

Archon Willie Hill Featured in NFL 50th Anniversary Celebration

January 6, 2016

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Shawn Farley at sfarley@umass.edu or [413-545-4159](tel:413-545-4159)

FAC DIRECTOR DR. WILLIE HILL TO BE PART OF CBS SPECIAL ABOUT THE HISTORY OF SUPER BOWL ENTERTAINMENT

This coming February, the NFL Super Bowl will be celebrating 50 years. And as long as there have been Super Bowl games, there have been spectacular half-time shows. The NFL is going all out for the golden anniversary of its tent-pole event, breaking the halftime show into "past," "present" and "future" acts. Speaking of "past" acts, Archon Willie Hill, Director of the UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center, (past Sire Archon Beta Sigma Boulé) holds the distinct honor of having lead the entertainment for the very first Super Bowl halftime show. On Friday, February 5th, CBS will host a two-hour special that looks at the history of Super Bowl entertainment. The feature will explore how the Super Bowl halftime shows have progressed since 1967 and will give a glimpse of what it takes to produce the show today.

The year was 1967 and Archon Hill was the Head Drum Major for Grambling College, now known as Grambling State University. For the very first Super Bowl and at a pivotal moment of the Civil Rights movement, Archon Hill led the marching bands for Grambling College, a historically black school, and the University of Arizona, predominantly white, onto the field. The CBS special will feature Archon Hill along with two University of Arizona marching band members who all participated in the halftime show. The behind-the-scenes feature also looks at previous performances by Archon Hill, Katy Perry, Bruno Mars, Beyonce, Bruce Springsteen, Prince, Paul McCartney, U2 and more.

In a year that saw racial riots in cities from Detroit to Los Angeles, when the racially charged "In the Heat of the Night" won Best Picture at the Academy Awards and Thurgood Marshall became the first black Supreme Court Justice, the blending of both bands in front of 40 million Americans watching at home on television and 60,000 watching inside the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum was monumental.

According to Archon Hill, "We had collaborated with other black bands all the time... But here's an all-white band from Arizona. It was a different twist to what we were accustomed to. We had to make sure we were hot stuff." The two bands marched together, eventually forming an outline of the United States, a blend of black and white that wasn't so seamless elsewhere across the national landscape or on the sports field.

Archon Willie Hill is Director of the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts

Amherst and a Professor in Music Education. He received his B.S. degree from Grambling State University and earned M.M. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Colorado-Boulder. Archon Hill was a Professor in Music Education, and the Assistant Dean at the College of Music at the University of Colorado-Boulder for eleven years; and Director of Education for the Thelonious Monk Institute in Los Angeles, California. Prior to his tenure at the University of Colorado, Archon Hill taught instrumental music for 16 years and served as instrumental music supervisor for four years in the Denver Public Schools (DPS).

Archon Hill is Past-President of The National Association for Music Education (MENC); Past-President of the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE); Past-President of the Colorado Music Educators Association, and Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society. He is a past member of the national board of directors for Young Audiences Arts for Learning, Inc., and currently a trustee for the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. In January 2001, Archon Hill was the recipient of the prestigious Lawrence Berk Leadership Award presented by the International Association for Jazz Education. In 1998, he was inducted into the Colorado Music Educators Hall of Fame; and in 2008, Archon Hill was inducted into Grambling State University's Hall of Fame.