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That's what I want to do, what I want to be, what I want to give

by Francis Gloria, President, Alaska ACDA

Have you even thought to yourself, after weeks of endless rehearsals, hours of overtime (without pay) and a couple of bottle of Excedrin, "I wonder if I have given these students something to hold on to, something they can grow from"

I am happy to say, I can answer this question for one choral director!

A few weeks ago, I was asked to write a university scholarship recommendation for Brendan Curran, a young man who will graduate from Lathrop High School in May. I was very pleased to do this for him because he is the type of student teachers dream of having.

Along with other shining recommendation letters I was given to read through, there was a response paragraph written by Brendan. The question was, "What was your most positive education experience?" The following is his response:

My most positive educational experience was with a combination of two spectacular honor choir experiences. Last year, I had the pleasure of singing under Dr. Scott E. Anderson at an All-Northwest Men's Honor Chorus and at this year's Alaska All-State Choir. Working with Dr. Anderson influenced me greatly, instilling in me a determined pursuit of excellence and a more positive way to live my life.

Never before had I seen a man so dedicated to his art. On both occasions, Dr. Anderson maintained a professional attitude toward the music, the singers and the way in which he ran our rehearsals. Dr. Anderson explained every detail in each piece and strove for technical and musical excellence.

When excellence seemed unattainable, I thought he might lose composure and vent his frustration. To my surprise, Dr. Anderson would praise the choir or sit back and tell an amusing story that was always meant to bring us closer to his overall goal. His enthusiasm and commitment to the music was contagious; soon, every singer was eager to work, pushing their skills and talents to the limit. By seeking excellence in himself and all those around him, Dr. Anderson aroused in me my own dedication to excellence.

Dr. Anderson's heart was even more inspirational than his musical proficiency. In all the time he spent conducting both choirs, he uttered nothing but positive ideas. He praised and supported us as though we were his own children. On an individual basis, he treated everyone with respect, professionalism and kindness. After the Men's Chorus performed, the entire choir gathered around Dr. Anderson,

smothering him with hugs and wishing him well. In three days, he had taught one hundred and twenty teenage males to offer friendship and love to a total stranger. When we met again at All-State, I had several opportunities to actually tell him about my All-Northwest experience and my desire to pursue conducting. Finally speaking to him eye to eye, I was awestruck by his wise and kind spirit. Later, I told myself:

“That is what I want to do, what I want to be, what I want to give.”

Dr. Anderson shall always be an inspiration to me.

After my first experience with Dr. Scott E. Anderson I thought I might like to be a choral conductor. After the second experience, I was certain. If there is a career in which I can share with others my love of music, I must pursue it. Through hard work and growth, I hope to one day be a great director and wonderful man like Dr. Anderson.