



Joe Bonsall

Joe Bonsall was a veteran musician who took pride in his more than 58 years association with Cajun music.

He was taught the accordion by his mother at the age of nine and was playing music professionally at the age of 11. He started playing the violin at age 14 and was playing with Lawrence Walker and Joe Falcon. Somewhere during these early years he also started playing guitar.

The Lake Arthur, Louisiana born musician was a man that had his own style of music. He moved to Orange County, Texas at an early age. He then formed the Orange Playboys Band. He played with the band known as “Joe Simon, Joe Bonsall and the Louisiana Cajuns” and has played in areas of Louisiana and Southeast Texas for years.

Joe Married Mabel Duhon from Vinton, Louisiana, in 1941 and this union produced two daughters and one son; however, the son was killed while working for the town of Vinton as a linesman.

Joe set aside his music during World War II as a U.S. Marine. He was wounded on three separate occasions during the combat in the Pacific Theater. Following the War, he went back to Vinton and continued playing music.

In 1977, he underwent heart surgery but was soon back on the bandstands playing music. Joe played more than 600 benefit dances to raise money for needy people and he recorded 36 single records, three albums and 10 tapes.

Mr. Bonsall was instrumental in the success of the Lake Shore Club Cajun Music Hall of

Fame and served as Chairman of the CFMA Lake Charles Chapter Cajun Music Hall of Fame.

He maintained that to really understand Cajun music you must be of Cajun heritage.