

THE ANNUAL BANQUET

The high point of each year is the banquet. This year it proved to be the biggest ever with 303 persons in attendance.

President Carl Norvell in his remarks pointed out that at the 1964 meeting, the membership was 1979. This year it reached 2500. Last year there were 19 chapters - this year 25.

Three Honorary Members from previous years were present - Mel Doner, Leonard MacClain and Reginald Foort. Dan Barton received Honorary Membership this year for his contributions to the art of theatre organ construc-

tion. Mr. Barton, at 81, enjoyed himself thoroughly and was pleasantly surprised by the honorary status bestowed on him.

Dan stepped to the head table to receive his Honorary Membership of the year and delivered a statement that will be long remembered by all present. (Editor's Note: His words appear on another page of this issue in the article entitled: "Thoughts about Dan Barton".)

President Norvell paid special tribute to Vi Thompson, Circulation Manager, and Ida James, Past National Secretary, for their hard work in behalf of Atoe. Unfortunately, neither lady was present to hear this tribute.



The head table during the Annual Banquet. L to R; George Anthony, and Mrs. Anthony, Erwin Young, Betty and Carl Norvell, Rod Elliott, George Johnston, Al Schmitz, and Dick Kline.



Erwin Young, Betty and Carl Norvell look on as Dan Barton prepares to acknowledge his Honorary Membership. *Trimmer Photo.*



Dan Barton, ATOE's Honorary Member for 1965-66. *Lamb Photo.*

THOUGHTS ABOUT DAN BARTON ATOE's 1965 - 1966 HONORARY MEMBER

By any measure of human accomplishment Dan Barton is a remarkable man. In his presence one soon encounters the qualities which enabled him to develop, build, merchandise and install the approximately 350 instruments which bear his name. At 81, Dan is alert in mind and active in body. Time has been kind to him. His ruddy complexion, thatch of silver hair and bright blue eyes reflect the spirit of a young man, the man who solved the problems inherent in theatre organ building to achieve a permanent niche in the hearts of those who revere the grandest of musical instruments.

Actually, Dan earned the honor represented by the ATOE Honorary Membership for 1965-1966 more than 40 years ago when the "golden voiced" Bartons fanned out from Kenosha, Wisconsin, to engulf America's Mid West in a musical concord quite different from any other heard before or since. Dan is quite aware of this tardiness of recognition but is no less pleased that... "after 40 years I'm being discovered".

Those who approached Dan with an assumption that they'll be dealing with a "square" soon get a taste of the youthful outlook of the man; his speech is of today, often salted with terms approaching that of the "jet set" and teenagers, including words and phrases used by jazz musicians. To state it bluntly there are no flies on Dan Barton.

As an example of his active approach to today, he decided entirely on his own to drive his automobile from his Oshkosh home 100 miles to Chicago "to find out just what this ATOE thing is

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DAN BARTON

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all about". He couldn't know that while he was zipping along the highway discussion was underway in ATOE circles about whether his health would permit a trip to Chigo to receive the honor in case he should be selected. Therefore, there were some open mouths in the Baker Hotel lobby when Dan entered, introduced himself and announced that he'd just driven in from Oshkosh.

One of Dan's holds on youth is anchored in his refusal to take himself too seriously. Replying to the questions of one young lady, the venerable organ builder's eyes twinkled as he said, "Yes, it's just possible that I am the greatest living innovator--designer--builder of theatre organs. Most of all the others are dead."

Whenever he appeared at convention functions, Dan Barton was a focal point of interest. Youngsters and parents gathered around the man who has become a legend within his lifetime. Wherever he held court he showed interest in all who came to pay their respects. He was as patient with the wide-eyed girl as with the organ fan with more enthusiasm than savvy. He made many new friends among ATOE'ers.

Dan Barton experienced two distinct moments of triumph during the convention. The first was at the Chicago Stadium. As he listened to the big-scale music of the behemoth he considers the culmination of his organ building career, his face was a picture of pride. Then when Al Melgard introduced him as the man who had built the giant, he rose briefly to acknowledge the applause. He grinned boyishly and waved to the sea of clapping hands.

The second such occasion was at the banquet when it was announced that he had been chosen Honorary Member of ATOE. Dan stepped to the podium and said:

"As a former theatre organ builder, I am very grateful to the ATOE for what they have done in conserv-

ing theater organs. I am very happy to be able to meet with a group of people who are willing to spend their time, money and energy rescuing and restoring 40 year old abandoned theatre organs so they may regain the prestige and reputation they so richly deserve and enable posterity to know what a theatre organ really

was.

It's a pleasure to have this young-at-heart man aboard. Now that he's been "discovered", we predict a warm and friendly future for Dan Barton among those who know and love the theatre organ, the far-flung ATOE.

Stu Green, Chicago



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ANNUAL MEETING PICTURES

The pictures taken during the Chicago Annual Meeting are the result of combined efforts of two enthusiastic ATOE members, Bill Lamb, Princeton, Illinois, and Carl Trimmer of Atlanta, Georgia.

Anyone desiring prints for their own collection should contact the photographer credited with that particular photo. They are available in sizes 4 x 6 and 8 x 10 at a nominal cost. There are many more pictures that were taken, and for space reasons we are unable to include in THEATRE ORGAN. Address your requests DIRECT to either:

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