

NOMINATION LETTER FOR LEWIS MERIKAS (in the Legacy Category)

Lewis (Lew) Merikas began his drum corps career with our Cadet Plebe organization in the winter of 1967, marching his first parade on Columbus Day 1967 in Newark, NJ in the Honor Guard. He then began instruction on playing the baritone bugle and stayed in this section until the end of the 1968 drum corps season. However, Lew had his eye on moving up to the "Big Corps," and after the 68 season was moved up to play 3rd Baritone. It's important to note that Lew actually did "double duty" in 1969 marching with both the Plebes and the Cadets in parades (we did a lot of parades back in the day . . .)

In 1970, he left the Plebes performing only with the "Big Corps". In 1971, Lew was asked to move to the Contra section, where he remained until taking the 1973 season off to attend a year-round school, returning in the winter of 1973 until his age-out year in 1975. He was a model Cadet who took pride in wearing the maroon and gold uniform, playing his parts to the best of his ability. In 1974 and 1975, he won first place in individual competitions in Cranford and Bayonne, NJ on Contra, and even had a solo in 1974 during the concert number of "In the Mood".



Regarding Lew's dedication . . . On a Saturday in June of 1974, Lew couldn't get off from work. We had a show in Auburn, NY (The Auburn Purple Lancers show). So, he drove to Teterboro Airport after work to take a helicopter to a local airport, and then flew upstate. At the airport, he almost missed his ride because the driver was paging the wrong name (Lewis Merks). Lew finally figured out the page was for him, got the ride to show, ran to the equipment truck where he quickly changed into his uniform. I remember lining up to go on to the field for competition, when several members of the Corps started calling out his name in a whispering, haunting way . . . "Leweeee . . . Leweeee . . . Leweeee . . ." Well, low and behold, with the Corps approaching the starting line and the announcer going through the Corps introduction, here comes Lewie, running with contra bass in hand to join the Corps just in time. He wasn't going to miss this show, no matter what . . .

While a member of the Corps, he helped instruct our Cadet Plebe organization with the marching category, and even designed a short drill for exhibition. He also worked with the Plebe Color Guard with their winter competing guard program from 1975 through 1977, and later became a Marching & Maneuvering judge with the Northeastern Judging Association for drum corps competitions and with Metropolitan Association of Adjudicators for Color Guard and Drum Corps competitions, a dream that he had when he was a marching member. Other color guards where Lew taught included the Emerald Grenadiers all-girl Drum Corps from Dover, NJ, the Bloomfield Cavaliers and a winter guard called the Golden Knights.

In 1975 Lew also helped to produce the first Corps History book "Reflections" and after aging out, and continued to participate with many fundraisers and alumni events. He was a MODEL CADET who led by example and one of the most dedicated Cadets I've ever known.

It is with the deepest respect and honor that I recommend LEWIS MERIKAS for consideration into The Cadets Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Greg Cinzio

Cadet Alumnus (1967-1977)