

Jesse L. Suggs, Jr. Biographical Sketch

Born in Durham, North Carolina, Jesse L. Suggs, Jr., is a proud graduate of North Carolina Central University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music Education. He has 45 years of teaching experience in the Guilford County School System.

Mr. Suggs has served as Assistant Conductor for the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra, founder and Music Director of the Jamestown Orchestra, and Co-founder of North Carolina's 1st Western Region Junior All-State Orchestra in 1992. He has served as Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of the Orchestra Section and Member-at-Large of the North Carolina Music Educators Association. Mr. Suggs served as principal bassist for the Greensboro Philharmonia and the Greensboro Civic Chamber Orchestra. He also played soprano, alto and tenor saxophones for the Greensboro Jazz Orchestra.

He retired in June 2000 and taught part-time in Guilford County Schools until June of 2014. He was the former conductor of the Northern Guilford Middle School Orchestra and the Ben L. Smith High School Orchestra, which holds the state record for the longest non-stop performance by a string orchestra (12 hours, 14 minutes and 29 seconds). He founded the Jamestown Middle School and Northwest Middle School Orchestras. He extended the musical ambassadorship of all these schools to include over 65,892 performance travel miles to Dallas, Atlanta, New Orleans, San Antonio, Bahamas, Jamaica, Hawaii, Australia and Singapore.

Under his leadership, the Northern Guilford Middle School String Orchestra performed at the 2014 Dixie Classic Festival in Richmond, Virginia. These 6th, 7th, and 8th graders performed over 14 minutes of Grade III string orchestra music from memory – a first in festival history! They received superior ratings from the judges.

Jesse Suggs was the recipient of the Maxine Swalin Award for an Outstanding Music Educator for 2008. This award, sponsored by the North Carolina Symphony, is given annually to a North Carolina music teacher who:

- Makes a lasting difference in the lives of students of all abilities and backgrounds
- Serves the community in an exemplary manner as a role model in music education
- Instills a love for music in children
- Inspires students to reach appropriately high musical standards

Mr. Suggs is active as a clinician, adjudicator and guest conductor. He maintains his deep passion for teaching and offers private music instruction to adults and students. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Board for the Wake Forest Community Youth Orchestra where he also conducts the Advanced Chamber Orchestra.

For more than 30 years Mr. Suggs has participated in competitive bodybuilding receiving numerous awards including receiving the International Federation of BodyBuilders Pro Card in 2017.

Mr. Suggs has been happily married for 55 years to his wife, Jannette, and has one daughter, Tonya, who follows in his musical and teaching footsteps.