

Foreword

We march along and sing this song . . .

I remember it as if it was yesterday, pulling the green satin blouse over my head, fastening my chrome buckle, carefully placing my painted white sticks and plumed black shako on my green sparkle snare drum. Once the ritual was completed, I walked to the gathering circle of Cavalier brothers, placing my hand on the shoulder of the Cavalier next to me. Together, we sang the opening words of our corps song, “We are the corps the Cavaliers.”

It was late May 1972. We were in Kenosha, Wisconsin, for our first competition of the season. It was the inaugural year of Drum Corps International, the beginning of the twenty-fourth competitive year for the Cavaliers. And it was a profound moment in my life. This experience and all those that followed bonded me with every Cavalier who marched before and every Cavalier yet to come. We are the corps the Cavaliers.

The ongoing saga of Don Warren and his Cavaliers has been untold for too long. Colt Foutz’s masterful *Building the Green Machine* captures both the heart and the history of Warren’s magnificent legacy while recounting some sixty seasons of the world’s greatest drum & bugle corps. From the opening section, aptly named “Street Kids,” through the final pages the story of the Cavaliers is one that you will read and reread for years to come.

If you are a fan, you will love this inside look at an organization that has provided entertainment and the thrill of competition in an art form internationally unique and truly American. If you are a current or aspiring member of the corps, this book provides a link to the past so you can understand the brotherhood of the green. If you are a former marching member (FMM), take pride in knowing that you are one of the many authors of this story. The Cavaliers survive and thrive in an environment that seems to doom many of the great corps, both past and present. Because of Don Warren and those who followed him aboard hot smelly

buses from coast to coast, sleeping on gym floors, drinking “CS,” and practicing from sun up until sun down, the Cavaliers continue to entertain fans, win championships, and build character—all while changing young boys into men.

Saying thank you to Don Warren is never enough, but any thank you to Don must always be followed by an equally heartfelt thank you to his lovely wife Jan and their family. While we were enjoying the benefit of Don’s time with the corps, Jan held down the fort. As much as we owe Don for all he has done for us, we equally owe Jan and their children for allowing Don to make such a tremendous difference in the lives of so many others. Jan and family, please know that your sacrifice is recognized and genuinely appreciated.

For those of us fortunate enough to have stood on that field while the announcer’s enthusiastic voice proclaimed, “Cavaliers, you may take the field for competition!” we owe more to Don Warren and the Cavaliers than we can ever repay. Other than my marriage to Arlene and the birth of my three children, being a Cavalier is the greatest experience of my life. Thank you, Don.

As I travel around the country on the *Playing with the Enemy* book tour, one persistent question comes up over and over concerning a single word that adorns an opening page of my book. “What does ‘Splooiie’ mean?” I always answer, “If you have to ask, you are not privileged to know. Besides, it would mean nothing to you, but to a Cavalier, it means the world.”

SPLOOIE!

Gary W. Moore, Award winning author of
Playing with the Enemy: A Baseball Prodigy, a World at War,
and a Field of Broken Dreams (Savas Beatie, 2006)

. . . and a proud Cavalier

P.S. I am but one of so many wonderful people privileged to call themselves a Cavaliers alumni. Being asked by the publisher to write this Foreword is an honor, but I accepted on one condition: that it be noted I write on behalf of *all cavaliers*, and not just myself.