

Parade Season

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

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A 100TH BIRTHDAY IS A MILESTONE worthy of a parade — or, in the case of the Wildcat Marching Band, two. Last November, the 125-some member band traveled to Philadelphia to march in that city's annual Thanksgiving Day Parade. Introduced by Gimbel's department store in 1920, Philadelphia's is the oldest Thanksgiving parade in the United States. "We try to do a parade or two every year," says band director Casey Goodwin '01, '06G. "When we got the invitation to apply to Philadelphia, I saw that 2019 would be a celebration of its 100th anniversary. It seemed fitting."

Band members made a relatively quick down-and-back of that trip, arriving the day before Thanksgiving and returning to campus on Friday. In March, approximately half the band will take on a somewhat more ambitious itinerary, traveling to Dublin, Ireland,

to march in two St. Patrick's Day parades and take in some of the local sights. They'll be joined by more than a dozen Wildcat Marching Band alumni, who are dusting off their instruments and their set lists to commemorate the band's centennial.

UNH's first band actually dates back to 1906, but it didn't start marching at football games until 1919. "The band itself has changed a lot since it started," says Goodwin, who played trombone with the Wildcat Marching Band in her student days and now directs both the marching band and its offshoot, the "Beast of the East" pep band that plays at hockey and basketball games. What hasn't changed is the camaraderie that turns more than 100 students into a well-oiled machine each year, delighting sports fans and parade-goers with stirring music and marching drills from Durham to Philadelphia to Dublin.

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