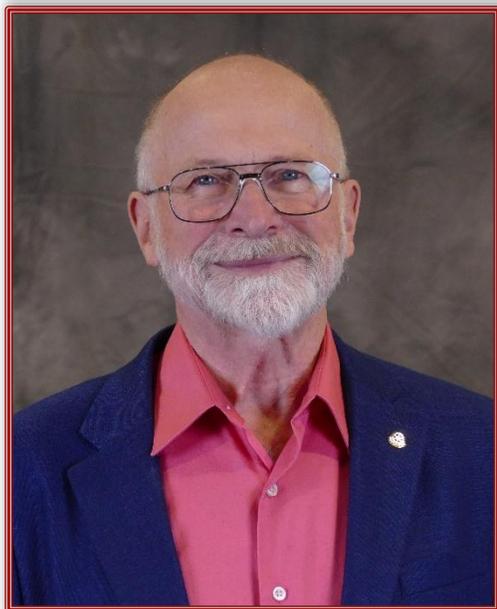


Meet Ron Klaphake - Tenor 1



Tell us about your childhood.

I was born and raised in Central Minnesota. My father initially rented a dairy farm and did sharecropping on a neighbor's land. I started school in a one-room rural schoolhouse but

eventually moved on to finish grade school at a larger community parochial school – with 33 classmates..

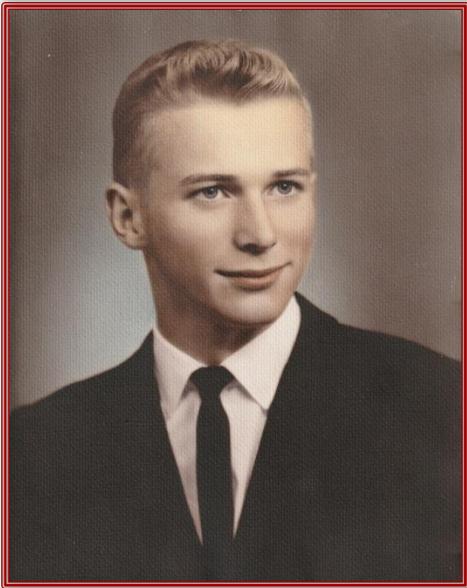


What started your interest in music and singing?



In the sixth grade, I started lessons on the trumpet and continued playing the horn throughout my high school years, and beyond.

Both of my parents, of German ancestry, came from large families. Music was a part of my life from an early age wherein family weddings, anniversaries, and funerals always involved uncles, aunts, and cousins singing and dancing.



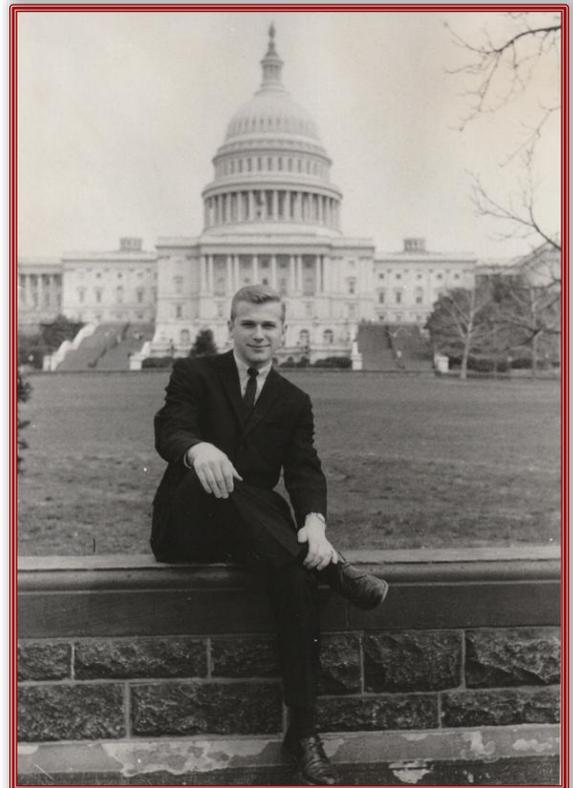
High School Senior 1963

As a high school senior, I started playing the trumpet with local dance and polka bands and became the lead singer of many tunes in our repertoire. I joined the American Federation of Musicians and continued to play the trumpet, valve trombone, and sing throughout my college years. (Even cut a couple of albums.)

In early 1965, as a college sophomore, I had the opportunity to intern and join the staff of a US Senator in Washington, DC. Without hesitation, I left Minnesota and spent nine months learning and soaking up the atmosphere of our federal government, while also attending American University.



1965 Intern in US Senate DC



I returned to Minnesota to finish college at St. Cloud State College (now University) in the fall, becoming student body president, and graduating in 1967 with a degree in political science and history.



1968 Commissioned Naval Officer

Upon graduating, I joined the US Navy, attending Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, was commissioned an Ensign, and completed supply officer coursework at the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens, Georgia.

I met my wife, Penelope, in September 1967 while on leave between the Supply Corps School and my assignment on board the ship, USS Henry B. Wilson, a guided missile destroyer. We were married three months later, New Years Eve 1967. (Saw action during Vietnam War in SE Asian waters.)



I was transferred to the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) in Washington, DC as its Disbursing Officer in 1970. While at NRL I attended night classes at American University and was awarded a Master of Public Administration degree in 1972.

In July of 1972, I returned to Minnesota and began my local government and non-profit management career. As City Manager in Morris, Minnesota, I started seriously singing, first doing a part in a musical at the University and then singing with the Minnesota Vocal Arts Ensemble which included “A Backyard Opera” conducted by Alice Parker at the University of Minnesota, Morris; “Carmina Burana” at Northrup Auditorium at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and a concert tour to Poland and the Soviet Union.

