

## Induction of John Dickinson (posthumously)

by Bob Cunningham



Rita Dickinson, and son with Bob Cunningham, presenter, and Marion Shearer DCAT President

I was asked by Tony Casciato to speak about John Karry Dickinson, who has been inducted into the DCAT Hall of Fame.

John passed away from cancer on August 6th of this year at the age of 64. Leaving his wife Rita, sons Pat and Chris and daughter Michelle and eight grandchildren.

The day of the funeral was a great indication of the type of guy that he was. The number of people at the church and not only Drum Corps friends but people from the Richmond Hill and Aurora Hockey Leagues.

I first was introduced to John, as a result of John Fox making mention of my name regarding the master of ceremonies job for The Love of Music. John called me and invited me to the Love of Music committee meeting in 2004.

I said that I would do it, but do not expect a professional job. John said not to worry and just have fun. After he and I discussed my salary I started to work on my presentation. As a result I was able to renew a lot of old friendships and my wife Linda and I had very a good and enjoyable friendship with John and his family.

Right from the beginning I found John to be a very dedicated and hard working member of the DCAT organization. He was a very honest man except for his discussion regarding my salary.

John worked and lived in the Richmond Hill area, John started his drum corps years as he said "at the tender and virgin age of 13." John marched with the Richmond Hill Hilltoppers. They were a street parade unit, John played snare drum and later became the drum major. In 1964 he left the Richmond Hill Hilltoppers and joined a newly formed York Lions Drum Corps. With York Lions, he start in the colour guard and then drum line and settled on the colour guard.

1966 he started his own printing business; he married the love of his life, Rita who he met as a result of drum corps. Rita was a majorette with the Leaside Lions Drum corps.

Along with Bob Nelson, for the next three seasons they were spinning their rifles, in shows and competitions 22 pound Lee Enfield rifles (no firing pin and plugged barrels). It was on one of the trips to Rochester, New York for a colour guard competition at the border, John and Bob decided they should declare and show the rifles. After taking them out of the trunk of the car and walking towards the customs office. They were met by several police officers and border guards with guns drawn. It was all sorted out but as John said, it scared the crap out of him and some others.

In 1967 he was on the field with Canada's Marching Ambassadors when they won the Canadian Championships, beating the Canadian Commanders and the Guelph Royalaires.

In 1969, was his last year for drum corps, he was to concentrate on his business and family. John and Rita have three children Pat, Chris and Michelle and four grand daughters that were the apple of his eye.

He was a very good family man. He was also a great fan of Elvis Presley, John and his family had the opportunity to go on a tour of Graceland a couple of months before he passed away. I saw the pictures and he was wearing those ungodly looking red and white and many other colours shorts. It concerned me to find out that he had bought them, I thought they had been a gift.

In 2003 he joined the DCAT Chorus along with his wife Rita and worked as hard as anyone to make DCAT a great organization. He later became President of the Chorus. John was the force behind the 'Love of Music shows' six years ago, he worked very hard and promoted it, to make it the success that it is to-day. His focus was to promote the DCAT Chorus and to promote youth talent.

He talked a lot about the need for more drum corps for the youth of to-day.

As a result of poor health he gave up the job of president and Chairman for the Love of Music.

John hired me as the Master of Ceremonies at great expense, I must add; we were going to discuss my salary after the fifth show he got me again.

John made a great number of friends within the Drum Corps World in the United States and Canada.

He is and will be missed by all. He touched, a lot of people, me being one of those people. I feel that I am a better person for knowing him. I have always thought that our time here is just a dress rehearsal and we later go on to the big show above. I think I can see John Dickinson, Dan Maloney and Ted Key up there right now getting a drum corps or choir together.