# HISTORY



2003 ISU FOOTBALL MEDIA GUIDE

COACHES

HISTORY

## **LSU Football Traditions**

rich history of LSU football is impossible to portray in only a few pages. However, below are tidbits from Tiger football annals that have contributed to the story that is LSU Football. These items are presented as background material with the hope that it will encourage a better understanding of the many traditions that are associated with Tiger athletics.

Special thanks to Peter Finney of the New Orleans Times-Picayune who has documented the history of LSU football in his book "Fighting Tigers," Marty Mule' of the New Orleans Times-Picayune who penned "Eye of the Tiger" in celebration of LSU's football centennial in 1993, and to the late historian H. Warren Taylor whose relentless pursuit of accurate information and record-keeping in the early years of LSU athletics has kept alive the accomplishments of Tiger athletes in football, basketball, track and boxing dating back to the late 1800s.

#### **NICKNAME: FIGHTING TIGERS**

In the fall of 1896, coach A.W. Jeardeau's LSU football team posted a perfect 6-0-0 record, and it was in that pigskin campaign that LSU first adopted its nickname, Tigers.

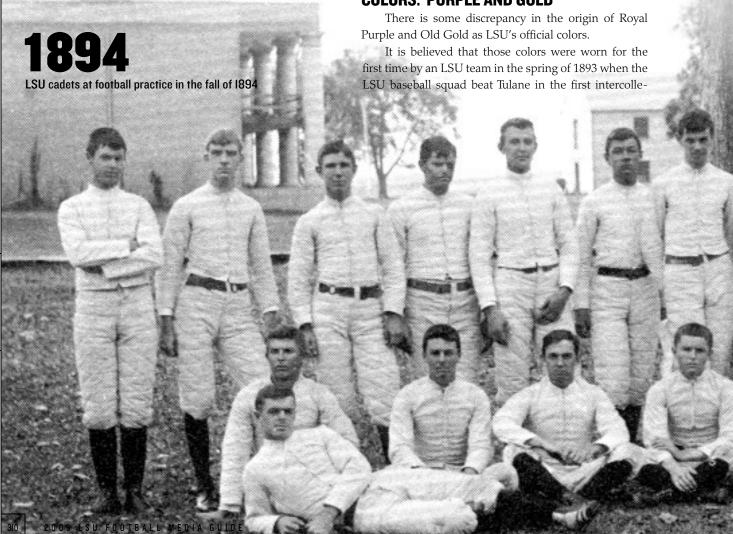
"Tigers" seemed a logical choice since most collegiate teams in that year bore the names of ferocious animals, but the underlying reason why LSU chose "Tigers" dates back to the Civil War.

During the "War Between the States," a battalion of Confederate soldiers comprised of New Orleans Zouaves and Donaldsonville Cannoneers distinguished themselves at the Battle of Shenandoah.

These Louisiana rebels had been known by their contemporaries as the fighting band of Louisiana Tigers. Thus when LSU football teams entered the gridiron battlefields in their fourth year of intercollegiate competition, they tagged themselves as the "Tigers".

It was the 1955 LSU "fourth-quarter ball club" that helped the moniker "Tigers" grow into the nickname, "Fighting Tigers."

### **COLORS: PURPLE AND GOLD**



giate contest played in any sport by Louisiana State University. Team captain E.B. Young reportedly hand-picked those colors for the LSU squad.

Later that year, the first football game was played. On Nov. 25,1893,football coach/chemistry professor Dr. Charles Coates and some of his players went into town to purchase ribbon to adorn their gray jerseys as they prepared to play the first LSU gridiron game.

Stores were stocking ribbons in the colors of Mardi Gras — purple, gold and green — for the coming Carnival season. However, none of the green had yet arrived at Reymond's Store at the corner of Third and Main streets. Coates and quarterback Ruffin Pleasant bought up all of the purple and gold stock and made it into rosettes and badges.

