

# PAS Headquarters

## More than just a building

By Gary Cook, Lauren Vogel Weiss and Rick Mattingly



**H**undreds of PAS members have visited the new Rhythm! Discovery Center in Indianapolis, perhaps during the past two PASICs or at some other time during the year. But how many realized that just down the hall is the official headquarters of the Percussive Arts Society?

The current office is where the full-time employees of PAS come to work every day: Executive Director Michael Kenyon, Marketing and Communications Director Jon Feustel, Membership Development Manager B. Laurel McKenzie, IT and Interactive Media Director Marianella Moreno, Membership Services Coordinator Lynna Mills, and C.J. Jordan in Support Services, plus an intern each semester. (Other PAS employees telecommute.)

The 2,550-square-foot office space is also where the Executive Committee meets during the year. It's where the annual billings for memberships are processed and where scholarship applications and contest entries are sent. It's the heartbeat of the organization.

But where was it before PAS moved to Indianapolis in 2007?

From 1961–1965, it was in Carbondale, Illinois where PAS Executive Secretary Donald Canedy taught at Southern Illinois University. When Neal Fluegel (who graduated from SIU) took over as Executive Secretary in 1965, PAS's official address moved to Terre Haute, where Fluegel taught at Indiana State University. PAS, which was incorporated in Indiana in 1969, remained in the Hoosier state for the next 15 years.

Meanwhile, each of the publications had its own address. The address for *Percussionist* was the same as the PAS address until 1979, when F. Michael Combs became editor and its address changed to Knoxville, Tennessee. *Percussive Notes* began as an independent newsletter in Indianapolis, the home of its editor, James L. Moore, who was a percussionist in the Indianapolis Symphony. In the fall of 1964, Moore moved to Columbus, Ohio, to begin teaching percussion at Ohio State University, and so the *Percussive Notes* address also became Columbus, Ohio, where it remained until the Spring of 1980 when Combs became its editor, too, and its address also became Knoxville.

"At the start of the 1980s, PAS hit a rough patch on its road to becoming today's leading instrumental society," says former PAS President Tom Siwe. "*Percussive Notes* continued to grow in excellence and PASIC was becoming *the* place for percussionists to congregate each fall, but the office was in disarray and complaints from the membership indicated to the Executive Committee that something needed to be done. In an attempt to right the ship, the home office was moved from Terre Haute, Indiana to Urbana, Illinois. As First Vice-president (later President), I was given the task of overseeing the Society's business and getting PAS back on the right course. At that time, the Society's financial resources were meager and its future looked bleak. With the help of office manager Dennis Wiziecki, part-time secretary Pat McKenzie, and many of my percussion students from the nearby University of Illinois, things began to change for the better. With a grant from a local Urbana business, the office began using computers to track membership and address mailing labels for the journals. Phone calls and letters from members were answered; bills were paid on time. The office, for the first time, was run like a business." PAS was reincorporated under the laws of Illinois in 1985.

In 1983, when Robert Scheitroma became editor of *Percussive Notes* and Stuart Smith became editor of *Percussive Notes Research*

*Edition* (which *Percussionist* had evolved into), the address for each publication was listed as Urbana, even though neither of the editors lived there.

In 1988 PAS was informed that the lease on their tiny two-room office in Urbana would expire in September 1991. President John Beck asked several prominent members of PAS if they knew of any charitable foundations that might be interested in helping finance a permanent headquarters for the society.

One person he spoke to was Dr. James Lambert, a member of the PAS Board of Directors who had become Executive Editor of *Percussive Notes* in 1986 and was Professor of Percussion at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. Lambert told Beck that the McMahon Foundation in Lawton had given money to support a number of arts projects in Lawton. The foundation had also given money to the American Choral Directors Association to build a headquarters in Lawton.

John Beck authorized Lambert to speak with Dr. Charles Graybill, President of the Board of Trustees of the McMahon Foundation, on behalf of PAS. Graybill was very receptive to the idea of helping the society establish a permanent headquarters and museum in Lawton.

At the November 1990 PAS Board of Directors meeting at PASIC '90 in Philadel-



Lawton, Oklahoma Headquarters

phia, members of the Board watched a video presentation about Lawton, Oklahoma narrated by Lambert and with a message from Graybill. Lawton proposed a lease of land in Elmer Thomas Park to PAS for 99 years at \$1.00 a year and a 7,100 square foot building. The proposed “Percussive Arts Society International Headquarters would house administrative offices, lobby space, a reference library, and the Hall of Fame Museum.” Second-Vice President Gar Whaley made a motion that “PAS move to Lawton, Oklahoma if all financial details can be negotiated.”

