

**News release**

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## Bernard Long, Jr.to march in 2026 Rose Parade® with the "Band Directors Marching Band"

*The Saluting America's Band Directors project has assembled band directors from across North America to march January 1 under the theme, "America's band directors: We teach music. We teach life."*

*Bernard Long, Jr*, the Band Director in the Madison CUSD#12 school district in Madison, IL , has been selected to join a marching band of more than 300 band directors from across North America in the Pasadena Rose Parade® on January 1, 2026. The band will accompany a colorful, animated float along the 5.5-mile parade route. Bernard was also selected to be the principal drum set percussionist in the inaugural 2026 Rose Parade-Saluting American band Director Jazz Band.

The Saluting America's Band Directors parade entry will convey the theme, *"America's band directors: We teach music. We teach life."* to recognize the extraordinary dedication and accomplishments of band directors and music educators everywhere. Throughout their careers, the music educators in this band have collectively mentored and taught hundreds of thousands of students. These professionals not only teach and conduct music, they teach about life itself.

According to Long, Jr, "*This experience will allow me to share my musical talents with the world. I'm thankful for my family, students, staff, administrators, and the Madison CUSD#12 School Board for supporting and cheering for me in this life changing endeavor. We have had several zoom meetings and virtual rehearsals throughout the year to perfect our Rose Parade performance. I'm excited to share the musical stage globally in the marching and Jazz band with the 350 plus other band directors who represent the face of music education."*

The band will be directed by nationally known music educator and innovative band director Jon Waters, who will also lead rehearsals and other performances of the band when in Pasadena.

The sponsoring organization behind the Saluting America's Band Directors project is the Michael D. Sewell Memorial Foundation, based in Pickerington, Ohio. The foundation was created to recognize and carry on the work of the late Mike Sewell, who dedicated his life to the school and community music programs in Pickerington and the Central Ohio area for almost 40 years.

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