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AMHERST

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UMass Minuteman Band  
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**Open Letter to UMMB Band Alumni**

**“And now, the end is near, and so we face the final curtain.”**

What DOES that mean? How many times have you sung that song? How many times have I heard it? Is it end of a show, the end of a season, the end of a career, or maybe the end of a significant chapter? At this moment, the end of a very significant chapter IS near: the end of our alumni fundraising campaign for a new band building for the Power and Class of New England. Although time is running out on this chapter, the end has not yet been written – this ending will most definitely depend on YOU.

**“My friends, I’ll say it clear; I’ll state my case of which I’m certain:”**

Yes, my friends, I am quite certain: We need your help. We really need your help, and, we most definitely need your help now. To kick off my request, I will challenge you – similar to the time this band got me to swim in the campus pond!

If YOU (and enough of our friends) – will pledge 250 DOLLARS for 4 years, and if you submit that pledge by September 15<sup>th</sup>, I will increase my personal pledge to 10,000! For you, just 250 a year! Twenty Dollars a month. \$4.80 a week. Just 68 cents a day! Please think about this.

I know it is a huge request. And, for some, perhaps it really is unreasonable. I guess that is my lot in life, to ask many unreasonable things of many, many, many people!! I certainly was unreasonable when you were with us. Long rehearsals, unreasonable weather conditions, performing over and over when your chops were most certainly dead, 3 dollar limits long after 3 dollars could buy ANYTHING reasonable – yes, I guess I have always been unreasonable. But think of the experience, think of your accomplishments, your memories.

**“WE’VE LIVED A LIFE THAT’S FULL...”**

We certainly did that while we were together. NO ONE could have predicted what this band would become. I certainly did not. You have stunned me so many times over the years: from the first show at UConn in ‘77 (ROCKY) to the sounds that echoed for days in Lowell during our first MICCA in ‘78. The stunning invitation to that first Inaugural – and ‘Williard Scott’s public announcement “That has to be the best damn band I ever heard!” Remember ‘Banned in Boston’ in ‘82 and our audience chanting “1812-1812” in ‘84? The frozen instruments and my poorly chosen words when I wished America a “Happy morning” that cold day on “Good Morning America.” We stormed Harvard Field in ‘86 – past the police lines! The trip to Newicks Lobster house in ‘87. Our first 300 MEMBER BAND in ‘88. The show had everything INCLUDING the Kitchen Sink. Phantom! Mermaid! Les Mis! Our first of 4 BOA’s in ‘93; where did THAT band come from on that evening?! How sweet seeing Mary Elizabeth, our 8 year old soloist shine with the band. Building Power and Class! The “Perfect Year” in ‘94. Our first Allentown in 96. THE HEARTBREAK OF LOSING CHAPEL. Being booed at James Madison

(until we surprised them with the opening chords of Tommy (Poor Nate and Steve singing into a bull horn after the rain destroyed our brand new sound system...) THE SUDLER TROPHY! (Could not have predicted THAT!) A plane ride and a national championship (Could NEVER have predicted THAT!) The extraordinary 9/11 show at Delaware Stadium. The Inaugural, GLADIATOR, BOA04, West Point, Navy, MONTREAL, BOA 07. And of course, this only encompasses the past 30 years! Think of the great accomplishments that I did not witness during the time of John Jenkins, Joe Contino, and before that as the band was beginning to develop...and NOW, unlike the performances that remain only in our memory, we can accomplish one thing that will stand forever for everyone to see: A NEW HOME FOR THE UMMB!!

**“We traveled each and every highway”**

You have never failed to astonish me. You always rose to the occasion, no matter what. And we always did it in unreasonable conditions. You sold bumper stickers and magazines and CD's. We even tried to sell ELECTROLUX vacuum cleaners. We have traveled in broken down buses, slept on gym floors, we barely kept you alive with Subway, McDonald's 3 dollar limits and every pizza shop in the east. But we always did what we had to, and YOU ALWAYS rose to the occasion.

And now, I have to ask, CAN YOU RISE TO THE OCCASION ONCE MORE? Please, CAN YOU JOIN ME? WILL YOU HELP US ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE!

**“And more, much more than this”**

In my next life, I will not ask anything of anyone. I will be a tree, or a rock, or a mosquito happy to be squashed by bandos at band camp – but for the moment, for this one moment – I NEED TO ASK. Please, can you set aside 68 cents a day for a few years? If you could do that, we will have our building!

**“WE DID IT OUR WAY”**

Of course there are those who never thought this band could accomplish what we have. Just a few years ago, I remember a serious discussion with someone on campus who said: “George, you can never have a band here like Michigan, you can never have a band that can compare with Ohio State” and in that same year, you won the Sudler Trophy which put you on a list with Michigan and Ohio State and the top 17 college marching band programs of all time.

And now, there are those who feel the Band Alumni will not meet our goal. They do not feel that Band Alumni have the depth of commitment to this program that I have seen over the years. As you know, we have struggled without a home for over a decade. I have tried to convince the powers on campus that we need a new building. “Where is your alumni assistance” they would ask. I responded – I KNOW we have alumni who care about this program. I KNOW they will do more than their fair share – but first, the University needs to make a commitment.

Well, the University HAS made a commitment, a huge commitment. And they are looking to us to respond. The time is here. It is now. It is this month, this week, this day! We can finally build this building – if you join us. However, we will need continued campus support to complete this project. But if we cannot achieve our goal, with such an unbelievable opportunity completely within our grasp, I fear they will not take us, nor the band, seriously from this point

on. The ball is now clearly in our court, and we need to serve it back to them with strength, and power, and class!

Two years ago, as a group of current bandos were visiting my house to watch UMass advance in the NCAA playoffs I received a surprise “Christmas Gift.” It was a card from the manager of the Hatch, and a check for \$1,000. He stated that he had always been thrilled with UMMB students who worked for him, and that this special organization needed, and deserved a home. If he, who never participated in the band, can see and understand our need – then it certainly must be clear to those of us who have shared the rain, mud and cold together.

This week I learned that a former member of my Drum Major Academy Staff – someone who has only watched tapes and listened to stories of the band - just pledged \$3,000 for our new building. I was stunned. He has never even seen the band live but he has been touched by your magic.

Of course the great news is this: We WILL have a building. But, we will need substantial outside funding to build the full building that this band deserves. In order to convince those outside of this organization that this band IS worthy of their support, we MUST step up and demonstrate the extraordinary Band Alumni strength and commitment that you have always had. We believe this program has something special – we need YOU to help demonstrate it. Only then, can we fully expect others to provide the support we need.

We are in the final stage of planning the scope of this building. We will need to realize our Alumni Fundraising goal, or very soon we will have to make huge cuts in our proposed building plan.

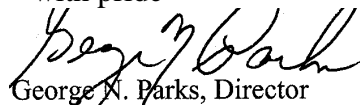
Over 225 people have made the commitment to be on the wall.

Will you join us? I will commit a total pledge of \$10,000 if YOU can help us succeed in reaching our goal of 1,000 for 1,000 by September 15th. That means we need 68 cents a day for 4 years. Perhaps it is totally unreasonable – and maybe, just maybe, it is not. Please help!

One more time, let us accomplish the impossible. We can do this; we will do this...but only with YOUR help!

Please visit the website, [www.umassband.com](http://www.umassband.com) and see the plans, and see those who will join us. We have 30 days to make a difference that will last forever!

‘with pride’

  
George N. Parks, Director  
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