#### **OLE WAR SKULE**

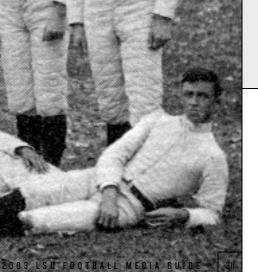
LSU began in 1860 as the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, shortly before the beginning of the Civil War. In fact, LSU's first superintendent was Civil War commander William Tecumseh Sherman. "Ole War Skule" was formerly a popular reference to LSU, as was the term "Old Lou."

#### **CHEERLEADERS**



Cheerleaders have long been a part of college football tradition, and the LSU Varsity Cheerleaders are no exception in their role in Tiger gridiron lore. Pre-game ceremonies feature the LSU Cheerleaders atop Mike the Tiger's cage as it circles the field. The cheerleaders also tradition-

ally lead the Tigers onto the field before and at the half of every game. The 1989 Tiger cheerleaders captured the National Championship in the annual Universal Cheerleading Association competition.



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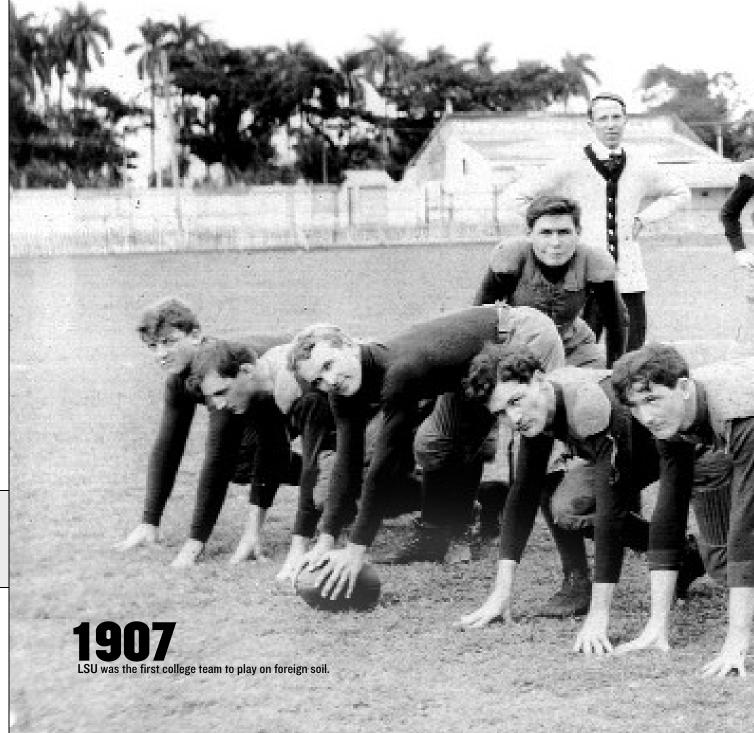
## **LSU Football Traditions**



Havana, Cuba - Dec. 25, 1907

#### **TIGERS INVADE CUBA**

LSU was the first college team to play on foreign soil when, in 1907, coach Edgar R. Wingard took his Tigers to Havana for an international gridiron bout. The University of Havana team had dominated every American service team it had played, but had never encountered football collegiate style. The finesse of the Tigers took the big Cuban team by surprise on Christmas Day at Almendares Park and LSU walked away with a convincing 56-0 victory before 10,000 fans.











