

GRAND MARSHAL

Leading the academic procession and representing the faculty by carrying the ceremonial mace at today's commencement is Dr. Albert O. "Tim" Cordell of Edinboro University's Music Department. The Mace Bearer is symbolic of the central role which faculty play in the academic and personal development of Edinboro's students.

Dr. Cordell, Professor of Music, has an undergraduate degree from East Carolina University and two graduate degrees from Catholic University of America. While teaching at Edinboro University, he completed the Ph.D. in Musicology with a specialty in the orchestration of the operas of the Italian master, Giuseppe Verdi. His focus during the five years of dissertation research was on primary source material at the American Institute for Verdi Studies in New York and in two Italian cities, in Venice at the library of the famous opera house, *Teatro la Fenice* and in Milan in the archive of *Casa Ricordi*, the location of the composer's valuable manuscripts.



While *La Fenice* is a world away from the hometown of Dr. Cordell, it was in Greenville, South Carolina where his journey began. He is the youngest of three sons of a textile working father and a stay-at-home mother, and by his own account: "My father's dedication to work and family was an inspiration ... he never missed work a single day in thirty-two years, and my mother never wavered in her full support of each son—each on a different path in life." Dr. Cordell was the first in his family to attend college, and the second son to enlist in the military. He is a Vietnam-era veteran with military service in the Washington, D.C. area and in Fulda, Germany. The military experience in Germany and a trip to Italy to perform with an Italian band—a first trip to Italy—changed his life and academic goals, and would eventually influence him to give college students the opportunity to experience other cultures on-site at considerable distances from home.

Dr. Cordell has worked with students and for students in many different ways at Edinboro University and beyond. He is a past director of the Edinboro University Honors Program, a past President of District 2 of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association, and for two years, January 2003 to 2005, he served as Associate Provost for Student Centered Initiatives. He is the former director of several student musical ensembles at Edinboro, including the "Spirit of Scots" Marching Band, the Symphonic Band and the University Orchestra. He has also directed other ensembles, including the Erie Junior Philharmonic and two high school bands prior to his tenure at Edinboro. In 1976, his high school band in Maryland was invited to perform at the White House on two occasions for the President of the United States, Gerald Ford. In Dr. Cordell's first year as director of the Edinboro State College Marching Band, the band was invited to perform at a playoff game for the Pittsburgh Steelers. With some creative thinking and the great organizational skills of the president of the marching band, the band unveiled the world's largest Terrible Towel—54 feet by 94 feet—in Three Rivers Stadium to great acclaim. A few weeks later the giant towel made a pre-game appearance at Super Bowl XIV. It is

now common practice to see large flags and other large items at major sporting events—perhaps that trend started here at Edinboro.

Edinboro's first "Technology Scholar" was Dr. Cordell, a recipient of numerous grants and awards for his innovative use of technology in teaching. His interest in technology corresponded with the early years of the World Wide Web and the new uses of multimedia in teaching. As luck would have it, his expertise would be shared on the same stage with world leaders in technology at conferences in Europe, the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Conference on Hypertext and Hypermedia in Milan, Italy in 1992, and two years later at the ACM conference in Edinburgh, Scotland—his first trip to Edinburgh. Other conference presentations, including one at Internet World and another at the Tenth International Conference on College Teaching and Learning would establish him at the forefront of the new technology. In 1995, a class at Edinboro called "Opera" was believed by many to be the first music class in the world to use the web to publish class work, including student research. Dr. Cordell was invited to document that class in a journal called *Musicus*, a publication supported by the Higher Education Council of England and a similar council in Scotland.

Dr. Cordell's first trip to Edinburgh in 1994 would be the beginning of his quest to establish a study abroad program in that city, Edinboro's namesake city. After several unsuccessful attempts, Edinboro @ Edinburgh became a reality in 1997 when Dr. Brian Zimmerman of the Geosciences Department joined Dr. Cordell and twenty-two students for two weeks in Scotland. A Scottish newspaper, the *Sunday Mail* reported: "A group of 22 students from Edinboro jetted in to study some real Scots, as well as music and geology...these lads are committed to all things Scottish." That initial study abroad program served as the model for Dr. Cordell's successful proposal to the honors directors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education for selection as the Summer Honors Program for the year 2000. For that summer program, Edinboro professors from history, philosophy, music, political science, geosciences, geography, art, and English taught an interdisciplinary course in Edinboro and Edinburgh on the Scottish Enlightenment as developed by Edinboro Political Science professor, Dr. Robert Rhodes. During that thought-provoking trip, the Edinboro contingent of 51 people had an audience with His Royal Highness Prince Phillip. The Scottish newspaper *The Herald* reported: "Bursts of laughter from the adjacent salon prove that the Duke of Edinburgh has lost none of his talent for witty speechifying. The scene is the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, this week; his audience, students from Edinboro (*yes, really*), Pennsylvania."

In his 35 years at Edinboro University, Dr. Cordell himself has had many audiences. As a trumpet player, an orchestra director and a band director, thousands of people have enjoyed his performances and/or performances by his students, many here in this venue at past commencements, at Edinboro football games, at a musical or an opera conducted by him, perhaps at a performance of *Messiah* by Handel, or at a solo recital. He has also given presentations beyond the classroom, at World Cultures Week, the Academic Festival or other festivals and events. Honors and awards have come his way as well, including selection by Pennsylvania band directors for membership in Phi Beta Mu, the

International Bandmasters Fraternity; the Orpheus Award from Phi Mu Alpha for “Significant and Lasting Contributions to Music in America;” and the Innovative Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award; and certainly the honor to serve as the Grand Marshal for the 2012 Spring Commencement. Dr. Cordell has also received several research grants, including a grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for research at the Verdi Institute at New York University and another NEH grant with renowned Renaissance scholars at Northwestern University.

In recent and less public years, Dr. Cordell contributed a chapter on a proposed book by a group of Verdi scholars and completed a textbook titled “Encounters with Music through Listener Actions.” He launched into the book project, a book about music and the actions listeners take to enhance encounters with music, after a two-year stint studying assessment, teaching in the general education curriculum, and orientation programs during his term as Associate Provost for Student Centered Initiatives. In 2004 President Frank G. Pogue thanked Dr. Cordell for his efforts with the following note: “Your work in restructuring the orientation program will leave a lasting legacy for your administrative efforts.” In 35 years Dr. Cordell has encountered many people across campus while working on a variety of projects, one particular project of his own creative initiative started in 2000 as a Ceiling Celebration and ended up as an Edinboro Sesquicentennial project, the Expansion of Knowledge mural in the Louis C. Cole Auditorium.

Dr. Cordell and his wife DiAnne are the proud parents of two daughters, Alison Cordell Cannon and Kelly Cordell Johnson, both graduates of Edinboro University. Alison, a distinguished reading teacher in South Carolina, has two degrees from Edinboro and a list of awards to her credit, including “Teacher of the Year” in her district in 2005-06 and “Reading Teacher of the Year” in 2008-09. Kelly is in law school at the Charlotte School of Law and an intern in the legal department of the Democratic National Convention Committee in Charlotte, North Carolina. Tim and DiAnne have two granddaughters and hopes for additional grandchildren.

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