

Desert Aires bid farewell to longtime member

By Jack McGill

Special to the Independent

Bill and Louise Kimmel have deep roots in barbershopping, a cappella, four-part close harmony singing, a uniquely American form of music. He was a member of the

Foundation Chorus in Tulsa, the birthplace of barbershop harmony singing. Her father was a member of the very earliest group in 1938 Tulsa. In fact, he sang with the barbershop icon, O.C. Cash, a name that resonates with barbershopping as does

George Washington and the earliest days of the American republic.

Mr. Kimmel started with the Desert Aires before they were the Desert Aires (i.e., just of group guys getting together to sing their beloved music). That group grew in size and stature so as to become The Sun Cities Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America. Now, after many years in the Sun Cities area, the Kimmels are moving back to their roots in Tulsa.

A celebration was at the Masonic Lodge at 107th Avenue and Union Hills with the present chorus, former members, and other guests. Former director Rich Thompson, who also directed the chorus in Mason City, Iowa, which was the setting for Meredith Wilson's "Music Man," closed the event

by leading all in international barbershoppers theme song, "Keep the Whole World Singing."

The Desert Aires now has 77 senior members on their roster representing many occupations/professions from 23 different states. They have been the A Plateau champions of the Arizona Division of the Far Western District. The chorus is preparing for its busy 2011-12 season, which includes numerous venues throughout the northwest valley. They are now accepting applications from men of good character who love to sing.

Call Jack McGill at 623-214-7500 or Ed O'Connor at 623-584-7522.



Submitted Photo

Bill Kimmel, standing, Louise Kimmel, sitting, with Bill Shaw, president of Sun Cities Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America.