before You Go Call* scheduled for August 21, 2025 at 7 p.m. ET.
- Want to support your favorite chorus, quartet, coach or barbershop bestie? Purchase a Big Screen Ad. Cost for Harmony, Inc members, quartets or chapters is \$35. Click [here](#) to purchase and submit your ad!
- Want to get all dressed up in your favorite fancy finery? Make plans to attend Champions in Blue: A Sapphire Soirée on Friday, November 7. This amazing event celebrates 65 Years of Quartet Champions! Cocktails at 7:30 Show time at 8:30. The cost to attend is included in your AEP price!
- Need a room? Hotel Reservations are being accepted through September 17, 2025 – follow the steps outlined [HERE](#) to make your reservation at Hershey's Lodge. Click [here](#) for the FAQs about Hershey Lodge.
- Need an AEP? Follow your chorus' procedures to ensure your AEP is ordered. All Events Pass Early Bird pricing of \$195 through September 1, 2025. Youth Members attend IC&C without cost as the Steve Hagerdon Bright Future Fund covers the AEP fees.
- Want to know all the latest info? Check out our dedicated webpages [HERE](#)!

TUNE UP TIPS

Dates and Deadlines to Remember:

- August 21, 2025 - Get all the details on IC&C 2025 with the 2025 *Know Before You Go* call at 7 p.m. ET.
- August 31, 2025 - Last day for Early Bird AEP pricing (price goes up \$10 per AEP after this date)
- September 17, 2025 - Last day to make your Hershey Lodge room reservation
- September 30, 2025 - Last day to purchase Saturday night dinner tickets
- October 1, 2025 - Last day to purchase a Big Screen Ad
- October 7, 2025 - Last day to submit your song registration (for competing quartets and choruses)
- October 31, 2025 - Last day for online AEP orders

Your presence is requested for
Champions in Blue:
A Sapphire Soirée
Celebrating 65 Years of Quartet Champions

Friday, November 7, 2025
Cocktail Hour: 7:30 pm
Show Time: 8:30 pm
The Great American Hall, Hershey Lodge

Hosted by:
Association of
Harmony Queens

2024 IC&C Chorus Champions
Northern Blend Chorus
*beams with delight at the realization that
their dream is fulfilled.
Congratulations!*



We will all remember fondly the time we celebrated Harmony in Louisville ...
and look forward to seeing you all again in November in Hershey, Pennsylvania!