

DON ZENTZ is the Director of Jazz Studies at the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville, FL. Presently in his thirty-fifth year as an award-winning music educator, Don's career has encompassed teaching at every level possible in education as a middle school and high school band director, college music professor, and fine arts administrator. He is an honor graduate and outstanding alumnus of Valdosta State University (B.M./M.M.E.).

Don received much acclaim and recognition during his nine-year tenure at the University of North Florida. Originally hired by jazz program founder Rich Matteson, Don co-taught the saxophone studio with Bunky Green. As the director of JE 1, the band won the National Collegiate Jazz Festival and Notre Dame Jazz Festival, was named Best Collegiate Big Band by DownBeat Magazine, was selected to perform at IAJE/Atlanta, produced two critically acclaimed CD's, and appeared on the international stage for the first time at the 1997 Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. Don was named an Outstanding Undergraduate Professor at UNF in 1996 and went on to represent the school at the state level. In 1999, he received a TIP Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Florida Board of Regents and was recognized nationally by DownBeat Magazine as their Jazz Education Achievement Award recipient.

Don is much in demand as a clinician in both traditional and jazz idioms. He has directed the All-State jazz bands of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Maine, and conducted the Delaware All-State Symphonic Band. During the 1990's, Don was selected to the music faculty of the Georgia Governors Honors Program where he headed the jazz division and conducted the wind ensemble. For over twenty years he was a per service saxophonist with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and still plays many of the off-Broadway shows that come into the southeast as a woodwind artist. He adjudicates extensively each year for the Florida Bandmasters Association and other independent music festivals like Festival Disney. Don served two terms as the Florida Unit president of IAJE.

Now in his fourth year at the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, Don directs both jazz ensembles, teaches jazz history and music theory, and serves on the band faculty. In the last three years, his top jazz ensemble has performed at the 2017 JEN Conference in New Orleans, won the 2017 Swing Central national jazz band competition in Savannah, was cited by DownBeat Magazine for Outstanding Performance placement in the 2017 & 2018 student music awards, presented Spring Jazz Night 2018 with special guest artist Ernie Watts, performed this past December at The Midwest Clinic in Chicago, and just recently was named the high school large jazz ensemble category winner in the 2019 DownBeat SMA's.

Don has been a Keilwerth Saxophones artist and endorser since 1995. His career reveals a deep passion for both the teaching and performing of music. He credits his career success to his mentors – Bob Greenhaw, Rich Matteson, and Joe David – and to his wife, Laurie, who has been his soulmate now for over thirty-five years. Don and Laurie reside in Fruit Cove, Florida in St. Johns County with their two daughters, Danielle and Andrea.