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St. Cloud

Tuomaala directs oldest, newest bands in St. Cloud

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There are distinct differences in the type of musicians and that should not be a surprise. Glen Tuomaala directs the St. Cloud Municipal Band and St. Cloud State University's Husky Sports Band. The volunteer Municipal Band will celebrate its 120th anniversary in 2007. The volunteer Husky Sports Band celebrates the one-year anniversary of its first performance in March.

"There is such a good sense of humor," he said of the Municipal Band. "They come on Monday nights and they want somebody to come onto the podium and musically kick the living daylights out of them because they do it Monday through Friday in their jobs.

"College kids aren't at that maturity level yet. It's not wrong, it's just different."

Getting here

Tuomaala began the job at St. Cloud State at the beginning of the 2005-06 school year. He has an interesting resume. The 35-year-old was born in Royal Oak, Mich., a suburb of Detroit. His father, Allan, is the CEO of Siegal/Tuomaala Associates Architects and Planners Inc. His mother, Linda, is a retired teacher who has spent the last three summers teaching in China.

"I have two parents who are Type A personalities," said Tuomaala, whose full-time job is at SCSU and receives a stipend for working the Municipal Band. "They are both workaholics, but they also have season tickets for the Detroit Symphony."

He began playing the French horn in the fifth grade and received undergraduate degrees in music performance and music education from Bowling Green State University in 1994. He began work on a master's degree, quit and went to work.

Tuomaala spent three years teaching at Purcell Marian High School, which is in the inner city in Cincinnati.

"We started with 14 kids and ended up with over 100 in three years," he said.

"It was the poorest private school in the archdiocese in Cincinnati."

"We had a gang threat my first year, had a kid throw a punch at me my first year. He missed, which is the good part."

"Rough school. I wouldn't trade it for anything else in the world. It was the most wonderful place ... beautiful kids. When you have absolutely nothing, you work pretty darn hard."

After the school received a Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation grant, he decided to finish his graduate degree. He worked for a number of colleges after graduating, the last of which was Alma College (Mich.) before applying for the Husky Sports Band job.

Starting from scratch

Why did he want the St. Cloud State job?

"It reminded me exactly of Purcell Marian," he said of his first job. "Here you go. Start a program that doesn't exist. There's been no sports band here for years. No equipment, no members, no music, nothing. I love that."

The Husky Sports Band played at its first event last March (a basketball game) and played its first football and men's hockey games this fall. The band has about 50 members, who range in age from 18-70. The goal is to get to more than 100 members and play at more events.

"We're going to expand slow and steady," he said. "I've seen it done the other way and you burn out the kids."

He has rehearsals with the Municipal Band on Monday nights and the Husky Sports Band on Tuesday nights. On top of all that, he does marketing and promotion for the music department at St. Cloud State.

He is busy and likes it that way.

"I'm really lucky to be here and to do what I do," he said. "When I wake up tomorrow, I hope I'm half as lucky as I am today."



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Musicians from the St. Cloud Municipal Band follow the lead of director Glen Tuomaala (left) during rehearsal Monday at St. Cloud State.

Multimedia

[Listen to the Husky Sports Band play "Louie, Louie"](#)

[Listen to the Husky Sports Band play the school rouser](#)

[Listen to the Municipal Band play "Military Escort March"](#)

[Listen to the Municipal Band play "Stars and Stripes Forever"](#)

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