



Ian Sturrock Memorial Pipe Band
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alabama's First Bagpipe Band Renamed to Honor State's First Bagpiper

Birmingham, AL February 10th, 2009 – The Heritage Pipes and Drums of Birmingham, Alabama is now the Ian Sturrock Memorial Pipe Band, newly christened to honor the memory of the first piper in the state of Alabama.

The band had its humble origins more than three decades ago when it was organized as the Ben Dearg Pipe Band under the direction of native Scot and retired Royal Air Force serviceman Ian Sturrock. Pipe Major Sturrock was the first to teach bagpipes in the state of Alabama and is regarded by the members of the pipe band as the source of Birmingham's proud Piping tradition. The Ben Dearg Pipe Band was even named the "Official State Pipe Band" by the late Governor Wallace.

Pipe Sergeant Brian Bowman remarks "I feel honored to carry on the traditions of this pipe band. It really makes me feel like I'm part of something."

The band is currently under the leadership of Pipe Major Ryan Morrison, the state of Alabama's only fully professional ceremonial bagpiper and a competing member of the Bushmills Irish Pipers Pipe Band of San Francisco. Pipe Major Morrison was a student of the band's previous Pipe Major Charles Smith, who was one of Sturrock's first pupils. To this day, Pipe Major Morrison plays the same set of pipes that belonged to Pipe Major Sturrock.

Several band members recently participated in pipe band competitions in Stone Mountain, Georgia in partnership with the Duncan McCall Pipe Band of Pensacola, Florida in which they took first place in their division.

The Ian Sturrock Memorial Pipe Band is currently preparing for their most exciting event to date: performing on stage with the legendary Irish band The Chieftains with Paddy Moloney Friday February 27th at the Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center.

Currently the band is sponsored by the two largest Scottish heritage groups in the state, the Saint Andrews Society of the Middle South and the Caledonian Society of Alabama.

For further information, contact Ryan Morrison at (205) 427-1756 or visit our website at www.ismpb.com.

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