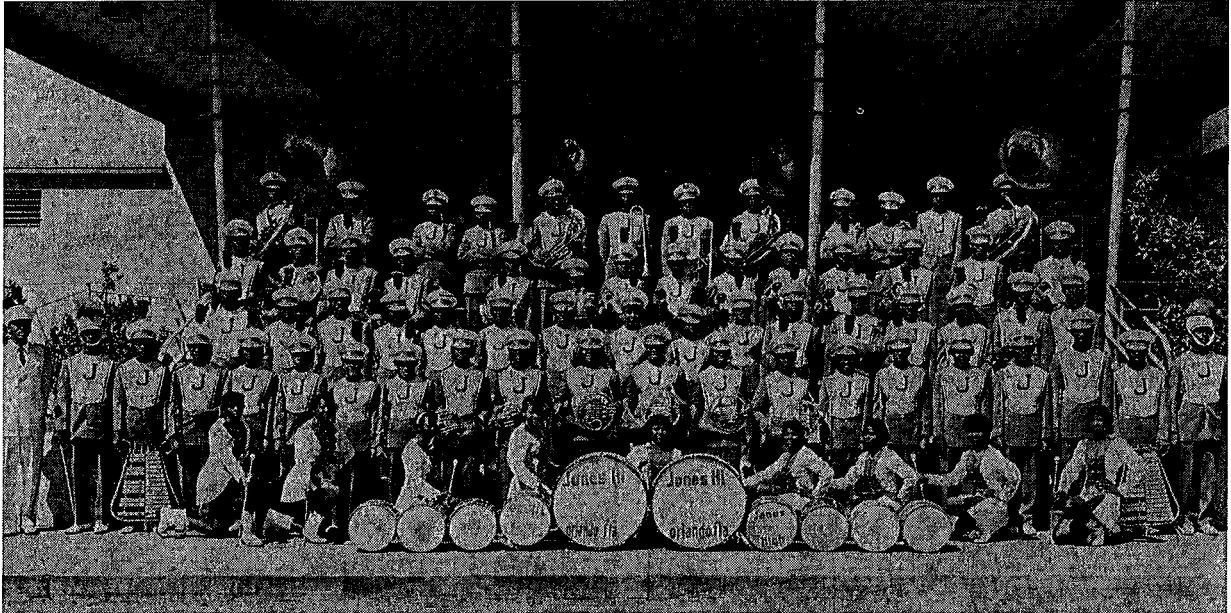


Marching Forward

BY CONNIE SUE WHITE

This historical documentary borne from a UCF film class chronicles how two Orlando high-school marching band directors crossed lines of segregation for their students.



COURTESY UCF & JONES HIGH SCHOOL (2)

It was 1964. Racial segregation was still alive in Orlando, including in the public-school system. But music served to bridge that divide for two men, one white and one black, who defied the times and worked together for the sake of their students. The all-black Jones High School was known to have the best marching band, but the all-white Edgewater High School marching band received the invitation to perform at the New York World's Fair. "Chief" Jim Wilson and "Daddy" Del Kieffner saw the talent of their students and collaborated on fundraising efforts so both groups of students could go to the Fair.

"We want to remind audiences that even in the difficult days of the Jim Crow South, blacks and whites found a way to work together when they agreed on what was the right thing to do," says University of Central Florida Associate Professor of Visual Arts & Design Dr. Lisa Mills, who codirected the film with UCF Associate Professor and Chair of the History Department

Dr. Robert Cassanello. "As is the case with Chief Wilson and Del Kieffner, these heroes did their work quietly, and their stories have never been widely told."

The documentary, produced by the students of a UCF honors public history and documentary class taught by Mills and Cassanello, includes historic photos and

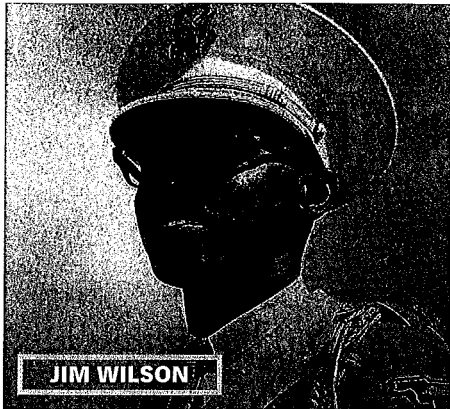
16mm film footage, providing a feeling of nostalgia representative of a simpler time. However, first-person accounts remind viewers that the 1963-64 school year was also tumultuous, filled with civil rights protest marches and brutal racial violence. Several of these stories, told with honest dignity and good-natured humor, will be animated by

graduate students in UCF's new Animation master of fine arts program.

"Historical documentaries present many visual challenges," explains Mills. "There's more and more evidence that animation adds a degree of emotional intimacy and visual variety that can further engage the audience."

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—Lisa Mills, codirector of *Marching Forward*



JIM WILSON

Of course, music is important to most films, but in a documentary about musicians, it's even more so. And why having a professional composer like Stella Sung, who is also a UCF professor of music, writing the film's original score was so important to the project.

"We're excited to have Stella. Growing up in Florida, she is very aware of Orlando's history — we both remember being on segregated buses," says Mills. "She has the talent and range to find a score that is uplifting and nostalgic at the same time."

Once the score is written, Valencia College's audio post production students will perform the final audio sweetening.

Also at the time of this writing, Dr. Robert Cassanello's UCF history students were collaborating with Walter Hawkins of the Jones High School Museum to create a website for the museum that will include information about the film.

"We're really excited to be collaborating like this — this is what we should be doing in the film community," Mills says of the various partnerships involved in producing and promoting the film.

Marching Forward is the fifth historical documentary produced by the class and codirected by Mills and Cassanello. According to Mills, one is completed about every other year, but this is the program's first feature-length film (60 mins).

"We'll start submitting it to film festivals soon, with the goal of getting it into the 2019 Florida Film Festival as well. We also hope to distribute a shorter version to local television stations for broadcast, such as WUCF-TV."

While *Marching Forward*, well, marches forward to a screening date, look for updates on the film's progress in upcoming issues of the magazine. **OAM**

Connie Sue White is managing editor for Orlando Arts Magazine.

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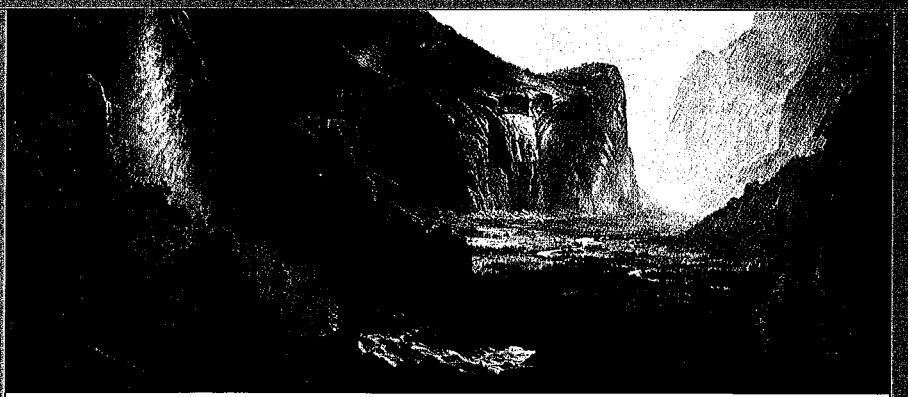
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