

Rex Conner

Biography

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In the Fall of 1960, Rex Conner began teaching at the University of Kentucky School of Music and became the first full-time instructor of the tuba and euphonium at an American university. Rex Conner (1915-1995) received a Bachelor of Music Education from Kansas University and a Master of Education from the University of Missouri. His initial teaching experience included public school music in the state of Kansas and at Nebraska State Teachers College. During the Second World War, Mr. Conner was a member of the 347th Army Air Force Band. He was appointed to the faculty of the National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan and taught there each summer from 1957 through 1982. Rex Conner was appointed to the faculty in the University of Kentucky School of Music in 1960, becoming the first full-time professor of tuba and euphonium at an American university. He was an active, enthusiastic faculty member through the time of his retirement from the University of Kentucky in 1980. During the nineteen sixties and seventies, universities throughout the country added full-time tubists to their music faculties, often referring to the "Kentucky model." It is interesting to note that the School of Music at Indiana University which is regarded as the finest institution of its kind in the world today, added a full-time professor of tuba in 1961 much in reaction to the notoriety of Mr. Conner's hiring by the University of Kentucky.

During his twenty-year tenure at Kentucky, Mr. Conner acquired a national and international reputation as an outstanding teacher. The fact that he was held in very high esteem can be documented by his appointment to the International Honorary Advisory Board of Tubists Universal Brotherhood Association in 1974. This body is comprised of a very small group of only the most highly respected professional tubists in the world. A great many original musical compositions for solo tuba were written for Mr. Conner by important composers and a recording made by him in the early nineteen seventies of a body of these works is still a "standard" among many tubists' and music educators listening libraries to this very day. Besides being a true pioneer in the field, Rex is beloved by his many students and was always regarded as a model of dignity. Rex Conner is truly an important historic figure for the University of Kentucky as well as the international music realm.

From:
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