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UNH Business Grad Establishes Fund to Perpetuate the Jazz Language

**Composer David Baker, fund's first jazz fellow,
teaches and performs Jan. 29-30**

By [Erika Mantz](#)
UNH News Bureau

January 26, 2001

DURHAM, N.H. -- Jazz may be the subject of a 19-hour documentary by New Hampshire filmmaker Ken Burns this month, but investment manager Dave King wasn't just thinking about this month, or even this year, when he established the Clark Terry and David Seiler Endowed Fund for the Perpetuation of the Jazz Language at the University of New Hampshire.

King was thinking much farther in the future.

"Dave Seiler shows up at a small state school more than six hours from New York City and starts an internationally known jazz program," King, a 1978 UNH grad, says of his former professor. "He just does it. Dave doesn't really accept limits the way other people do, but the next person isn't going to be Dave Seiler. This fund is to make sure the existing program is maintained and grown."

Seiler came to UNH from the University of Idaho in 1972, immediately putting the school on the map when he organized a visit by internationally known trumpet player Clark Terry. One visit blossomed into a friendship that brings Terry back every year, including to celebrate his 80th birthday last December.

King's goal is to raise \$2.5 million by December 2002. He gave an initial gift of \$250,000 and is committed to matching 50 cents on every additional dollar donated. The money will be used to secure the tradition of jazz education at UNH.

"I hope donations of all sizes pour in," King says. "These two men touched not only my life, but thousands of others. The theater was packed the night we celebrated Clark's birthday. Hundreds of people enjoyed great jazz for \$8 a ticket. That's an incredible bargain to see performers of this caliber."

The first guest resident to come to UNH thanks to the fund arrives Jan. 28. David Baker, chair of the jazz department at Indiana University, will spend two days performing, teaching and lecturing. He is an educator, composer and performer with numerous awards, including a 1973 Pulitzer Prize nomination, induction into "Down Beat" magazine's Jazz Education Hall of Fame (1994), and the American Jazz Masters Award from the National Endowment for the Arts (2000). The following activities are open to the public:

- Jan. 29, 1 p.m., Paul Creative Arts Center M128, arranging and composing session
- Jan. 29, 3 p.m., PCAC M226, open rehearsal with UNH Jazz Band
- Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m., PCAC M223, discussion of Ken Burns' "Jazz," pros and cons
- Jan. 30, 1 p.m., PCAC M135, performance of David Baker's compositions
- Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m., PCAC M135, "How to Memorize Standard Tunes" and a panel discussion on the current status of jazz education

"I'm thrilled to be able to start the ball rolling," King admits, "but I really want to build an infrastructure. This is an important time to get a lot of people involved in supporting jazz at UNH."

King remembers knocking on the door of Seiler's office one September day in 1974. A freshman with no declared major, he signed up to play guitar in the UNH Jazz Band, a constant throughout his four years at UNH as he went on to study administration at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics.

"Dave Seiler was a huge example to me as to how you do as much with your life as you can possibly do," King

says. "You open as many doors as you can, and don't close any. In fact, I've told him that it wouldn't have mattered if he was the master tiddlywinks champion. His influence would have been the same, because it's about much more than jazz."

King lives in Brookline, Mass., with his wife and two children. He is a mutual fund manager at Putnam Investments and a collector of old, vintage archtop guitars. Associated with jazz, King describes the type of guitar as "a gigantic violin."

His most recent performance was in the alumni jazz band hand-picked by Seiler for Terry's birthday celebration. King recalls Clark Terry's first visit to UNH in 1975, and said the musician's great spirit and commitment to jazz education is equal to that of Seiler's.

"These are the kinds of experiences I want to make sure future generations get to experience," King says.

And Seiler agrees.

"In the late 1950s, jazz wasn't respected on a lot of college campuses," he remembers. "In some history books, it was relegated to being music for houses of ill repute. And now, thanks to work like the Ken Burns documentary, people who would never have thought to put a jazz CD in the player are engrossed in this series."

"Kids today don't want to memorize tunes, they just want to listen and improvise," Seiler says. "We need to help kids realize they have to fill in the holes. Jazz truly is passed on from person to person, and they didn't have the luxury of playing jazz on gigs and listening to the older players. We're going to bring in as many of these great teachers as we can. That's what we mean by perpetuating the language."

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