

Don Zentz is the Director of Jazz Studies and serves on the band faculty at the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville. Previously he was the Director of Fine & Performing Arts at The Bolles School (Jacksonville), a post he served for twelve years. Now in his thirty-fifth year of teaching, Don has held music professorships at the University of North Florida, Valdosta State University, and Florida Community College at Jacksonville. Prior to college teaching, Don was a high school and middle school band director in Georgia and at Wolfson Senior High School in Jacksonville. His programs earned superior ratings and championship recognition in all areas of band media – concert, marching, and jazz.

Don received much acclaim for his work and leadership in jazz education particularly during his tenure at the University of North Florida during the 1990's. He was originally hired at UNF by program founder and jazz education pioneer Rich Matteson. Don co-taught the saxophone studio with legendary altoist Bunky Green. As the director of the UNF Jazz Ensemble, Don brought national and international visibility to the jazz program at UNF. The ensemble produced two critically acclaimed CD's, won the Notre Dame Jazz Festival and National Collegiate Jazz Festival in Mobile, performed at festivals in Europe, and was recognized by DownBeat for "Best Big Band Jazz – Outstanding Performance". The extensive list of guest artists that have performed with his jazz ensembles reads like a "who's who in jazz". These artists include Herbie Hancock, Maria Schneider, Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Daniels, John Fedchock, Joe Lovano, and Ellis Marsalis. In 1999, DownBeat awarded Don their Jazz Education Achievement Award. UNF had named him an Outstanding Undergraduate Professor in 1996. He also received a TIP Award from the Florida Board of Regents for Excellence in Teaching.

During his current tenure at Douglas Anderson, his top jazz ensemble performed at the 2018 Midwest Clinic in Chicago, 2017 JEN Conference in New Orleans, won the 2017 Swing Central national competition in Savannah, and was recognized by DownBeat for Outstanding Performance placement in their 2017 and 2018 Student Music Awards – winning the high school jazz ensemble category in 2019. Ernie Watts was the guest artist for Spring Jazz Night 2018. Both jazz ensembles placed first and third at the inaugural 2018 Jacksonville University Jazz Festival and appeared on the Jacksonville Jazz Festival. Receiving superior ratings at music performance assessments continues to be a mainstay for both DA jazz ensembles.

Don is very much in demand as a player, adjudicator, and clinician in both traditional and jazz idioms. He was a per service saxophonist with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra for over twenty years and works many of the off-Broadway shows that travel into Florida. He has performed in concert with notables that include Dave Brubeck, Ray Charles, Dizzy Gillespie, The New York Voices, Natalie Cole, Nancy Wilson, Doc Severinsen, The Manhattan Transfer, and Diane Schuur. He adjudicates extensively each year for the Florida Bandmasters Association and other independent band festivals across the south including Festival Disney. He has directed the all-state high school jazz bands of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Maine, the Delaware All-State Symphonic Band, and most recently the 2016 Florida All-State Middle School Jazz Band. He served as the jazz studies coordinator, music department chair, and wind ensemble director for the Georgia Governors Honors Program during the 1990's. Don has presented a variety of clinics and master classes at numerous musical events for students and teachers alike. His articles have appeared in professional publications such as *The Instrumentalist* and *Music Educators Journal*. During his two terms as the Florida Unit President of IAJE, Don was responsible for instituting the State Jazz Workshop in Florida.

Don has been a Keilwerth Saxophones performing artist and clinician since 1995. His career reveals a deep commitment and passion for both the teaching and performing of music. He credits his professional success to his mentors – Bob Greenhaw, Joe David, and Rich Matteson – and to Laurie Zentz, his loving wife and soul mate for over thirty-five years.