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By Tyler West For the Herald

## The Leader of the Band: Winner continues tradition of Pumpkin Show Band

In 1982, three years after it was founded, the Circleville Pumpkin Show Band came under the directorship of Clifford Kerns. After Kerns, a Circleville High School graduate, served in World War II and graduated from college, he proceeded to teach in the Circleville school system for over 20 years. A staple of the community,

Kerns directed the Pumpkin Show Band for 24 years.

Kerns passed away eight years later at the age of 90.

In 2006, Kerns passed the baton to current director David Winner. Winner remembers the conversation he had with Kerns when the idea first came up.

"In 2006, Mr. Kerns was losing his vision," Winner said. "He didn't feel like he could do it anymore. He had been trying to do it with more lights and more help. He came to me and we talked at the Pumpkin Show. He asked me if I would be interested in directing the band."

Initially hesitant, Winner decided it was the right time. While the responsibility was daunting, Winner says it was the faith of his wife, along with Kerns, that led him to accept the position.

"I thought, 'Man, that's a lot of responsibility,'" Winner said. "I didn't know if I was smart enough or if I had the time but he told me, 'You can do it.' I talked to my wife and we decided to make that commitment. It was pretty much his decision and he announced it at the Christmas concert in 2005. When he announced it, there was a big gasp from the crowd."

The overriding factor that led him to accept the position was Winner's respect for the selflessness of his community. The band consists of people of different ages and personalities. The one thing they have in common, and the most important aspect according to Winner, is that they all represent something bigger than themselves. They all represent Circleville.

"We're a community-oriented organization," Winner said. "We try to be involved in community events if we're needed or asked. What's interesting to see, what most people don't see, is that when we get together, we're kind of like a family to a certain extent. We're a close-knit group. When somebody is hurt, we all try to look out for them."

Winner went on, noting how the band is made up of all that Circleville has to offer.

"We've got doctors, we've got lawyers, we've got teachers, a lot of retired people. We have people from all aspects of life, from Pickaway County to Ross. It's a far-reaching project."

Since taking over, Winner hasn't changed much about the program. Now, Winner says he is looking to expand.

"I just want to keep it going and try to expand it. We have practice every Tuesday night. Out of 52 weeks in a year, we probably practice 40 of them and we practice here at East Franklin Street. We're always looking for new members, always looking for younger members. We're always looking for people who want to enjoy music," Winner said.

One project Winner wants to continue is the Pumpkin Show Scholarship Fund. The scholarship goes to one area high school band member and was started under Kerns in 2003. In May of that year the band recorded an album. Since then, all of the proceeds of any album sales have gone to the scholarship fund.

"We give out \$500 scholarships. We normally give out one each year," Winner said. "If we do find more than one or two that are worthy, we tend to come up with the money to include them."

The band's next performance will be July 3 in conjunction with a Circleville Downtown Business Association First Friday event.