**1896 TIGERS** 

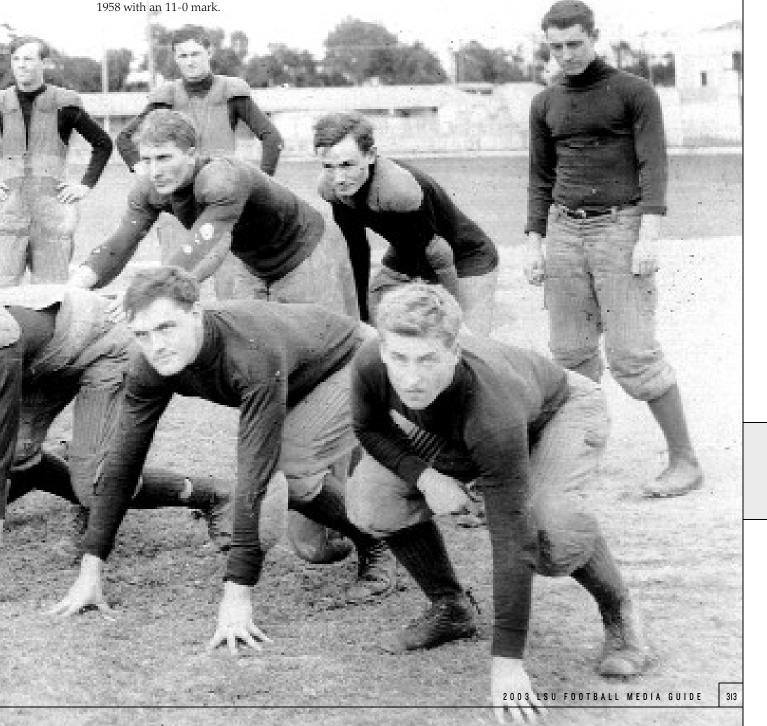
1902 TIGERS

1905 TIGERS

1908 TIGERS

### **PERFECT SEASONS** (1895, 1896, 1898, 1905, 1908, 1958)

LSU has had six unblemished seasons in its history. The Tigers first went undefeated and untied in 1895 under head coach A. P. Simmons with a 3-0 record, but the first truly great LSU team is considered to be the 1908 squad led by one of the most legendary players to wear the Purple and Gold--Doc Fenton. That 1908 team, coached by Edgar R. Wingard, soared through a 10-game schedule without a loss or tie as Fenton scored an incredible 125 points on the year. It was 50 years before LSU would post another perfect season, winning the national championship in



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The Kingfish, Huey P. long

#### **KINGFISH**

No single person can be credited for building LSU Football into the entity it is today, but one of the men who most in fluenced the popularity of Tiger football was nei-

ther a player nor a coach.

The "Kingfish," Louisiana Governor Huey P. Long, never shied from using his political influence to aid the cause of LSU football. Two examples: In 1934, athletic director T.P. Heard reported low advance sales for the LSU-SMU game because of a circus coming to town the night of the game. Long contacted the proper Barnum and Bailey representatives and informed them of a near-forgotten animal-dipping law. The show was canceled and LSU-SMU ticket sales took off.

Later that same year Long used his influence to "entice" passenger agents of the Illinois Central Railroad to lower fares for LSU students traveling to a road football game. When Long threatened to reassess the value of railroad bridges in the state from \$100,000 to \$4 million, the railroad generously agreed to give LSU students a \$6 roundtrip fare for the Vanderbilt game that season.



**Stadium Dormitories** 

#### **DORMITORIES**

Tiger Stadium is unique in that it once housed some 1,500 dorm rooms, home to many an LSU student over the years. This concept was introduced in 1928 by T.P. "Skipper" Heard, who can also be credited for bringing night football to Tiger Stadium. Heard learned that LSU president James Smith proposed to use \$250,000 to build new dormitories on the LSU campus. Heard sold Smith on the idea of raising the stands on both the East and West sides of the stadium and extending them to the end zones, then constructing the dorms inside the stadium. Thus the University got its dorms and Tiger Stadium's capacity increased by 10,000 seats in 1931.

#### THE GOLDEN BAND FROM TIGERLAND



The grandest band in all the land, the Golden Band from Tigerland is as much a part of Saturday nights in Tiger Stadium as the team itself. Among the many favorites of LSU fans is the band's traditional pre-game march down North Stadium Drive from the Band Hall to the tune of "Hold That Tiger." That tradition is a carry-over from the old pre-game parades through downtown Baton Rouge. Castro Carazo was the man handpicked by Louisiana Governor Huey Long in 1935 to revamp the Tiger band. It was Carazo and Long who together wrote fan favorite "Touchdown for LSU," and two years later Carazo also penned

the official LSU fight song, "Fight For LSU."

