

Milligan jazz concert honors Don and Clarinda Jeanes

The Milligan College Jazz Ensemble will present "The Sounds of Mardi Gras: A Tribute to the Music of New Orleans" on Monday, April 18, at 7:30 p.m. in Milligan's Mary B. Martin Auditorium in Seeger Memorial Chapel.

The concert will celebrate the success of Milligan's retiring President and First Lady, Don and Clarinda Jeanes, and will feature nationally acclaimed woodwind artist Dr. Phil Thompson. The event is free and open to the public.

"We have a very special evening planned to honor the Jeanes' tenure at Milligan," said Rick Simerly, director of the jazz ensemble and associate professor of music at Milligan. "The concert will consist of songs associated with New Orleans. In addition to jazz ensemble arrangements of this music, we will have several small group performances in the style of New Orleans

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traditional jazz bands."

The 24-piece Milligan Jazz Ensemble consists of Milligan students, as well as students and adults from throughout the region.

"The concert will be a fast-paced evening of songs featuring several soloists within the ensemble and small groups," Simerly said. "Add to that the virtuosity of Phil Thompson, and we will have quite an event on April 18."

Thompson is professor of music at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C., where he teaches woodwinds and directs the jazz program. He earned his doctor of musical arts degree in multiple woodwind performance at the University of North Texas and has performed throughout the United States with jazz greats Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Goodman, Clark Terry, Sarah Vaughan, Nancy Wilson, Ray Charles, Harry Connick Jr.,

Natalie Cole, Lou Rawls and numerous others.

He has performed with dozens of Broadway musicals including "Wicked," "The Producers," "Spamalot," "Hairspray," "42nd Street," "Chicago," "Little Shop of Horrors," "Beauty and the Beast," "AIDA," "Ragtime" and others. As a clinician for Conn-Selmer Inc., Thompson performs clinics and concerts throughout the United States.

"Dr. Thompson has performed with jazz legends across the country, and we are pleased he is coming to Milligan to help us honor Dr. and Mrs. Jeanes," Simerly said.

After 14 years as president of Milligan, Jeanes announced last October that he will retire from the presidency on July 15, 2011.

For more information about the concert call 461-8723 or e-mail music@milligan.edu.