



Far Western District

Convention Honoree

Melany Schmidt Callagher – 2023 FWD Spring Convention Honoree



Melany Schmidt Callagher has always been a singer, in no small part because of her mother's vocal skills. Over 40 years ago she entered Ron Black's life as his eldest step daughter, and that happy circumstance turned her into a remarkably skilled and active barbershopper. She has sung lead in many quartets, competing at all levels including the SAI International contest. As the director of the Santa Rosa Redwood Chordsmen for 9 years you have seen her skills on display at FWD contests many times. Currently she is the Assistant Director for the SAI Pacific Empire Chorus.

Nearly 20 years before the BHS opened the door to female membership Melany began to volunteer for backstage responsibilities at FWD contests and quickly became the Stage Manager at both the Spring and Fall District contests as well as many Division contests. This is a behind-the-scenes effort which entails setting up the stage configuration, helping with the judge's equipment, overseeing the quartet and chorus flow, managing the on-stage post-contest presentations, and then helping clear the area at the end of the event.

Any of you who have competed in one of these events has been treated to Melany's calm demeanor and gracious smile as you have come on stage. This was true even during the tragic time when she and her husband Eric were among the hundreds who lost their homes in the devastating fire which decimated much of Santa Rosa a few years ago. Melany has certainly earned her stripes in what was formerly an exclusively male endeavor. Well done, Mel!