After the Board of Directors approved the move to Lawton, Beck sent a letter to The McMahon Foundation requesting financial assistance for PAS in the construction of a headquarters and percussion museum in Lawton. Within a month, the foundation unanimously approved a 2-to-1 matching grant: \$250,000 from the McMahon Foundation; \$125,000 from PAS.

Executive Director Steve Beck relocated to Lawton in the summer of 1991, opening a small office in rented space. The Percussive Arts Society International Headquarters and Museum officially opened on August 8, 1992. The office occupied 3,400 square feet of the 5,000-square-foot building, with the remaining space used for the museum. The administrative area was now large enough to allow PAS to expand its staff to five full-time employees, along with several part-time workers.

With Garwood Whaley serving as President, PAS was ahead of schedule on paying off the original loan, thanks to the generous support of the percussion community—from the largest manufacturers to individual members of the society. The McMahon Foundation therefore agreed to another 2-to-1 matching grant (\$200,000 from The McMahon Foundation; \$100,000 from PAS) to fund an addition to the museum. Another addition to the building was completed in 2001 bringing the Percussive Arts Society headquarters and museum total space to 13,000 square-feet.

Steve Beck left PAS in the Fall of 1996 and was replaced as Executive Director by Dr. Randall Eyles, who had been involved with PAS as a member of the Executive Committee for many years. When Eyles resigned in 2001, then President James Campbell put together a team to interview and hire the next Executive Director, which was Michael Kenyon.

“I remember sitting in Lawton after dinner with our treasurer, Michael Balter, and taking stock of our challenges,” Campbell recalls. “While we had a talented and dedicated core of professionals in Lawton working in the office, the location did not prove to be attractive to new personnel that we tried to hire. The PAS museum in Lawton, while comprehensive and beautifully designed, was too remote



PHOTO BY WILL HAWKINS

### Grand Opening of *Rhythm! Discovery Center*

to be visited by our membership. It was obvious that we had to relocate to provide our headquarters with greater resources and visibility. Although the Society outgrew Lawton, it will always be remembered as a place we can be proud of and is part of our rich history.”

In 2004, at PASIC 2004 in Nashville, the PAS Board of Directors approved a request from then President Mark Ford, on behalf of the PAS Executive Committee, to begin looking at possible metropolitan areas to relocate PAS from Lawton.

“Just before my presidency and through the first nine months of my presidency, we looked closely at cities across the United States, starting with a list of 94 metropolitan markets,” says Rich Holly, who followed Ford as PAS President. “Following extensive research on each city, that list was narrowed to six viable finalist cities, and after receiving proposals from those six, we narrowed it to four that we would strongly consider.”

In September 2005 at the Executive Committee Summit meeting in Columbus, Ohio, the cities of Nashville, Columbus, Atlanta, and Indianapolis were considered as relocation sites for PAS. At PASIC 2005 in Columbus, under the leadership of President Rich Holly, presentations were made to the full Board of Directors by representatives of the cities of Indianapolis and Lawton (who did not want PAS to move). After lengthy deliberation, the PAS Board of Directors approved a move of its administrative offices, museum, and library to Indianapolis where, for the first time, PAS would be able to operate its headquarters, house its museum and library, and present its annual convention in the same city. (Indianapolis was already home to Bands of America, and PAS’s current next door

neighbor is Drum Corps International, which moved from suburban Chicago.) Negotiations followed between the city of Indianapolis and PAS leadership to secure the best possible real estate in Indy for the PAS offices and museum.

By PASIC 2006 in Austin, plans were underway to relocate PAS from Lawton to Indianapolis. In April 2007, with Gary Cook as President, PAS moved to temporary offices in Indianapolis.

In January 2008, the dedication and perseverance of Executive Director Michael Kenyon and the Executive Committee paid off. After months of negotiations, legal and architectural counsel, proposing the Claypool Court space to the Board and receiving their support, PAS secured a lease on prime real estate in the heart of downtown Indianapolis, directly on the Cultural Trail, that will serve PAS, its members, and public museum goers for generations to come better than any other space considered. By early 2009 build-out construction was well underway for new offices and the museum and library.

In April 2009, under the leadership of President Steve Houghton, PAS moved into permanent offices at Claypool Court: 110 W. Washington Street, adjacent to the new museum under the new name of *Rhythm! Discovery Center*.

The Percussive Arts Society has made itself an important part of the Indianapolis community. With its location in the heart of downtown, PAS can look ahead to its next half-century. PN