

Albany State University Marching Rams Show First HBCU to Perform in Historic 100th America's Thanksgiving Parade

Albany State University's Marching Rams Show Band Will Make History As The First HBCU To Perform In 100th America's Thanksgiving Parade In Detroit.

ALBANY, GA, UNITED STATES, July 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Albany State University](#) (ASU) Marching Rams Show Band (MRSB) will make history this fall as the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) band to perform in America's Thanksgiving Parade in Detroit, Michigan.



Marching Rams Show Band

"We are honored to have Albany State University in the 100th America's Thanksgiving Parade presented by Gardner White! We welcome them to Detroit and look forward to seeing this wonderful band on Woodward Avenue, Thanksgiving morning."

“

This is more than a performance. It's an opportunity to represent Albany State University, honor the legacy of HBCU bands, and share this experience with the city that helped shape who I am."

Dr. William Brooks, Director of Bands, Albany State University

- Tony Michaels, President and CEO of The Parade Company

The milestone performance will take place during the parade's 100th anniversary celebration on Thursday, November 26, 2026. One of the nation's oldest and most celebrated holiday traditions, the parade draws hundreds of thousands of spectators along its three-mile route and millions more through televised broadcasts.

Dr. William Brooks's connection to America's Thanksgiving Parade spans decades, making this moment especially meaningful. As a Detroit native, he first participated in the

parade as a middle and high school student, later returning as a high school band director,

where he led his Tennessee-based band to a first-place finish. Now, as Director of Bands at Albany State University, Brooks returns once again—this time leading the Marching Rams Show Band—marking a full-circle moment as he brings his students to perform on the same streets that helped shape his musical journey.

“This parade is such a special moment for me. I was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. To return now as a college band director, bringing my students to my hometown, is truly a full-circle moment. What makes it even more meaningful is that we are making history.”

- Dr. William Brooks, Director of Bands, Albany State University

The parade will step off at 8:45 a.m. EST at Woodward Avenue and Kirby Street, traveling through downtown Detroit before concluding at Woodward Avenue and Congress Street.

Leading up to the performance, the Marching Rams Show Band will engage in community outreach across the Detroit area, including visits to K-12 schools for recruitment, performances, and cultural exchange. The band will proudly showcase its signature identity as the “Soul of Southwest Georgia,” highlighting both Albany State University and the region on a national stage.

“This is an impactful moment for many of us. We have the opportunity to share our talent, passion, and dedication while upholding the standard of excellence of HBCUs on a national stage. Every note we play reflects our preparation, commitment, and pride.”

- Christopher Pennyman, Albany State University Junior Music Education Major, and Clarinet Musician



Dr. William Brooks, ASU Director of Bands



Albany State University Official Stacked Logo

Recognized as one of the nation's premier HBCU marching ensembles, the Marching Rams Show Band is known for its dynamic performances, precision, and electrifying sound. Under Dr. Brooks' leadership since 2023, the program has experienced significant growth and national recognition, including participation in the National Battle of the Bands and being named an ESPN "Band to Watch."

Under Dr. Brook's leadership, the band has experienced remarkable growth, expanding from just 26 musicians to reaching its goal of 160 members in only four years.



America's Thanksgiving Parade Logo

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- Dr. William Brooks, Director of Bands, Albany State University

The invitation to perform in America's Thanksgiving Parade not only highlights the band's excellence, but also reflects Albany State University's continued commitment to showcasing student talent, cultural pride, and academic achievement on some of the nation's most prestigious stages.

Rachel Lawrence
Albany State University
+1 229-364-6683
[email us here](#)

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