

## R. C. “Chief” & Nellie Davidson

“Chief” Davidson, as he was known, had a powerful influence on Plainview by instilling the love of music in generations of students under his direction. Many have made music their profession. He coordinated bands at the elementary and junior high levels and directed the remarkably successful Plainview High School band for nearly 30 years.

The band, known for its impeccable musicianship and precision in marching, won many honors under his direction, including 28 consecutive Division I honors in University Interscholastic League marching (a string that under his successors had grown to 70 by 2007 and is believed to be a national record).

Robert C. Davidson was born in 1899 in Jacksboro, Texas, graduated from high school there, attended Valparaiso University in Indiana, and graduated from the Vandercook School of Music in Chicago. He directed bands in the Panhandle communities of Groom and McLean before moving to Plainview in 1935. At the time a story in the Plainview *Evening Herald* said he was “an able musician and organizer and studied music and band direction in Chicago several times in the past three years.”

The PHS band had only 30 members at the time, but after Davidson took over, that number soon grew to more than 100. In summer 1962 the PHS band was chosen to represent Texas at the Music Man Festival in Mason City, Iowa. The band also played for many community and area events such as bond rallies during World War II, the Bar-None Rodeo Parade, the Pioneer Round-Up Parade, and summer concerts, usually at the bandstand on the northwest corner of the Hale County Courthouse grounds.

Davidson was known as a perfectionist who showed concern for all of his students, whether they played first or last chair in their particular section. For several years after his retirement from PHS in 1964, Davidson directed the Wayland Baptist College band, which he had helped start several years earlier. The band hall at Plainview High School bears Davidson’s name and that of his assistant for 15 years and eventual successor, O.T. Ryan.

“Chief” Davidson was a member of First Baptist Church, the Plainview Lions Club and Plainview Rotary Club and also was a Mason and Shiner. He married Nellie Sims in 1922. They had three children. He died in 1979.

2008 Centennial Circle of Honor, Plainview Texas