The History of the

St. Augustine Jazz Society

# By Edward Trester, Co-founder

“The year was 1989—I had recently moved from Jacksonville to St. Augustine. I was playing with a small trio in the country clubs in Jacksonville. We played for the dinner crowd so the music was nice easy listening, kind of boring in a way.

So when I learned of a small group of musicians who got together for Jazz jams at the old Sheraton Beach Hotel by the pier. I checked it out. That’s where I met some musicians playing Swing and Jazz.

It was great. That’s where I met John Patterson, Jim Shipp and Ed Thomas, among others. After a while, we decided to form a club that would keep Jazz and Swing alive as we all agreed it was an American art form. The main goal, however, was to encourage young people to get an interest in this form of music, and so the St. Augustine Jazz Society was born. John Patterson became our first founding president. John was very helpful in getting the society a tax-exempt status with the state of Florida as well as promoting our group. We kept playing at the Sheraton Hotel and slowly but surely, more musicians joined in and we started to get crowds.

Over the years, we played at different venues from the V.F.W. to other hotels at the beach. Our membership grew and we got into a position where we gave music scholarships to young deserving high school students as we do today. We should all be proud of our society. To date, we have given over $110,000 to local students for their music education. We have tried to keep our monthly jams interesting where our local musicians and vocalist can play together, as well as bringing outside talents in for concerts. I want to personally thank Joe Robertson and all our board members for their outstanding work in keeping our society growing and to all our members for your loyal support.

Keep Swinging.”

For more information on how to become a member or to become a volunteer, visit our website at [www.stugjazzsociety.org](http://www.stugjazzsociety.org).