



Stillwater Pioneer Athlete Memorial



MAX ALLEN MITCHELL

December 17, 1914 - February 26, 1991

Stillwater High School Class of 1932

5th Annual Memorial Induction Ceremony

October 7, 2000

I am pleased and honored that I was asked to make this "Distinguished Service Award" Presentation of Dr. Max A. Mitchell. He was my mentor, co-worker and friend for many years and much of any success in my work was due to his guidance and support.

This award is in a new category for the "Stillwater Pioneer Athlete Memorial" and it is a very appropriate one. Most sport activities are team efforts. In addition to the team on the playing area, there is a larger team which supports them and make them more effective. In addition to the coaches, there are school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, fans, team physicians and trainers,

cheerleaders, bands and many others. Cheerleaders and bands generate spirit with the fans through the use of familiar yells and school songs. A special school song can be very stimulating and one that has been used for sixty two years is known and recognized by all.

"Pioneers," composed by Dr. Max A. Mitchell, is that song. The enthusiasm generated by the playing and singing that song is relayed to the playing area and encourages the players to do their best.

So, it is fitting that the composer of a school spirit song, which has been a part of several generations of Stillwater High School students, be recognized with this special award.

The son of Dr. and Mrs. Lang Allen Mitchell, Max Allen Mitchell was born December 17, 1914, in Frederick, Oklahoma. The Mitchell family, which also included a daughter, Hazel Marie, moved to Stillwater in 1924. Dr. Mitchell was to be the first physician at the Oklahoma A&M College (now Oklahoma State University) infirmary. He would continue his medical practice in Stillwater until his passing in 1950.

Max was musically and academically talented. While a student at Stillwater High he was a member of several musical ensembles and honor societies. He was elected President of the graduating class of 1932. During that year he presented to his classmates, and the school as a whole, an original musical composition titled "Pioneers." Several years later (1948) a competition was held at SHS to compose lyrics for a school song. The music of this new school song was to be "Pioneers." After the winning set of words was selected, this song became the official school and pep song. Today, Stillwater High uses this pep song at athletic and school events alike. Because the vast majority of high schools have used college fight songs adapted to their particular high school, Stillwater High School is one of a small minority of high schools that has a unique school and pep song.

After high school, Max continued his studies at Oklahoma State receiving his degree in Music. He was selected as the "Outstanding Graduate Among Men" at his commencement in 1936. Further post graduate studies included a Masters degree from the University of Michigan and a Doctorate in Education from Columbia University in New York City, New York.

Upon completion of his Masters degree, Max returned to Stillwater as a member of the Faculty of Music at OSU. He was to remain a member of the faculty for 42 years eventually being appointed Head of the Music Department. Over the years he held leadership positions in both state-wide and national music education organizations. One such office was his being the National President of Kappa Kappa Psi, an honorary band fraternity, which was founded at Oklahoma State University and retains its national Headquarters in Stillwater to this day.

If one were to look at the library of music in the SHS band department, one would find that the song "Bronze and Blue", a second school fight song, is arranged by Max Mitchell. The origin of this song is not readily known. Max was also involved in the composition of the Stillwater Junior High School song.

Max has left behind a legacy of involvement in present day school activities that is difficult to duplicate today. With every touchdown scored, at most pep rallies, at many school functions, when the words "Stillwater High united, working together . . ." start to flow from the mouths of the students and alumni of the day, Max's gift of music to his classmates engenders Pioneer Pride to the present day.

Presenter
Hiram Henry