

President Jack Fitzpatrick's Keynote Remarks Delivered August 12, 2018

Gentlemen,

O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall in their first call to the kindred spirits of their day, decried the pressures of life and the work-a-day world. They yearned for just one evening of freedom and escape. They somehow knew that the wings of song and a barbershop quartet would lift them up and transport them to a happier, carefree place. As those that followed them, we have all found that same happier, carefree place.

They have delivered a sacred trust into our hands – that of preserving our music and the harmonies inherent in it and intrinsic to it. Sadly, those two cornerstones were both in imminent danger of being lost forever. The powerful influences of the world have slowly eroded what was once pure and simple – music and harmony that filled men's hearts with joy and love for the music and for one another.

As we lost those two foundational anchors of our hobby, the spirit of fellowship and fun that has bound us together have fled away with them. As the old poem says, "There is no joy in Mudville." Nor is there the same joy that once blossomed in the thousands of big cities and tiny hamlets that dot our land, as the pure harmonies of barbershop quartetting echoed everywhere.

To us has befallen the honorable, yet arduous, duty of finding, restoring and preserving, what was passed on to us in trust – and then one day handing it off to the next generation, with joy – just as it was given to us.

As a gentleman of honor and integrity, each one of you was very carefully chosen and asked to serve on this board. Your lives have demonstrated that you will always and at every opportunity give all that you have and do all that you can do to carry the torch through the world until it is time to pass it onward.

As the first Board of Directors, it is our solemn task to lead the way, keeping the path straight and true. Together we will determine the future of the barbershop world for years to come.

We cannot allow ourselves to fail.

Therefore, I wish for us all to be steadfast and strong in our resolve to keep this wonderful hobby alive and pure.

My blessings to everyone