

Marching Band to perform with Boston Pops

By: [Jennifer Warner, Collegian Correspondent](#)

The University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band has been invited to perform alongside the Boston Pops tonight when Jack M. Wilson is inaugurated as the 25th president of the University of Massachusetts.

Wilson, a physicist, engineer and entrepreneur, decided to forego a traditional inauguration ceremony and start his own tradition with an event to celebrate the UMass community called "UMass Honors."

"There is no group that better represents the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of UMass students, nor is there a group that has brought greater honor to our university than the Minuteman Marching Band," Executive Director of Alumni Affairs Bob Goodhue said.

Wilson was elected as president of the five-campus UMass system on March 24, 2004, after previously serving as interim President. During the first part of his presidency, Wilson has highlighted the 58,000-student UMass system's importance as a research and economic-development engine for the state.

"UMass Honors" will take place at Boston's Symphony Hall, where Wilson will be inaugurated at 7 p.m. According to Band Personnel Manager Michael Smuda, the band will showcase music from the past season prior to the ceremony.

Following the ceremony, The Boston Pops will perform at 8 p.m. The 300 member Minuteman Marching Band, under the direction of George N. Parks, will join conductor Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops in the finale performance. Band members will enter into the hall, filling the balcony and lining the walls, as the Pops begin to play Stars and Stripes.

"When our work is recognized enough to be invited to the inauguration celebration of the university's president, it is an incredible accomplishment," senior flute player Leanna Toy said.

Members of the band were surprised when their director first notified them of the performance.

"This opportunity doesn't happen all too often," Smuda said. "Not only are we playing with the Pops, but we'll be doing so in front of many top notch respected people such as Wilson who will be attending the event."

U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy will also be honored at the ceremony as the 2005 recipient of the President's Medal, UMass' highest award.

Kennedy has been a strong advocate for public higher education, advancing the cause across the nation while working with particular emphasis on behalf of the public institutions in Massachusetts, according to Goodhue.

In honor of the special event, all proceeds will support student scholarships throughout the five UMass campuses, according to the Office of the President.

Wilson also notably served as vice president for academic affairs and founding chief executive officer of UMassOnline, the University's nationally acclaimed distance-learning division.