The tradition of the LSU Tiger Marching Band continues today. In December of 2001 the band was awarded the Sudler Trophy. The Sudler Trophy is the highest honor a collegiate marching band can receive and has been called "the Heisman Trophy of marching bands," according to Frank Wickes, director of LSU bands.

The LSU Tiger Marching Band is made up of some 325 musicians, Golden Girls and Colorguard members. In 1997, the band was selected as the top band in the Southeastern Conference by SEC band directors.



# 1931 NIGHT FALLS ON TIGER STADIUM

The tradition of playing night games in Tiger Stadium began on Oct.3,1931,when LSU downed Spring Hill, 35-0, under the lights. The idea of night football was introduced by T.P. "Skipper" Heard, then graduate manager of athletics and later to be athletic director. Several reasons were cited for playing LSU games at night: (1) to avoid the heat and humidity of afternoon games, (2) to avoid scheduling conflicts with Tulane and Loyola, (3) to give some fans who were busy tending to plantations in the afternoon the opportunity to see the Tigers play. An immediate

increase in attendance was noted, and Night Football soon became ingrained in LSU football lore. LSU has also traditionally played better at night than in the light of day. Since 1960, LSU is 178-57-4 (.753) under the lights of Tiger Stadium and only 13-19-3 (.414) during the day at home.



# 1946 TIGERS BATTLE HOGS IN "ICE BOWL"

The Tigers of 1946, though not one of Bernie Moore's two SEC championship teams, was surely one of Moore's finest squads. Only a 26-7 loss at the hands of SEC foe Georgia Tech spoiled the season and the Y.A. Tittle-led Bayou Bengals landed in the Cotton Bowl against Arkansas and star Razorback Smackover

Scott. But ice, sleet and snow pelted Dallas on that Jan. 1 as LSU filled oil drums with charcoal and started fires for makeshift heaters on the field.

Fans built fires in the stands and watched the Tigers roll to 271-54 advantage in total yardage and a 15-1 lead in first downs. Those numbers, however, didn't equate on the scoreboard that showed 0-0 at game's end. The Tigers finished the season with a 9-1-1 record in Moore's penultimate season as head coach.



#### **NUMBERING SYSTEM**

LSU, in 1952, introduced a unique--and short-lived--jersey numbering system. The idea of coach Gaynell "Gus" Tinsley and publicity director Jim Corbett, the system utilized an abbreviation

of the player's position on his jersey. Thus, ends, guards and tackles wore the letters "E", "G" and "T" followed by a single-digit number. The right side of the line wore even numbers, the left side odd numbers. In similar fashion the centers, quarterbacks, left halfbacks, right halfbacks and fullbacks wore "C", "Q", "L", "R" and "F", respectively, followed by single-digit numerals.

The 1953 LSU yearbook, the Gumbo, boldly predicted that the new system "may revolutionize the football jersey manufacturing industry." It didn't.



# 1958

#### CHINESE BANDITS

The nickname of one of the three units utilized in Paul Dietzel's three-platoon

system that vaulted the Tigers to the 1958 national championship. That year, the first team was named the White Team, an offensive unit was named the Go Team and a defensive unit was tabbed the Chinese Bandits. The White Team, naturally, wore white jerseys and was so named. The Go Team wore gold jerseys as the word "gold" was eventually shortened to "go."

The name "Chinese Bandits" actually originated when Dietzel recalled a line from the old "Terry and The Pirates" comic strip that referred to Chinese Bandits as the "most vicious people in the world." In their heyday, the Chinese Bandits were featured in Chinese masks in Life magazine. In 1980 the LSU band revived the "Bandit" tune played when the LSU defense stalls any opponent's drive.

