

Anna G. Muela

Gina Muela was born on July 27th, 1962, in El Paso, Texas, to Ambrosio and Maria Antonia Muela. She grew up in Clint, a small (back then) farming town, and attended Clint schools from kindergarten through high school.

Gina started her musical journey in the 4th grade on the flutophone under Mike Marsh. Fortunately for everyone within hearing distance, students quickly transitioned to band instruments and the clarinet became Gina's instrument. Because Clint was such a small school, 7th graders became members of the HS band, competed in all the UIL contests, and were Sweepstakes winners throughout Gina's Clint band career. She was the drum major for 3 years without trying out because when Mr. Marsh told you to do something, you did it, no questions asked!

The Clint Band competed in the UIL State Wind Ensemble, the Six Flags Music Festival, and was named the 1977 TMEA Class A Honor Band. That year, Clint had 4 TMEA All-State musicians, a big feat for a band of less than 50 musicians that included 8th graders. The music literature that Mr. Marsh introduced to the Clint musicians was always challenging, and they never realized how difficult it was because he told them, "It's easy. You will be fine."

In the 8th grade, Gina started clarinet lessons with Vin Richards, who was instrumental in Gina becoming a four-year TMEA All-State Band member and UIL State Solo and Ensemble qualifier. A 2nd director, Jesse Lotspeich, was hired at Clint the same year, and having three outstanding educators and musicians influenced Gina to continue with her music education.

It was in her Junior year at the State UIL contest that Gina performed for Dr Richard Shanley, Baylor University Clarinet professor and he became pivotal in her decision to attend Baylor University. While at Baylor, Gina played in the Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, Baylor Orchestra, and BUGWB, and is thankful for the solid pedagogical foundation that was provided by Dick Floyd, Michael Haithcock, Dr Stephen Hyde, Helen Ann Shanley, Dr Doris DeLoach, Dr Larry Vanlandingham, and, of course Dr Richard Shanley.

In her first 6 years of teaching, Gina moved closer to home after being 500+ miles away from Clint. She accepted her first teaching position at Culberson County ISD (Van Horn) where she split her time teaching band and elementary music. It was followed by a brief 2-year stint at Hanks HS (El Paso) where she also taught beginners at Tierra Del Sol and Glen Cove Elementary before returning to Van Horn. She was assured that she would no longer have to teach elementary music but with more down time, Gina became a Level 1 EMT in her spare time and volunteered for the Culberson County EMS. She briefly considered leaving music behind when she was offered a teaching position by the head of the El Paso EMS but as luck would have it, she ran into her former band director, Mike Marsh, at the State Solo & Ensemble Contest. He happened to be looking for a middle school director at Eldorado, so she interviewed for the position and happily continued her music career. It was also the first year that ATSSB came into existence and Gina had the privilege of being there for all the "behind the scenes" decisions that helped grow this fantastic organization to what it is now.

After 4 years, Mr. Marsh took a position in Oklahoma, and Gina had agreed to stay as the MS/Assistant HS Band Director to help the transition for the new director. Although a director was hired, he changed his mind, and by July, Eldorado was once again looking for a HS band director. The superintendent offered Gina the position, and since she did not want the program to continue without a director, she agreed to be the interim. In her 8 years as the "interim director", the Mighty Eagle Band continued the great tradition of excellence started by Mr.



Marsh. They were consistent UIL Sweepstakes winners and appeared at the Texas State Marching Contest twice, and were the Bronze medalists in 1999.

Gina returned to teaching middle school band by accepting a job at Littlefield JH in 2003, where she had the opportunity to work with Bonnie Anderson and lead the JH band program while still mentoring HS students – the best of both possible worlds. The Maroon Honors Band earned 18 consecutive UIL Sweepstakes Awards and was chosen as Best in Class for the Greater Southwest Music Festival in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2022. They were also finalists for Class C TMEA Honor Band in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017, and OPS winners in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016, placing 1st in the March and Concert category in 2013.

Gina served as the Region 16 3A/4A MS All-Region Coordinator and has been an All-Region Band clinician in Regions 1, 6, and 8. In 2014, she presented a clinic at the Texas Bandmasters Convention/Clinic entitled “Developing and Maintaining a Rural Class C Middle School”. Her professional affiliations include ATSSB, TMEA, TBA, and Phi Beta Mu.

Gina also served as the ATSSB Class C State Representative from 2019 – 2022. Working with the State Board during COVID to ensure that ATSSB students did not miss out on their All-State Band experience was a great accomplishment and truly shows that we (ATSSB) are all here for the kids.

Gina would like to thank and honor so many people who helped her on this musical path, starting with her late parents, Ambrosio and Tonia, who always attended her concerts from the time she started playing an instrument until her last concert tour with the Baylor Wind Ensemble. Her Godparents: Cooky and Ed Prado: supportive and proud of every single accomplishment. God-siblings: Eydie, Mario, and Andi, who are more like blood siblings; love you y’all! Mike and the late Elaine Marsh, her “band parents,” who were always there for support, advice and unconditional love. Moving to Littlefield to work with Bonnie Anderson for the past 22 years was the best way to end her band director days. Thank you for being the best cheerleader and always believing in her. All her former students (40 years’ worth) who made teaching a privilege and a joy, they will always have a special place in her heart.

Gina considers herself extremely blessed and honored to receive this award from ATSSB and is grateful for all the wonderful band director friends from all over Texas.