



Hall of Fame Inductee

Name: JOHN MORGAN

Instrument: Saxophone/Educator

Year Inducted: 2022

John Morgan grew up listening to artists like Benny Goodman, Stan Kenton, and other masters. He attended Drake University, where he received three degrees — music education, jazz performance and saxophone performance. It was during those years at Drake that John initially connected with the Des Moines jazz community, performing with the Don Hoy Band, the Des Moines Big Band and Irene Myles.

John toured nationally with the Russ Morgan Orchestra and the Columbia Artist Tours. After touring, John started his own dance band which traveled the Midwest and performed for three Iowa Governors' Inaugural Balls. John's musical versatility landed him gigs performing with artists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Natalie Cole, Joan Rivers, Bob Newhart, The Temptations, Bernadette Peters and Aretha Franklin. He is a first-call player for many local groups such as the Des Moines Big Band, the Turner Center Jazz Orchestra, the Des Moines Municipal Band and others, even the Java Jews!

John is a highly respected arranger and educator. His arranging credentials include a commission to write jazz arrangements for the Belin Quartet. As a teacher, he was the recipient of the Rotary Club Teacher of the Year Award. He currently is celebrating his 30-plus year teaching career at Merrill Junior High in Des Moines. He has also taught as an adjunct saxophone instructor at four universities and continues to teach through his studio at Drake's Community School of Music.

John is most proud of his accomplishments as a husband and father. He and his wife, Nancy, enjoy time with their two grown children and two grandchildren.