# 1959

#### 89 YARDS

There have been longer scoring plays in LSU football history, but Billy Cannon's 89-yard punt return against Ole Miss in 1959 is simply, and undeniably, the most famous play in Tiger gridiron records. In fact, some



consider it one of the most memorable in college football history. It was an eerie, misty and humid Halloween night, and the Rebels of Mississippi took a 3-0 lead into the final quarter, threatening to end an 18-game LSU win streak. On third and 17 from the Ole Miss 42, the Rebels' Jake Gibbs punted 47 yards to the Tiger 11 where Cannon hauled it in on the bounce. Cannon careened off seven tacklers down the east sideline and darted 89 yards to immortality. Some say it may have been that run that assured Cannon of the Heisman Trophy he received at season's end.

#### **HALLOWEEN**

Drama on Halloween is as traditional as pumpkins and goblins for LSU and Ole Miss. These schools have met seven times on October 31 with the series tied at 3-3-1. The most notable game on All Hallow's Eve was the 1959 thriller that saw Billy Cannon return a punt 89 yards to spur a 7-3 Tiger victory. The Tigers and Rebels next met on Halloween in 1964. Ole Miss led 10-3 late in the fourth quarter in Death Valley when LSU scored a touchdown to make it 10-9. Quarterback Billy Ezell then threw to Doug Moreau in the front corner of the endzone on the twopoint conversion, at nearly the exact point where Cannon had crossed the goalline five years earlier for an 11-10 win. There was a 17-year drought before the teams played on Oct. 31 again, this time at Jackson in 1981. A seesaw battle ended with a 46-yard field goal off the foot of LSU's David Johnston as time expired for a 27-27 tie. In the most recent meeting, the teams engaged in the first overtime game in LSU history at Oxford in 1998, but Ole Miss emerged with a 37-31 win.

### **LSU Football Traditions**

#### SOUTH END ZONE

Whether it be the 1959 goal line stand that sealed victory for the Tigers against Ole Miss on the "Billy Cannon Run" night or Bert Jones' pass to Brad Davis as time expired to beat the Rebels in 1972, the south end zone of Tiger Stadium has become somewhat of an enigma for the sometimes strange and often memorable plays in LSU football. In the past 18 years alone, the Tiger defenders have put together eight goal line stands at the south end zone, including the following games: 1985 Colorado State, 1985 Florida, 1986 North Carolina, 1986 Notre Dame, 1988 Texas A&M, 1991 Florida State, 1992 Miss. State and 1996 Vanderbilt. In 1988, the Tigers stymied the Texas Aggies at the LSU 2-yard line despite the distraction of a bank of lights going dark midway through A&M's series of plays. For that series, LSU's defense was nicknamed the "Lights Out Defense."

The first great goal line stand at that end of the field may have been in that 1959 game when Warren Rabb and Billy Cannon halted Ole Miss' Doug Elmore at the one-yard line for the 7-3 victory. Then, in 1971, the first and most memorable of LSU's three goal line stands against Notre Dame was at the one-yard line at the South end of the field as Louis Cascio and Ronnie Estay hit the Irish's Andy

Billy Cannon and Warren Rabb make a stop at the South End Zone.

Huff at the goal en route to a 28-8 Tiger victory.



# 1966

#### LSU STUNS NO. 2 ARKANSAS IN COTTON BOWL

One of the most notable games in LSU football history was the 1966 Cotton Bowl against powerful Arkansas. The Razorbacks went into the New Year's Day tilt ranked No.2 in the country and riding a 22-game winning streak. LSU owned a meager 7-3 mark compared to the Hogs'perfect 10-0 record, but little Joe Labruzzo silenced many a disbeliever to spark the Bayou Bengals to their greatest bowl win. The Tigers left Dallas with a 14-7 win over the Southwest Conference host Razorbacks. The Tigers have appeared in three other Cotton Bowl classics, tying Arkansas 0-0 in the 1947 game beating Texas 13-0 in 1963 and losing to Texas 35-20 in 2003.

