

## KENT HAY ATKINS

There is a new guy in the baritone section. He is new to the Chordsmen and he is new to Wilmington. Kent Atkins and his wife Alison recently moved here from Kansas. The Pricketts provided some assistance in the move and Charlie introduced Kent to the Holiday Chorus. Kent liked both what he saw and heard and forthwith joined our happy little band.

Kent was born and raised in Fort Scott, Kansas. His father, Martin Atkins, and his mother, the former Virginia Sample, were likewise born and raised in Fort Scott, a railroad town in central Kansas. His dad was an insurance agent in Fort Scott and his mother was a social worker. His mother was an active lady taking Kent “everywhere” and instilling in him a wide array of interests and a spirit of adventure. Kent has a sister Karen, an RN and a resident of Kansas.

In high school he played trombone, but gave this up so that he could participate in vocal music programs that he found more rewarding. One day he was listening to the radio and he heard a program where they were discussing a quartet contest. On this program he heard songs by the Four Harsemen and the Confederates. He was blown away by the ringing chords and has been a fan of barbershopping ever since. He did a bit of quarteting in high school and later in college. He sang in the Messiah in high school and has repeated that experience most years since. This guy enjoys music.

He went to Kansas University where he earned his B.S. in Pharmacy. Music played a major role in his college life. He sang in the University Chorus and in the prestigious Concert Choir for director Clayton Krahbiel. Dr. Krahbiel was an associate and good friend of Robert Shaw, and this relationship provided many opportunities for Kent to sing with and for Robert Shaw. He was offered a role in the production of Brigadoon at KU and this opened up a new artistic outlet and got him into his first set of kilts. More on this later. With such a dedication to the music scene, many of his friends assumed he was a music major.

After graduation from KU he became a hospital pharmacist in Wichita, KS. He spotted an ad in the local paper for the Air Capital Chorus, the barbershop chapter in Wichita, and decided to check it out. He says they were “just like the Chordsmen” and made him feel right at home. They were his social group for two years. He had the opportunity to sing with the Buffalo Bills while a member of the Air Capital Chorus.

He then moved to Hays, Kansas as Director of Pharmacies and there met another newcomer to Hays. Alison was from Greenville, NC, a graduate of ECU, an accomplished pianist, and a voice teacher at the local University. Kent and Alison married and settled down in Hays for 42 years. They have a son, Reynolds, living in the DC area and a daughter, Alison, in Massachusetts. They are both Jayhawks.

Alison had been a participant in the gatherings of the Scotsmen at Grandfather Mountain. She intended to continue that participation and insisted on a pre-nuptial agreement that they would attend the Grandfather Mountain event each year. So far they have attended 42 times and at least it will now be just a one-day drive to get there. This experience got Kent reconnected with his own Scottish heritage and to say he is now extremely involved would be an understatement. As he says: “the little kid from Kansas has a room named for him in Lyons Court”. This is a whole ‘nother story but suffice it to say that he has his own coat of arms and I am sure we will see his kilts one day soon.

The Atkins are very pleased with their relocation to Wilmington. They have long appreciated and loved the ocean. Our beaches, the many activities, and the friendly natives have them believing they made a wise selection for a new home. Kent is very enthusiastic regarding the Chordsmen. He very much enjoyed singing for Larry in the Holiday chorus and looks forward to ringing some major chords with the Chordsmen. Please say "hi" to Kent and welcome him to Wilmington and to the Chordsmen.