

Fire of the Carolina's brings marching band back to football

Morgan Chase
Reporter

With a bang of the bass drum and a toot of the brass horns, Elon's marching band will parade onto the football field for the first time in more than 20 years.

Bill De Journett, Elon's new marching band director, said he hopes the band, along with the new stadium, will bring some school spirit back to Elon. Football games are something students expect to be collegiate experiences, he said.

De Journett, or Dr. D, as he is known to the band, conducts his 89 players, dancers, color guard members and baton twirlers from a platform at the edge of the intramural fields. DeJournett brings 14 years of directing and most recently at Colorado State University to the Fire of the Carolinas.

One of the first things De Journett did at Elon was established a band council. "It was important for me to have student involvement from the beginning," he said. Students selected the uniforms and drum major, drafted an

attendance policy, designed T-shirts and participated in many other logistical details.

One of the band council's most important tasks was to name the band. DeJournett and the students talk about the history of the previous band, the Show Band of the Carolinas, which marched from 1962-1982.

The marching band members have been practicing together for less than a month, which includes one week of "band camp."

Maggie Newton, a senior piccolo player, hopes all that practicing will pay off. "I'm nervous for the band as a whole," she said, "but once we get in the stadium, I'm sure it will all come together."

In 1962, Elon College hired Jack White to direct the Show Band. White worked his band hard, treating them like Army recruits, band members recall. The band practiced at least five days a week, sweating as hard as the football players.

Director of Elon Alumni and Parent Relations, Mary Ruth,



Amy Cowen/Photographer

Elon's University's marching band, the Fire of the Carolina's, performed for the first time in front of the Elon community at the special college coffee held on Sept. 11. Instead of the intended performance, the band played the national anthem in response to the national tragedy earlier that morning.

played alto sax in White's band that year. She still remembers the first game in 1962, held at Appalachian State University. "We worked so hard [even though] we were so small, and we were so scared at our first game," she said.

Jack White's band quickly became an honored tradition at

Elon. "We became leaders on campus," Ruth said. "We were well known at Elon... people knew if you were in the band."

The pre-game show will feature an old ballad, Carolina Moon, which DeJournett hopes will become an Elon signature tune. Students will also learn two

half-time shows, one featuring songs from Chicago and Earth, Wind and Fire and another with Latin jazz tunes. DeJournett says he picked the repertoire because it is high-energy and in-your-face. "It's something student have heard before and will enjoy playing," he said.

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