Education Support

American Dance

Kickin' since 1940

From the Kilgore College Rangerettes Website - History

In 1939, Kilgore College Dean, Dr. B.E. Masters, decided that the college needed an organization that would attract young women to the college and keep people in their seats during football game halftimes. His goal of equalizing the male/female student ratio had a secondary benefit - the folks would stay in the stands during halftime instead of sipping improper beverages under them.

Dr. Masters brought Miss Gussie Nell Davis to Kilgore College to create something special. Her creation and gift to the world were the *Kilgore College Rangerettes*! The first group of its kind in the world, the *Rangerettes* brought "show business" to the football gridiron. Miss Davis' team took to the field during the 1940 football season, pioneering the field of dancing drill teams now seen across the nation. Miss Davis retired in 1979, and passed away on December 21, 1993.

The first assistant director of the *Rangerettes* was Peggy Crowder. Miss Crowder was a Rangerette in the 1940s, and later returned to Kilgore College as Dr. Peggy Coghlan, the Vice-President of Instruction and Chief Academic Officer. The creator of the "Stomp", Dr. Coghlan retired from the college 1996 and lives in Longview.

Barbara "Pill" Harmon Malm was the second assistant director. She is retired and resides in Kilgore.

Mr. Denard Haden became the first Rangerette choreographer in 1948. He created the Rangerette style by using innovative patterns and steps, and developed many original ideas that are still used by dance and drill teams today. A very creative choreographer, Mr. Haden, was also a well-known dance instructor all over East Texas. He retired in 1978 and passed away in 1983.

Mrs. Deana Bolton Covin was the third assistant director of the *Rangerettes* from 1972 to 1979, and she became the second director of the *Rangerettes* when Miss Davis retired in 1979. Mrs. Covin became very well known for her emphasis on precision, polish, and perfection. She retired in 1993, but continued to play a very active role in the *Rangerette Forever* Alumni organization. The Rangerette Gym was renovated in

September 2001 and renamed in her honor. Mrs. Covin passed away on June 28, 2016, at the age of 94.

The second Rangerette choreographer was Mrs. Ruth Flynn. Mrs. Flynn worked with Mrs. Covin from 1980-1984. She is a former Rangerette who directed the Tyler Junior College *Apache Belles* from 1985 to 2011. Mrs. Flynn is retired and resides in Tyler, Texas.

Mrs Covin's first assistant director, Laura Davis, was also the third Rangerette choreographer. Mrs. Davis is a former Rangerette Lieutenant and Swingster (1975-1977), and worked as the assistant director with Ruth Flynn and Mrs. Covin for one year (1983-1984). After Mrs. Flynn left Kilgore College in 1984, Mrs. Davis took over choreography in addition to her duties as assistant director. Miss Davis currently resides in Dallas, Texas and is Co-Owner of Spirit of America.

Mrs. Covin's next assistant director and choreographer was Miss Dana Brown. Dana is a former Rangerette Lieutenant and Swingster (1981-1983) who assisted Mrs. Covin from 1986-1993. Originally from Dallas, she became the third director of the *Rangerettes* after Mrs. Covin retired in 1993, and then Mrs. Dana Blair in 1994. Mrs. Blair is the first director to have been a Rangerette.

The current assistant director and choreographer of the *Rangerettes* is Mrs. Shelley Wayne. Shelley is a former Rangerette Lieutenant and Swingster (1985-1987) originally from Houston who returned to Kilgore College after directing the Westfield High School drill team (Houston, TX) for one year. Mrs. Wayne and Mrs. Blair have worked together with the *Rangerettes* since 1993.

The *Rangerettes* are the world's best-known collegiate drill team, traveling all over the United States, and on several world tours since the 1970s, including South America, Romania, France, Canada, Japan, Singapore, Italy, Switzerland, England, Scotland, and Ireland.