



## NAfME - COLLEGIATE CORNER

### You Gotta Know Joe

**C**all me sentimental, but I believe that the holidays are the perfect time to reflect. After the whirlwind that was the winter conference, there was so much for me to reflect on! This conference was a spectacular display of collegiate participation, dedication and passion for our field. We had the most awarded conference scholarships to date, with a line of students ready and willing to take on dozens of beneficial tasks. We eventually ran out of tasks to give, which, at such a large conference, is nothing short of an impossible feat!

I saw collegiate members in attendance at an array of sessions, including our collegiate business meeting and dinner. This dinner was attended by NafME President Kathleen D. Sanz, as well as by several members of the NYSSMA® Executive Council. In an impressive display, this was the most well attended collegiate business meeting we have had. I believe that this fact was of utmost importance to show President Sanz and the NYSSMA® Executive Council the proud future of the Collegiate NYSSMA/NAfME branch. We are, and will continue to be, a stronghold of musical vigor for the organization.

#### Discovering Joe Sugar

At my first couple of Executive Council meetings, I continued to hear a name that rang a bell: Joseph R. Sugar. I knew he was someone important, and I also knew that it was my obligation as Collegiate President to find out more about this beloved

educator and man of action.

Joseph R. Sugar was a Long Island music educator who worked in the field for a stunning 56 years. He taught the entire existing range of music learning levels from elementary to university. A true musician at heart, he played in the Air Force Band, Military Air Transport Band, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

Long Island University's C.W Post campus 2009 music department chairperson, James McRoy, talked sincerely about Sugar's influences on the department. Not only did he help to

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cement a strong curriculum, but also he established Post as a driving force of music education. Furthermore, he was the Past President of NYSSMA®, Past President of the Eastern Division of the Music Educators National Conference, and the long-standing NYSSMA® Government Relations Coalition Chairperson.

The NYSSMA® Government Relations Chair title does not have the same prestige as President, which we always associate with the top dog. However, I know the gravity and value

of this position, as I have worked closely with our current chair, Alan Orloff. I watched and participated in important lobbying, traveling to Washington, DC, to meet with our NYS senators and representatives. This lobbying was the key foundation to receiving funding for Titles I and IV, as well as putting forward the legislative request for the Guarantee Access to Arts and Music Education (GAAME) Act.

Lobbying is at the forefront of music education advocacy, and it is no simple undertaking. Joseph R. Sugar had a passion for advocacy that was absolutely overwhelming. He fought for the right not only to access music, but also to fund it. He fought for respect - respect of the occupation, and craft, that is music education.

Sugar was an all-around man of action and duty, participating in both civic and fraternal groups. I now understand Joseph R. Sugar's unarguable importance to the legacy of music education and his unprecedented contribution to its advocacy.

#### The real world of lobbying

Advocacy was something I wanted to find naturally. When I talk with my friends and family, I can easily fill their ears with the importance of music education. My range of topics spans anywhere from case studies I have read to my everyday triumphs with my students. Music is my passion, and my life's work - how hard could it possibly be to talk about why we should have it?

I must admit, however, that the

world of political action was new, strange and unlike anything I had experienced in the past. For me, this was not a deterrent. My lack of knowledge on the subject pushed me to research, learn, and become a true advocate.

Political action is unique. It is built on laws, numbers, articles and bills. The first time I read a legislative request - specifically, the GAAME Act - my head spun a little bit. It read, "Section 1114(b)(A)(iii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C 6314(b)(7)(A)(iii)) is amended ..." These kinds of specifics are enough to make any unknowing reader put the paper down and never come back.

I quickly realized, on the contrary, that this jargon can be decoded down to a quite simple amendment. Once

a summary of the request is read, none of the required governmental grammar is needed by the average advocate. This legislation, in essence, was to encourage underfunded and low-income area schools to use Title 1, Part A funds for sequential, standards-based music education taught by licensed music educators. This was to be a historic addition to music education being part of the "Well-Rounded Education" (through ESSA).

When I had this request in my hands, approaching senate offices, it was no longer a scary document. This document was power and life-changing to students who desperately needed it. This document was my gateway to participating in the democracy in which I was blessed to be born.

Whether you are a new advocate ready to take political action or a sea-

soned advocate itching to get back onto the hill, the 2019 Joseph R. Sugar Day is right around the corner! This year, the lovingly nicknamed "Joe Sugar Day" is on March 4 at Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY. From 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. participants will continue to carry on Sugar's legacy through advocacy and lobbying in the New York State capital city.

I would like to end on an amazing quote from last year's Joe Sugar Day, from Senator Kemp Hannon: "If NYS-SMA hadn't been coming here all these years, support for your programs would have ebbed long ago."

Al fine,  
Kiersten E. Hecht  
C-NAfME/NYSSMA® President ||

## HAVE WE LOST YOU? Stay Up-to-date!

Have you recently:

*Moved? • Changed your name? • Changed any "other" contact information (phone/email/school)? • Noticed that you're no longer receiving NAFME and/or NYSSMA mailings?*

We receive lots of email and phone inquiries asking us to update NYSSMA member information in our computer system. Guess what? YOU CAN DO THIS EASILY AT ANY TIME!

Here's how you can very easily update your NAFME and NYSSMA information:

1. Get a hold of your NAFME membership card with your member number (if you can't find your membership card, please contact NAFME Member Services at: 800-336-3768).
2. Log on to [www.nafme.org](http://www.nafme.org)
3. Go to the upper right hand corner and click on "My Account"
4. Enter your email address and NAFME number.
5. Click on: "Manage Profile"
6. Update your contact information.
7. Click on: "Save Changes"
8. That's it. You're now all up to date

