

# Richard Bjella

Inducted into the *Hall of Fame* in 1995

Rick Bjella is a 1969 graduate of Washington High School. Mr. Bjella went on to Cornell College earning his Bachelor's Degrees in Organ Performance and Music Education. While there he participated in organ competitions and recitals, directed the madrigal singers and other orchestral and choral groups.

Rick began his teaching career at Ripon High School in Wisconsin, increasing their choir enrollment from 52 to 184 students in his four years there. He then returned to Washington to become the Concert Choir Director for six years, starting at the age of 26.

While at Washington, he staged the first Madrigal Dinner, and he created Momentum in 1977 and the Madrigal Singers in 1980. During that time he also began the Cedar Rapids Concert Choir Festival and launched the Cedar Rapids Symphony Chorus.

In 1983 Mr. Bjella directed the Old Gold Singers at the University of Iowa and a year later assumed the position of Director of Choral Studies at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1984. Rick directed the Concert Choir, Chamber Singers, Vocal Jazz Ensemble, and the Choral Society at

Lawrence and taught and supervised student teachers.

