



July 26, 2007

FIRST BIX LIVES AWARD TO RICH JOHNSON

College music major, decorated soldier, celebrated guitarist, photographer, writer. Rich Johnson has been all of these, as well as a faithful friend to many throughout the world, and a tireless worker for the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society.

To all who have given their time and talents to making the Bix Festival grow bigger and better over the past 36 years, Rich Johnson is a treasured icon, always on the trail of undiscovered chapters in the life of Bix, his musical idol. His efforts to bring to light Bix's hometown history have caused other hometowners to catch "Bix Fever" and join, often successfully, in the search.

His findings have also been provided to hundreds of Bixophiles around the world, too, increasing interest in Bix and the Festival. Rich was instrumental in forming the Bix World Advisory Council in 2005. More and more, Rich has become our roving ambassador, our "Doctor Jazz."

He has aided greatly in attracting name band leaders and their musicians, not only to participate in our Festivals, but also to set up jazz training sessions for school-age musicians, and seminars with experts discussing Bix's contributions to jazz. Always looking toward the future, Rich proclaims that unless we train young musicians in trad jazz, the music will one day be lost.

Finally, Rich is a quiet, modest man (with a mind packed not only with music history, but also an inexhaustible supply of jokes and sly quips). He has not sought honors or even thanks over his long years with the Bix Society, but he has earned the respect of all who know him.

And so it is fitting that this first Honor Award goes to him with all of our thanks and best wishes.

The Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society
Board of Directors

The Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society
Davenport, Iowa