#### **TAILGATING**

It has often been pondered whether the attraction of night football is because of the excitement of the atmosphere created by a game under the lights, the more pleasant weather of an evening after the sun has set, or because it allows more time for tailgating. If it is not football that people of South Louisiana crave, then it is food. Tiger fans arrive as early as Thursday evening for Saturday games, set up their motor homes and kick back for a weekend of cooking and enjoyment for two days until kickoff.



1988

#### TIGERS "MOVE THE EARTH" IN WIN OVER AUBURN

QB Tommy Hodson connected with WR Eddie Fuller in the back of the endzone for the touchdown that vaulted LSU to a 7-6 victory over Auburn on Oct.8,1988 to help lead the LSU Tigers their seventh SEC crown. The moment will forever be know as the "Night the Tigers Moved the Earth" as the play caused such a thunderous explosion from the 79,341 fans in Tiger Stadium the LSU Geology Department registered vibrations on a seismograph machine at the exact moment the touchdown was scored.

#### **VICTORY HILL**



A pre-game ritual for many Tiger fans is to line North Stadium Drive in the hours before kickoff to see the Tiger Marching Band in its walk from the band hall. The band pauses each game on the hill next to the Journalism School to play "Tiger Rag" to the

delight of the LSU throngs.

Former head coach Curley Hallman began the tradition in the early 1990s of leading the team by foot down Victory Hill from Broussard Hall two hours before the game. That practice became so popular that Gerry DiNardo and Nick Saban continued the tradition, even though the team began to stay in a hotel the night before home games. The team buses drive from the hotel to Broussard Hall--not Tiger Stadium--in order for the players to make their traditional walk down Victory Hill.

## **LSU** vs. TULANE

LSU'S RIVALRY with the Green Wave of Tulane was a natural from the game's infancy. The Greenies won LSU's first football game in 1893 by a 34-0 count, but over the ensuing seasons, the Tigers have dominated the series and own a 65-22-7 margin over their neighbors from New Orleans. The proximity of the schools made for the development of the rivalry in its early years and, by 1913, fans began to travel the distance by automobile instead of by train. Today's Tiger fan can traverse the distance from Tiger Stadium to the Louisiana Superdome in less than 90 minutes, but in the early years, according to the New Orleans Times Picayune of the day, "with a good car, it can be negotiated in perfect comfort in six hours."



**LSU Football Traditions** 

#### CROSSBAR

Unbeknownst to many a Tiger fan, the LSU football team still runs onto the field under the same crossbar that stood as part of the north end zone goalpost in Tiger Stadium as early as 1955. It had long been tradition that the LSU football team enter the field by running under the goalpost when the new "T-style" goalposts came into vogue. By virtue of tradition, the old "H-style" posts stood on the field of Death Valley until it was finally removed in 1984. Part of the crossbar, however, was kept and mounted above the door of the Tiger Den through which the Tigers run onto the field each game.In 1993,in celebration of the centennial of LSU football, the "H-style" goalpost was returned to the end zones of Tiger Stadium thanks to a donation from Shaw Industries of Baton Rouge.



# **VOICE OF THE TIGERS**For many years, John

For many years, John Ferguson was known as the "Voice of the Tigers" as his call of the action was broadcast nationwide. The most famous call of all plays, though, belongs to J.C. Politz who was the "Voice of the Tigers" in 1959 when Billy Cannon made his famous

John Ferguson

89-yard run. By the time Cannon reached midfield on that play, a technician attempted to turn up the sound on Politz' mike to raise it above the crowd noise. In the excitement of the moment, though, he turned the knob the wrong way, lowering the volume and raising the crowd noise, and much of Politz' call of that play is lost for ever.

