

*Dave Nichols would have been St. Albans '63 but transferred to Sidwell Friends after 7<sup>th</sup> grade. His sister Jan graduated from NCS in 1963 as well.*

I am struggling with the dates but it was probably around 1954 or 1955 after leaving Beauvoir and entering St. Albans that I became a member of the Boys Choir at the National Cathedral under Richard Dirksen. We lived on Woodley Road, with the Cathedral Campus across the street. My sister Jan went to NCS, and I remember Canon Martin living right up the street from us. I enjoyed going to choir practice, and frequently exploring many of the rooms and chapels in the Cathedral and closely “monitoring” the ongoing construction.

Richard Dirksen, at the time, was in the process of building an organ which I was very intrigued by. He was a strong disciplinarian, however was always good with praising us when we met/exceeded his expectations. One day I was not factual with him and he quickly discovered that. I thought for sure I would be thrown out of the Boys' Choir, and even worst he would tell my parents. Fortunately the two of us worked it out and it was a learning opportunity that still impacts how I live my life today!

During the Christmas Holiday seasons, Mr. Dirksen would arrange for some of the choir boys to visit the private homes of people hosting Christmas parties to sing carols. What a treat, and the families would actually pay us for doing something that was fun!

My fondest memory of Mr. Dirksen was the nap of hair he had on his forehead which, when playing the piano or organ, would become his baton!