

The King's Heralds: Don Scroggs, tenor; Russell Hospedales, baritone; Joel Borg, lead; and Jeff Perles, bass

The King's Heralds

Eighty years ago three brothers and a friend joined voices to form a quartet to sing gospel music at what is now Southwestern Adventist University, naming themselves The Lone Star Four. Within a decade they were hired by young evangelist H.M.S. Richards to assist in a radio broadcast called Tabernacle of the Air. A year later the program was renamed The Voice of Prophecy, and the quartet became The King's Heralds. After the program became a national broadcast, Richards and the quartet became a popular part of Adventist identity, one that continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In 1982, the quartet left the program and became the Heralds. They are now again known as The King's Heralds.

Little did the three Crane brothers, Waldo, Wesley, and Louis, and friend Ray Turner realize what they were starting when, as college students in Texas, they made those initial attempts at harmony in 1928 and named themselves The Lone Star Four. Within a decade they were singing on The Voice of

Prophecy radio broadcast as The King's Heralds, part of what would grow to be one of the most successful national and international religious broadcasts of the 20th century.

By the time of the program's first national broadcast in January 1942, four weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Waldo and Louis Crane had left the quartet. A year later, Wesley left, to

be replaced by Wayne Hooper. Turner would continue as a member until 1947.

There would be a number of changes in personnel all through the 1940s, some brought about by an attempt by church leaders in Washington, D.C., who, responding to pressure from trained musicians who wanted a more

sophisticated level of music in the broadcast, hired George Greer to work with the quartet. When both Richards and the quartet resisted Greer's efforts, church leaders in Washington released three members of the quartet in early 1947 and made an attempt to replace Richards.

Finally, in the middle of that year, the situation became untenable and Greer left, to be replaced by Lon Metcalfe. Again, there were clashes and, in 1949, Metcalfe also left.

Hooper, who had been one of the three released in 1947, had just completed a music degree at Union College. He was invited to return to the VOP and agreed to do so with the understanding that he could form a new quartet and have control over what it sang.

Hooper brought back Bob Seamount, who had also been released in 1947, to sing second tenor, retained Bob Edwards as first tenor, moved Jerry Dill from baritone to bass, and placed himself as baritone. The new quartet, with its unique blend of voices, would sing together for the next 12 years.

Their choices in music, along with recent breakthroughs in sound recording and reproduction would define The King's Herald sound for millions of listeners. The advent of records and stereo enabled the quartet to release quality records that Adventists and VOP listeners eagerly purchased.

Through the years, the quartet traveled literally thousands of miles, particularly during the camp meeting season, when it was not unusual for

them to travel over 12,000 miles a summer. It was a grueling schedule with long drives over the road, last minute arrivals when delays occurred along the way, constant performing, and extended visiting after the meetings.

Seamount was the first to leave the Hooper quartet, to be replaced

Jim Teel, in the summer of 1982. Teel and the quartet immediately formed an independent ministry called The Heralds' Ministries. The quartet, now named The Heralds, began to function on its own, inviting Teel to assist as a keyboard artist and arranger.



The 1949-1961 King's Heralds quartet with Voice of Prophecy speakers E.R. Walde and H.M.S. Richards. Left to right: Jerry Dill, E.R. Walde, Bob Seamount, Wayne Hooper, H.M.S. Richards and Bob Edwards

with John Thurber in 1961. The following year Hooper and Dill left, replaced by Jack Veazey, baritone, and Jim McClintock, bass. These new members, along with Edwards, would sing together as a highly regarded group for the next five years.

By the end of their time together in the late 1960s, radio audiences were dwindling as more people tuned in to television. By the beginning of the 1980s, radio evangelism was relying on short two-, five-, or 15-minute programs that focused more on the message and less on music. Also, during those years, musical tastes of the radio audience were changing to a preference for more contemporary music.

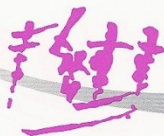
These changes as well as the salaries and travel expense associated with a music group, led to the release of the quartet and its accompanist,

They began performing extensively in the U.S. and internationally on Christian television and in concerts at churches of many denominations. They also visited hospitals and prisons on a regular basis.

