

Allen Perdue Britton, Ph.D. Biography



Allen Perdue Britton, - Class of 1932 - b. May 25, 1914 - d. February 17, 2003 From the EHS Yearbook, *The Maroon*: General Studies; First Band 1,2,3,4; Tri-Y 1-2; First orchestra 3-4; Comedy Concert 3; Assoc. Ed. *Mirror* 4; District and State Solo Contest 2.

Britton was born on May 25, 1914, in Elgin, Kane County, Illinois. He was the oldest son of Walter Allen and Mary (Perdue) Britton. The family lived on a farm just west of Elgin for Allen's first six years, then moved into Elgin. Allen married his high school sweetheart Veronica Fern Wallace on August 30, 1938, in Elgin, Illinois.

Britton obtained his high school diploma from Elgin High School, Illinois in 1932. He then attended the University of Illinois, from which he graduated with a B.Sc. in Instrumental Music in 1937, and a M.A. in English and Education in 1939. In 1949, he completed his Ph.D. in Musicology at the University of Michigan, his thesis titled *Theoretical Introductions in American Tune-Books to 1800*.

Britton taught band and English in the public schools of Griffith, Indiana and also at Eastern Illinois University. He served in the US Army during the Second World War as a military policeman and a band member. Britton had learned German from his German-born grandmother.

Britton served as assistant professor of music at the University of Michigan from 1950, full professor in 1959, assistant dean in 1960, and as dean of the School of Music from 1971 to 1979. He was also a trustee of the National Music Camp at Interlochen.

He was an American music educator. Through his many passions in life he contributed to elevating the field of music education to the same stature as the field of musicology. He developed the doctoral program in music education at the University of Michigan, where he directed 51 dissertations. He contributed heavily to the history of music pedagogy in early America, especially singing schools. To combine his two interests of music education and history he joined with Marguerite V. Hood, Warren S. Freeman, and Theodore F. Normann and created the *Journal of Research in Music Education (JRME)*.

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Less than a decade after developing the journal for Music Educators National Conference (MENC), he became its president from 1960 to 1962. It was during this time that Russia had launched Sputnik and the United States tried to counteract that advancement by going "Back to the Basics." This meant that there was little monetary support for music. As the president of the Music Educators National Conference, he took it upon himself to harness the full potential of this organization's political power. MENC, now the National Association for Music Education, has since exercised its influence over numerous political and social actions.

HONORS and MERITS

Inducted into the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) hall of fame 1986
Invited to be the closing speaker at the University of Maryland's celebration of the sesquicentennial of Music in American Public Education Sponsored by MENC-1988
The Michigan Music Educators Association Award of Merit
University of Michigan Citation of Merit
University of Illinois School of Music Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award
MENC's History Special Research Interest Group Distinguished Service award (1996)
For American Sacred Imprints, 1698-1810: A Bibliography, was given the Vincent H. Duckles award for the best book-length bibliography or other research tool in music

Listed in Who's Who in America 1986-1987.