From 1977 to 1981, as City Administrator in River Falls, Wisconsin, I sang with a community choir affiliated with the University of Wisconsin, River Falls. From 1981 to 1986, I was the President and CEO of the Downtown Development Corporation in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and served on the Arts Council Board of Directors, started playing trumpet with local bands once again and limited my singing to the local church choir.

In 1986, I moved my family to Missoula, Montana, and managed the



1992 Cantanti in Missoula

Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation. Missoula has a significant performing arts environment. I soon found myself singing with the Missoula Symphony Chorale, the all-male Missoula Mendelssohn Club,

a 12-member madrigal group called Missoula Cantanti, and my church choir.

Hence, I sang four nights a week from 1986 to 2000. (I traveled with the Mendelssohn Club on three summer concert tours to Europe during that time-frame as well.)



1995 Missoula Mendelssohn Club



1990 Luther Billis

In addition, I performed with the community theatre in "South Pacific", "Jesus Christ Superstar", "Godspell", "Unsinkable Molly Brown", and "The Most Happy Fella". In my spare time, I commuted to California one weekend a month for three years to earn a Doctor of Public Administration degree from the University of Southern California.

In 2000, I left the hustle and bustle of Missoula to operate the Greeley-Weld Economic Development Corporation in Greeley, Colorado. While in Greeley, I limited myself to singing with the semi-professional Greeley Chorale. We performed with the Greeley Philharmonic in addition to our own concerts and special events, including the annual “madrigal dinner” and “pops and pasta” concert. We also recorded a challenging holiday/madrigal CD.



2001 Greeley Chorale

While in Greeley, my son and I developed and constructed the Arizona Broadway Theatre in Peoria, Arizona. We opened the professional dinner theatre in the fall of 2005 with the musical “Anything Goes.” (The rest of that story is still being written!)

I left Arizona in 2009 to retire to the Missoula, Montana, area only to be driven out by the continuous summer forest fires. My wife and I then decided to retreat to the lake country of Northern Minnesota where I sang with the regional Classic Chorale, but soon realized that cold weather, snow, and ice were not for us. So, we returned to Arizona in 2019.

When did you become involved with the WVC?

I joined the West Valley Chorale in 2023.

What's the most satisfying thing about singing with WVC?

The most satisfying thing about singing with the WVC is the opportunity to sing a challenging and varied repertoire, with a truly professional director and a group of extremely dedicated, mature, and talented singers.

Who is your favorite composer(s), and why?

My favorite composer is/was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. (I really enjoy singing his "Requiem.") But my favorite all-time work, which I have performed on more than one occasion, is "Carmina Burana".

Having attended countless numbers of musical theatre productions and concerts over the years, I hesitate to pick one as the "best."

Do you have a hobby?

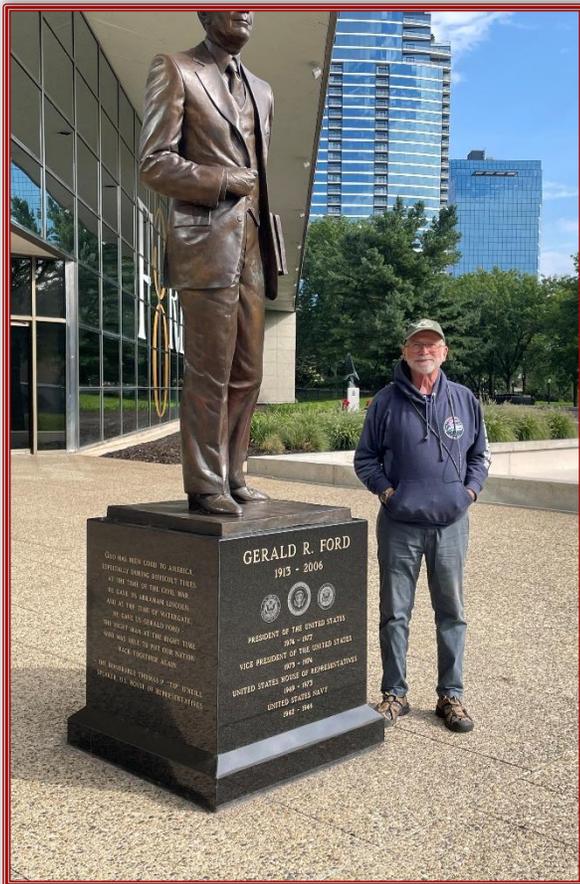
As a hobby, I like to read biographies of the Presidents of the United States, especially the founding fathers. In addition, I have been an active member of Rotary International since 1982 and believe in Rotary as a service organization. I have held several leadership positions with local Rotary clubs and currently serve as Membership Chair of the Rotary Club of Surprise & Sun City West, as well as an Assistant Governor for Rotary District 5495 in Arizona.

What is your favorite movie of all time?

I don't go to movies, period.

What would you sing at Karaoke night?

As far as Karaoke is concerned, I probably would pick a number from a musical such as “Les Misérables”, “Fiddler on the Roof”, or “Man of La Mancha.”



2024 Gerald R. Ford's Presidential Library and Museum in Grand Rapids, MI

What is on your bucket list?

For more years than I can remember, I have traveled this country and Canada in a motorhome, visiting historical sites in every state of the union and most provinces of Canada. My bucket list was to visit every official Presidential Library in the country. I finished that bucket list this past summer and have now sold my last motorhome. (My wife and I recently purchased a summer cabin in Northern Arizona.)



What are you most thankful for?

I am most thankful for having been able to experience life at its fullest (i.e., “live life outload”), having a tolerant and devoted wife and wonderful children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. (My daughter, son, and stepson are all engaged in music performance, music administration and/or musical theatre.)



Ron and Penelope at Arizona Broadway Theatre