

Marching Band wins cheers in Indianapolis

by [Sarah R. Buchholz](#), *Chronicle* staff

The Minuteman Marching Band further raised its national profile Nov. 8-10 when it performed by invitation at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis for more than 20,000 people. The "Power and Class of New England," which participated in the inaugural parade for President George W. Bush in early 2001 and received the national Sudler Trophy in 1998, was one of two college bands asked to showcase its talent and skill at the Bands of America's High School Grand National Championships.

The band performed its entire halftime show as an exhibition and opened the finals of the competition with "God Bless the USA" and "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"It's a huge national exposure," said Michael Klesch, assistant director of the band, "a tremendous showcase for us."

The championships are attended by more than 80 bands which compete in three rounds. Many of the best high school performers in the country participate. Klesch said the Minuteman Marching Band's performance there is likely to serve as a good recruiting tool.

"The band got four standing ovations," said Keith Paul, senior Web developer and band alumnus volunteer, who traveled with the band to Indianapolis.

"They really lit the crowd up," Klesch said.

"It was a remarkable achievement for the band, and a feather in the UMass cap," said band director George Parks, who assessed the performance as "possibly the finest ever" for the band. "They received ... enthusiastic standing ovations from a very critical and knowledgeable audience of more than 20 thousand."

"The UMass Minuteman Marching Band is truly one of the finest marching bands in the nation," said executive director of Bands of America Scott McCormick. "I have rarely seen such an overwhelming reaction to a band by the band students and families in the audience as I saw and heard at Grand Nationals during the UMass band's performance."

The other college band that attended came from the University of Texas at Arlington.