

Letter of Recommendation for Bob "Chicky" Gross for the Cadets Hall of Fame

07/10/2021

I joined the Garfield Cadets in 1979 as my brothers and I came over from the Hawthorne Muchachos who folded their drum corps. Then in 1980 I was first introduced to Cadets Instructor/Arranger Bob "Chicky" Gross as I auditioned for the tympani section. Immediately I was impressed by not only his musical genius and his perfect pitch ability, but his extraordinary God-gifted talent to come up with musical arrangements that sounded so beautiful while looking so hard to play on sheet music, and yet he made it easy to learn and remember.



I myself had no musical training or experience playing tympani, but it was Chicky who gave me a chance as long as I was willing to learn, work hard and trust him. He took me under his wing and trained me not only to be a concert tympanist but to develop relative pitch and eventually become the cadets solo tympanist from 1981-1982. Chicky's vision of the "cpit" was ahead of its time, and it eventually was adopted by every DCI corps at all levels. He demanded perfection and accountability. Whenever I made a slight tuning mistake during rehearsal, only Chicky with his acute ear could immediately notice it and with hand signals let me know the direction of my correction. He is as gifted as I have ever know or heard of. Musicians like Chicky are far and few between, and the Cadets were very blessed to have had him in the organization. He flew under the radar because he is a quiet person who does not want the limelight or seek recognition for anything that he does. A visionary in his own right, Chicky devoted a lot of his time to try new ensemble arrangements and keyboard/tympani solos which added greatly to the Cadets show in terms of general effect and musicality. I remember in many cases after he arranged a keyboard or tympani part that other Cadets and instructors would just look in amazement at what they just heard. Many times Chicky would come up with an arrangement after only a few seconds as we all just watched in appreciation at the genius before us. Even with all of this, Chicky never made me feel less of a Cadet or person because I could not initially play the parts as soon as he played it for me. He taught me perseverance, loyalty, dedication, self-sacrifice, humility and, most importantly, that I could achieve anything as long as I put my mind to it. Most importantly, it was Chicky who kept me and my brothers in the Cadets even as we were about to fold the Corps back in the fall of 1979, as he had faith that it would all work out, which it eventually did. These life lessons would be the reasons why I was able to graduate from West Point. I owe Chicky a great deal of gratitude, and there is no one more deserving to be in the Cadets Hall of Fame than Bob "Chicky" Gross.

Sincerely,

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