

Mike Shea – Founder - Saxophonist

Mike is the founder and manager of Black Satin and is also the saxophonist of the band. Mike dreamed for many years of forming a band to play classic pop standards but his career as CIO for the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner made that impossible until he retired in 2016. Mike formed Black Satin in March of 2018 and is very proud of Black Satin and the talented players in the band.

Mike Shea started on his music career in Everett, WA at the tender age of eight when his parents bought him his first clarinet. In junior high school he soon discovered that girls thought the saxophone was much cooler than the clarinet and Mike switched to tenor sax.

He soon was playing lead tenor in the high school band. While attending the Northwest High School band festival in 1967 he was selected for the festival All Star band by none other than Quincy Jones, future record producer for Michael Jackson and the Thriller album. Quincy liked Mike's tenor solo in the All Star band enough to write a note to Mike's band director telling him he enjoyed Mike's solo. Mike also won the John Phillip Sousa award as the top band musician in high school.

Mike then joined the Air Force and stopped playing for 24 years to pursue a career in computers. He retired from the Air Force in 1991 and moved to Olympia, WA, and decided he missed playing sax and quickly joined up with Olympia's Johnny Lewis Swing Band as their lead tenor saxophonist.

During his tenure with Johnny Lewis, Mike had the opportunity to play with many top big band and jazz artists including Joe Lovano, lead tenor with Woody Herman's Thundering Herd; George Thow, trumpeter with Lawrence Welk's band; and Dave Shriver, bassist for Eddie Cochran and Trini Lopez. He has also played and soloed with Lee Oskar of War and Harvey Wickland of the Ventures.

Mike walked into Barb's Soul food in late 1992 and found Bert Bell, former musical director for Soul Train, playing piano in a trio called the Other Brothers. Bert invited Mike to sit in and Mike soon joined the group playing soul tunes and jazz standards.

When the Other Brothers disbanded Mike played with a variety of local Olympia bands including Laughing Matter and the Fanny Burns Band. Mike sat in one night with Jerry Bentley's band Blues Attitude and his jazz, soul, and big band background clicked with the Attitude's mix of blues and rock. Mike soon joined the band and played with Blues Attitude for 10 years.

Mike is also a member of the popular Sweet Bay Blues Band playing blues standards plus original tunes in the South Sound area.