



Zambelli
FIREWORKS

Gayl Doster
2009 IFEA/Zambelli Fireworks International
Volunteer of the Year Award
Nominated by Music for All
Indianapolis, Indiana



Gayl Doster's involvement with the Bands of America Grand National Championships began in November, 1984 when he watched his daughter compete in the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. It was then that the former high school and collegiate musician was taken by the excellence associated with Music for All's Bands of America (BOA) programming. Witnessing, first hand, the pinnacle performance opportunity provided to his daughter and other student musicians from across the country left the former high school and collegiate musician with a renascent pride. The emotional impact of attending the national championships prompted Gayl to become a BOA volunteer. But shortly after the 1984 grand national competitions, Gayl's profession took him to Rhode Island; a state without BOA programming. So, his ability to become a volunteer did not present itself until 1997 when he returned to Indiana.

His first assignment was the loading dock at the BOA Grand National Championships. The unassuming, retired President and Chief Operating Officer of Hooks Drugs enthusiastically dedicated more than eight hours on three consecutive days assisting band parents unload props and instruments in the November cold. Word of Gayl's enthusiasm and professional background spread and in 2004 he was asked to serve as the assistant tabulator at the BOA Grand National Championships. For three days, he volunteered from 8am to 11pm assisting to ensure the accuracy of each competing band's score. It was then that Scott McCormick, President and CEO, met Gayl. Scott immediately noted Gayl's enthusiasm, talent and dedication to the job he had been assigned. Shortly after that meeting, Gayl was invited to serve on the Music for All Finance Committee. In two short years, his keen eye for fiduciary management and mentoring aptitude resulted in an invitation to serve on the Board of Directors. In 2008, Gayl assumed the role of chairman of the board. Gayl Doster's altruistic motivation to serve has been without parameters. As you will learn from reading this, this man's multifaceted leadership and unprecedented philanthropic gift kept Music for All from closing its doors forever.

Even as Chairman of the Music for All Board of Directors, Gayl's roles and responsibilities have no parameters. In the chairman's role, he is responsible for maintaining leadership and board cohesiveness. He must be conversant on the mission, service, policies and programs of the organization. He assumes fiduciary responsibility and provides like oversight. He actively works to engage new volunteers, board

members and donors. He assumes a leadership gift role and encourages those in his social network to do the same. He is an advocate for Music for All, its events and mission. Moreover, Gayl still volunteers to unload trucks, covers his own costs to travel and serve in key volunteer positions at events across the country, mentors and empowers the Music for All executives with the skills amassed from an extraordinary professional career and reports once a month to the office where he assists with reconciling accounts. Simply put, there is no role or responsibility too menial or big for this humble volunteer.

Specific expertise, organizational assistance and enthusiasm are synonymous with Gayl's on-going contribution to Music for All. As a volunteer on the finance committee, he quickly learned of the financial challenges plaguing the organization. Unlike those who had removed themselves from the job of navigating the not-for-profit back to solvency, Gayl emerged as a leader. He rolled up his sleeves and delved into the intricacies of Music for All's business. He listened and learned unassumingly. He served as a voice of reason, applying the financial expertise he had amassed from a 43-year career in executive fiduciary management. Recognizing that people make the organization, he has personally hosted employee outings, as well as holiday parties. Driven by the belief that the skills one learns from music participation are transferrable to most areas of life, Gayl's enthusiasm is insatiable. His tireless drive has made an indelible impression on Music for All's events, as well as every staff member. To say that Gayl is an inspiration is an understatement.

One of the best examples of Gayl's initiative and leadership was his initiation of an organizational 360 degree assessment to measure employee satisfaction and address issues impeding a positive and efficient work environment. Recognizing organizational transformation pains resulting from the 2006 merger between the Music for All Foundation and Bands of America, he used his personal resources to cover the expenses associated with bringing in outside experts to lead the organizational check up. He regularly attended 360 meetings and required executive staff to review policies and procedures associated with employee satisfaction. This assessment resulted in the modification of numerous employee policies. Furthermore, it positively changed the culture and work environment at Music for All. Every employee, independent of his/her position, learned and grew as a result of this initiative.

Gayl exemplified his dependability when the changes in economic condition began to affect Music for All's 2009 fiscal year budget. The board chairman and member of the finance committee knew that difficult mid-year adjustments had to be made. These included steps to make substantial reductions in operating overhead. These actions/changes were adopted in late summer 2008 and made throughout the fall. Those austerity measures included taking \$500K out of budgeted expenses (\$488,000 on a one time FY09 basis and \$630,000 on a recurring basis). Changes also included a hiring freeze, staff pay reductions of 20% through the end of fiscal year 09 (February 28, 2009), program adjustments, and intensified fundraising. Once again, Gayl's dependable expertise was there to assist the Music for All executive team in weathering

the perfect storm. Finally, under Gayl's leadership, Music for All has instituted a five year plan to erase its negative fund balance by FY13.

During the first round of budget cuts, Gayl knew the organization would need to raise at least \$200,000 in private support. So, he and his wife provided a \$100,000 matching gift challenge to infuse fundraising. In order to receive the gift, Music for All had to raise an equal amount. The matching gift challenge was the springboard to the organization successfully raising more than \$200,000 in 45 days. In addition to conveying Gayl's depth of personal commitment, his challenge gift was the impetus to the establishment of a recurring, reliable base of private support. In 2008, Music for All raised more than \$500,000 in private support and secured more than 1700 new donors. Without The Doster Matching Gift Challenge, Music for All may not have survived.

Gayl Doster's impact goes far beyond Music for All's Bands of America Grand National Championships. His enthusiasm, caring spirit, professional expertise and desire for children to grow through music have impacted the entire Music for All family. His relentless giving has ensured an organization's prosperity.

Gayl's positive attitude is seen whether volunteering in the office or at an event. He is quick to learn about those around him and eagerly interested in the details that define a well executed event. Even during times of organizational uncertainty, he has never shown discouragement or lack of belief. His commitment to attend events across the country and learn through volunteerism still prevails. He has enthusiastically volunteered for several upcoming events including spending one week this June at the Music for All Summer Symposium in Normal, IL.

Gayl Doster has taught an organization the importance of volunteer management. While he will always be the volunteer from the 2003 Grand National Championships, he has evolved into an unforeseen leader, donor and mentor. Gayl's story is one that every leader, staff member and volunteer can learn from. He plays a critical role in molding all the things that impact each of Music for All's events, as well as the organization's ability to achieve its mission. The organization has prospered from his numerous gifts and the lives he has touched have been immeasurably enriched.