

HISTORY OF WILLIE MACKENZIE

SAPA Pipe Band has always faced the challenge of achieving sustained and solid musical growth with seriousness, but still trying to be inclusive. We recently found ourselves with the pleasing reality of having a big growth in the number of musicians and dancers. At first glance this can be understood as an advantage, but the day to day of the group meant the coexistence of several different levels of musicianship. Given this scenario, we took the hard internal decision of dividing the band into two groups: an advanced band and a formative/development band. This would allow each group to focus on specific necessary actions for their development and improvement. The division also brought the need to give each band its specific denomination, and in a certain way its identity and sense of belonging. It was therefore that we decided to give the development band the name of a notorious person in **S.A.P.A.**'s history.

S.A.P.A. has been the sum of people who have tirelessly and creatively carried out the teaching of the Scottish traditions and framed them in a feeling of family and friendship. There are many important people in the history of **S.A.P.A.**, and choosing one of them has been very difficult. This is why we should tell you who Willie MacKenzie was from the perspective of his bandmates and family.

He was a Member of **S.A.P.A.** for 40 years. In his early days he marvelled everyone with his singular grace in the Scottish Highland Dancing. Time went by and the years tamed his skills in the dance, but his love for the band led him to enter the Drumming Corps. His fanaticism and enthusiasm were key factors to create the "**Sapitos**" by the late 1970's. With his usual "insistent attitude" he persuaded many of his nephews, and their friends, and their friends' brothers to join **S.A.P.A.**. The Pipe Band and the Dancing Group were filled with children and teenagers.



Like that, whole families like the Macnies, Nicolussi, Wray, Acuña, Santana McKinlay, López Walker, Vallés, and of course, the Mac Kenzies entered **S.A.P.A.**'s ranks. Within few years the Band had managed to have a 7-member Drum Corps. In the same way, by 1991 the Pipe Corps started receiving an influx of potential Pipers who started playing in a short time. Willie kicked off a youth movement that multiplied the number of bandmembers exponentially and led us to become the biggest band of Argentina and South America.



For those who were lucky enough to share those times with him, he was not only an enjoyable teacher but a matchless friend and an example to follow due to his camaraderie and joy of living. In **S.A.P.A.**, Willie met Deborah, his life partner and crony of his histrionism. Deborah, like no one, understood Willie's unique spirit, supporting and empowering him. From the love of this singular couple of contagious laughter Andrew was born.

Willie was a very special person, unlike everyone. A born motivator who never dropped his arms for the band. Never angry, never depressed, he also had other interests, including politics, economy, the river Delta, Racing Club and Pucará Club. As in everything, Willie committed himself body and soul, working in pursuit of his ideas, trying to generate a shock wave that multiplied its action. Like all myths, his wanderings are going to be more fun every time they are told again.



We have arrived at the conclusion that it is not just a name, it is a starting point. Willie was always very inclusive and pioneering, so we are sure he would have been delighted for **S.A.P.A.** to have a formative band to mold future pipers and drummers. "**Willie MacKenzie's Legacy Pipe Band**" is just a tribute and starting point on the solid foundations of what he transmitted during the time he was in **S.A.P.A.**: friendship, commitment and momentum. We hope this is the beginning of a long and prosperous period, always remembering what Willie meant for **S.A.P.A.**, for his friends and family.

Today the band is small and is looking for new members, both pipers and drummers, to continue his legacy with spirit and impetus.