It was not an easy transition. Jerry Patton, one of the quartet members who had already been with the King's Heralds for 15 years, would continue with the new group for another 22 years, a record length

of service for any quartet member in its eighty years of existence. He later talked about the challenges they encountered as they established themselves as an independent entity. It was an experience that tested his faith and, in the end, made him grow stronger spiritually. Jim Ayars, another quartet member who sang during the transition, would also observe that those first few years were challenging as they sought to establish a ministry that broadened to include other venues outside the Adventist circle of churches and institutions.

In its first seven years, the quartet expanded its repertoire to include a mix of contemporary favorites, traditional hymns, and spirituals. They also always included something for the children. The group began to win Angel Awards for the excellence of their recordings, plus one for their 15-minute radio broadcast, Sounds of Praise. The



program, created for use by local pastors, was written and produced by Teel.

In 1985, they traveled to China as part of a cultural exchange program with the U.S., the first Christian group to do so. Since 2003, they have traveled annually to Africa to present both music and evangelistic sermons under the auspices of Global Evangelism.

As an independent ministry, they have had numerous opportunities to perform for other Christian groups, including the Christian Booksellers Association, the National Association of Religious Broadcasters, the Protestant Health and Welfare Association, the Greater Pittsburgh Charismatic Conference and the Baptist World Alliance. They also continue to perform for meetings scheduled by the Adventist church.

The quartet appears regularly on "Praise the Lord" on the Trinity Broadcasting Network and on "It Is Written." Additionally, they have continued to sing for patients and their families in hospitals and witness to inmates with their prison ministry.

In 2003, they reclaimed The King's Heralds name when the VOP failed to renew its copyright in a timely way. It was a controversial move, yet one that prevailed in spite of a challenge from the VOP.

The Heralds, now again the King's Heralds, have continued to receive Angel Awards for their work. Over the years, the quartet has earned a total of twenty-three Silver Angel Awards for "Excellence in Media," including six for "Best Male Vocal Group," and fourteen for "Best Album." The group received a "Gold" Angel Award in 1992 for being the oldest continuous Gospel Quartet in America.

Today the King's Heralds maintain an active concert schedule doing five-week tours and performing 40 weekends a year. In a typical year they give 175 concerts.

Including the Heralds years, twenty-nine men have sung in the quartet since its founding 80 years ago. They have recorded over 100 albums in thirty different languages in a variety of musical styles, making them a

favorite with audiences of all ages and social strata.

The tradition in blend, harmony, and balance in the quartet's a cappella singing style, a distinctive sound since 1949, has been enjoyed by millions in the United States and over 50 countries, including the islands of the Caribbean, all of Latin America, the South Pacific, Australia, Asia, and Africa. They have sung for heads of state, governors, ambassadors and other dignitaries, as well as for those in the humblest walks of life.

As they celebrate their 80th year of ministry and look to the future, they are anxious to continue and build on the rich heritage in Christian witness they have inherited from past members of the quartet.

Dan Shultz

Sources

Robert E. Edwards, *H.M.S. Richards*, 1998, Review and Herald Association.
King's Heralds Website
Interviews/conversations: Wayne Hooper, 10, 14 February 2005; Jim Teel, and Jim Ayars, February 2005. Jerry Patton, February 2005, 3 April 2007.

Singers in the King's Heralds and The Heralds

BIOGRAPHIES FOR THE FOLLOWING QUARTET MEMBERS AND ACCOMPANISTS/ARRANGERS
CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.IAMAONLINE.COM

ELWYN ARDOUREL
AL AVILLA
JIM AYARS
JOEL BORG
BRAD BRALEY
GEORGE CASEBEER
LOUIS CRANE
WALDO CRANE
WESLEY CRANE

JERRY DILL
ROBERT EDWARDS
BEN GLANZER
WAYNE HOOPER
RUSSELL HOPESDALES
JIM MCCLINTOCK
JOE MELASHANKO
JERRY PATTON
JEFF PEARLES

DON SCROGGS
BOB SEAMOUNT
VERNON STEWART
CALVIN TAYLOR
JIM TEEL
JOHN THURBER
BETH THURSTON
RAY TURNER
JACK VEAZEY