

Tiger Trivia

Towson's mascot, the tiger, arrived on campus not with a roar. Instead it waited quietly in the bushes for the right time to pounce.

Actually it paraded on campus with the help of Lou Winkelman '64. He was the very first Tiger mascot, strutting the stripes in the 1963 Homecoming parade. We went to a costume shop and rented the tiger suit, Winkelman recalls. After I graduated, the students slowly made the mascot what it is today. I got calls for years asking where the costume came from.

Winkelman actually introduced the tiger as the official Towson mascot winning SGA approval a year before the parade. It took about a year, but by 1963 students accepted it and the Tiger made its home at Towson.

For Winkelman, the tiger tales began in the early 1960s when he was a member of the men's soccer team. He says no one on the team wanted to be called the Golden Knights, the most popular name for sports teams prior to 1961.

The Knights mascot may have come from the 1920s and 1930s, when an elaborate Olde English Christmas dinner was held with knights and ladies costumes, music and a pageant. The 1930 Tower Echoes used Renaissance style pictures of archers to depict athletes and campus life. In 1951, the Knight reigned over Towson with references to the campus being a Camelot with merry court life (student activities) and many tournaments (sports). The late 50's, however, brought other mascots--the lacrosse team was the "Indians; and the wrestling team, the Teachers.

Winkelman and his team mates had their own idea and simply adopted the tiger as their mascot. Although they wore jerseys with a knight and horse logo, they were adamant that they would be called tigers in their yearbook photo.

Student interest in the Tiger remained high through the 1960's encouraged by Winkelman's weekly sports column Tiger Tales in the Towerlight; the Towerlight masthead's use of the tiger image from '66-'69; and a gift of a stone tiger statue by the Class of '67, stolen from campus a few years later.

In the 1970's, however, the Towson Tiger, like the real animal, became an endangered species. Other than brief sports stories, there is only one reference in a 1970's yearbook. The Tiger resurfaced in the 1980s with the purchase of the first official costume by the sports program and with a major presence in almost every issue of Tower Echoes and around the campus.

The Towson mascot has come a long way since the reign of the Golden Knight. Today the much-coveted Tiger goes through intense tryouts and training. The Tiger makes appearances at all home football games, men's and women's basketball games and



gymnastics meets. The Tiger also appears around the community for special events and celebrations.

Knights (pre-1961)
Teachers (wrestling-1961)
Indians (lacrosse 1960)
Tigers (official mascot in 1962)

Information gathered with help of Ada Smith, librarian, Towson University Archives, Bill Everett, coach, Towson University Cheerleaders, Susan Quinn, publicist, University Relations and Peter Schlehr, director, Sports Information.

School Spirits

One of the advantages of attending a school like Towson University is the university's rich 140-year history. Over the years, many stories (or legends) have developed about certain buildings, people, and places on campus.

One of those stories is about the Auburn House, located adjacent to Uritas Stadium and the Towson Center. Towson University first acquired the Auburn House back in 1971, and today the property is used primarily as office space for Athletics and for special events.

However, the white mansion we see today on Auburn Drive is not the original structure built by Charles Ridgely in 1790. In 1849, on a "dark and stormy night" the original mansion was struck by lightning and ultimately destroyed by a fire, killing a woman named Martha, who was allegedly a maid or nanny working late that evening in the mansion. There is also conjecture that a child could have also died in the fire.

The Auburn House was ultimately rebuilt in 1850, and it is said that to this day the ghost of Martha still has a presence there. Accounts from both visitors and staff include lights flickering, strange noises, or even that Martha, herself, can sometimes be seen from the attic window. By the way, the rathskeller in the basement is named in her honor.

According to TU Foundation President Dan McCarthy, a few years ago university police reported to the Auburn House for noise complaints and the K-9 dog accompanying the officer refused to enter the house.

As recent as last year [2007], a ghost hunter even discovered "paranormal" activity in the Auburn House. Whether you believe in ghosts or not, you have to admit that it sure makes Halloween—or your next visit down Auburn Drive—a little more interesting.

Adapted from former President Robert Caret's "