

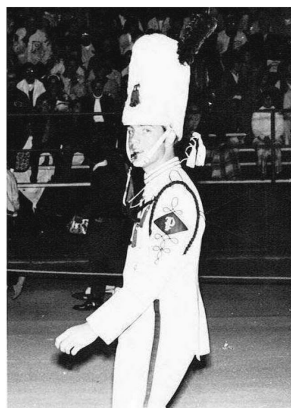
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LAPD Band

by Christina Challey

From performing on the “Gong Show” to announcing the UCLA Band pre-game show at the World Series, LAPD Band member Kerry Riddle’s musical career has encompassed a variety of



Kerry as drum major at Paramount HS.

entertainment experiences—including conducting the Billy May Orchestra for a TV special!

Born in Provo, Utah, Kerry grew up in a musical family, where both parents were musicians. His father, Kent Riddle, was a music teacher who played saxophone and clarinet. Kent taught band, orchestra and general music at Walton Junior High School in Compton. Kerry’s mother, Alice “Rusty” Riddle, was a pianist, singer and vocal coach. As a vocal coach, she helped several children successfully audition for the Mickey Mouse Club. A union musician, she had her own combo and was famous for her showmanship as the pianist for 17 years at the Fireside Inn in Encino. In the 1950s, both of Kerry’s parents regularly played in many big bands of the era. And while in school, Kerry’s brother, Karl Riddle, played clarinet and drums.

Kerry started playing the tonette (a plastic flute) in third grade. By fourth grade, he decided to play the clarinet, like his father. His parents then had him study with Frank Chase, a retired



At a big band gig.

studio musician, who taught Kerry how to sight-read music and introduced him to the alto saxophone. Since then, Kerry learned to play all the common saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone) as well as several different clarinets (Eb, C, Bb, bass) and the flute.

In Kerry’s early years, he played in the South Gate Youth Band and Huntington Park Symphony. He played in several all-southern and all-state junior high and high school honor bands. He started playing in the UCLA Wind Ensemble while still a high school senior at Paramount High School. While at Paramount, Kerry led the marching band as their drum major. As all of you current and ex-drum majors know, this is an honored position with a lot of responsibility. Just ask Kerry how he dealt with the “sound delay.”

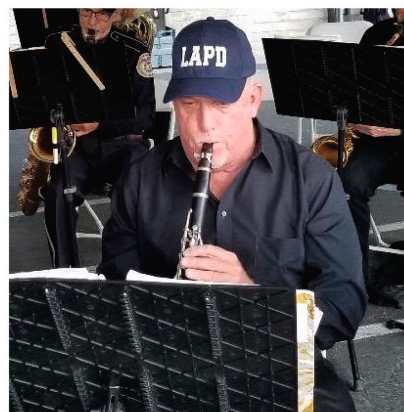
At UCLA, Kerry studied and got his Bachelor of Science degree in music education and math/computer science. He played in the UCLA Wind Ensemble, jazz bands, pep bands, sax quartet and the opera orchestra. While at UCLA, he studied clarinet with Mitchell Lurie. His years in the pep band found him playing for many of the basketball games coached by John Wooden. And, as a multi-talented musician, Kerry took a summer job working as a cook in Oaks Tavern in Frontierland at Disneyland!

After college, Kerry stopped playing music for 30 years, while focusing on his career in IT and QuickBooks consulting. In 2012, he started playing again,

and decided he wanted to study with someone who taught jazz improvisation. He found Kyle O’Donnell, a graduate of the University of North Texas, teaching in Los Angeles. He said Kyle gave him a solid foundation for jazz soloing, and connected him with the Los Angeles jazz community.

Today, along with playing with the Los Angeles Police Concert and Jazz Bands, Kerry plays with several big bands, the Santa Monica College Wind Ensemble, the Palisades Symphony, a woodwind quintet and several sax quartets. He says he enjoys all but a few styles of music, and listens to all the greats for inspiration. He also likes to travel when he can break away from all his music commitments.

For more information about the Band, please contact Jim Starr, executive director, at sngcop@aol.com. See our website at www.lasown.com. For greatly appreciated donations, please go to www.lapolicefoundation.org, and in the “Comments/memo box,” put “for the Band.” ♦



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