

Bob Eckman joined SPEBSQSA, Inc. in 1985 while working in Dover, Delaware. He was subjected to this first rehearsal of the Diamond Statesmen by fellow Playtex, Inc. employees Len Dornberger and Phil Belt. The Director, Gene Anderson, insisted Bob sing Baritone since he could read music. Since Bob had no ear for the Baritone part, he had to learn all the music by rote. It was his last stand as a Bari. Bob had several leadership roles in the chapter, including a 3-month stint as President before he moved to Northern Virginia in April 1987.

But that was not Bob's first barbershopping experience. In college (University of Maine), the fraternities had a chorus contest. His fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon, won first place singing a long forgotten barbershop song. A later invitation to a chapter meeting in Baton Rouge did not hook him. That was to come later in Dover.

Bob's musical ability is inherited from his father and grandmother, who was a piano teacher. Bob's Uncle Bob was a talented pianist and played in jazz bands before his death in WWII. Bob's Dad was a flutist, playing in a Division band in WWII and later in community bands in Wilmington, DE, Bob's hometown. Bob began singing in the youth choir at church well before his voice changed. He took piano lessons, which didn't take, but he did play clarinet in Jr. and Sr. High School. His non-barbershop singing experience includes several church choirs, the Wichita Symphony Chorus and currently, the Virginia Consort Festival Chorus.

After moving to Springfield, VA in 1987, Bob took time off from Barbershop, but, at the urging of his wife, Maggie, they attended the 1988 Spring Tonic of the Alexandria Harmonizers. He was blown away by their Toyland set. After attending the following week's Guest Night, he was hooked. Bob's first competition experience was the 1989 International Convention in Kansas City, where the chorus won it's second Gold Medal. First contest, first Gold Medal, cool!

Bob was now singing Lead as that was much easier than Bari. However, the Harmonizer's arrangements were so high, he finally moved to bass, which was his natural voice range and which he had the ear for. As Bob said, "I improved both sections". Bob went on to have many wonderful memories with the Harmonizers, including more Gold Medal Moments, appearances at Wolf Trap and the Kennedy Center Honors, and the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in France.

In 2011, Bob & Maggie moved to Lake Monticello, Virginia, near Charlottesville. The 2 ½ hour commute to chorus rehearsals was not in the retirement plan so Bob retired from the chorus but is still a proud chapter member.

Administratively in Alexandria, Bob has been chapter Treasurer, Board Member at Large, and Logistics Manager (i.e. truck driver and loadmaster). Bob became involved in District affairs when he took on the role of Events Team Treasurer in 2006. He was elected District Treasurer in 2007, a position he held for 10 years until he was elected Executive Vice President in 2017. He is currently District President. He was elected to DELASUSQUEHUDMAC in 2009 and named to the District Hall of Honor in 2018.

When he is not "doing Barbershop stuff", he claims to be in retirement a professional volunteer, volunteering at Monticello, Habitat for Humanity, the Lake Monticello Beautification Corps, and the Virginia Master Gardener program with Maggie.

Bob & Maggie have 3 children; Rob (GE), Sarah (MD National Guard, professional flutist), and Jamie (Microsoft), and 5 grandchildren who think a vacation at the Lake with Nana and PopPop is the best.