Ferguson later returned to the mike as "The Voice," then moved into television where he worked on TigerVision broadcasts beginning in 1984. At that time, Jim Hawthorne took over the radio duties and remains today the football,

basketball and baseball "Voice of the Tigers." The legendary Ferguson is now director emeritus of LSU's Tiger Athletic Foundation.

#### THE RAG

Valley.

The Rag was the traditional spoils of victory in the LSU-Tulane rivalry for many years. A flag decorated half in LSU's colors of purple and gold, and the other half adorned in the green and white of Tulane, it was held for one year by the victorious school until the game the following season. The whereabouts of the original flag are unknown; however, a new version of The Rag was awarded to the LSU squad after the Tigers defeated the Greenies, 48-17, in the 2001 season opener in Death

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### Mike the Tiger



Trainer Mike Chambers and namesake with Mike I housed in City Park Zoo.

the famed live Bengal Tiger that serves as the graphic image of all LSU athletic teams, begins the 13th year of his reign on the LSU campus.

He proudly rules over a modern, refurbished domicile, just north of Tiger Stadium which is divided into two areas: a concrete space containing a pool and grassy expanse, equipped

with a tiger-sized wooden scratching post and a climbing platform. In addition, there is an indoor home into which he can retreat to avoid inclement weather with a large window that allows his fans to view him while inside.

Mike's ride through Tiger Stadium before home games in a cage topped by the LSU cheerleaders is a school tradition. Before entering the stadium, his cage on wheels is parked next to the opponent's lockerroom in the southeast end of the stadium. Opposing players must make their way past Mike's cage to reach their locker room.

Tradition dictates that for every growl elicited by Mike before a football game, the Tigers will score a touchdown that night. For many years, Mike was prompted to roar by pounding on the cage. Objections of cruel punishment brought about the use of recorded growls to play to the crowd before the games. That practice was discontinued shortly afterward and, today, Mike participates in the pregame tradition without provocation.

The Tiger mascot stopped traveling with the LSU team in 1970 when his cage overturned on Airline Highway in an accident en route to a game. Mike IV traveled four times in recent years, though, as he appeared at a Mardi Gras parade in 1984, the 1985 Sugar Bowl and LSU's basketball games in the Superdome.

Mike V made his first road trip in December 1991 to the Louisiana Superdome to witness LSU and Shaquille O'Neal defeat Texas, 84-83.

In the mid-1980's, pranksters cut the locks on Mike IV's cage and freed him in the early-morning hours just days before the annual LSU-Tulane clash. Mike roamed free, playfully knocking down several small pine trees in the area, before being trapped in the Bernie Moore Track Stadium where police used tranquilizer guns to capture and return the Bengal Tiger to his home.

The incident was reminisent of a kidnapping of Mike I many years ago by Tulane students before a Tiger-Green Wave battle.

#### MIKE I

The original Mike was purchased from the Little Rock Zoo for \$750, with money contributed by the student body. Originally known as "Sheik" at the time of his purchase, his name was changed to Mike for Mike Chambers who served as LSU's athletic trainer when the first mascot was purchased. Chambers had played football at Illinois where he blocked for the legendary Red Grange. The first Mike was housed in the Baton Rouge Zoo for one year before a permanent home was constructed near Tiger Stadium. Mike I reigned for 20 years before dying of pneumonia in the midst of a six-game LSU losing streak in 1957. Fearing the LSU faithful would give up hope upon the death of the mascot, Mike's death was not made public until the Tigers finally ended the losing streak.

#### **MIKE II**

Served a brief reign, lasting only the 1957 season, before dying of pneumonia in the spring of 1958. He was born at the Audubon Park Zoo near the Tulane campus in New Orleans.

#### **MIKE III**

Just in time for the 1958 national championship season, Mike III was purchased from the Seattle Zoo following a "national search" by then-athletic director Jim Corbett. The student body contributed \$1,500 for the purchase of the tiger. Mike III served as mascot for 18 seasons, dying after the only losing season of his reign as LSU posted a 5-6 record in 1975.

#### **MIKE IV**

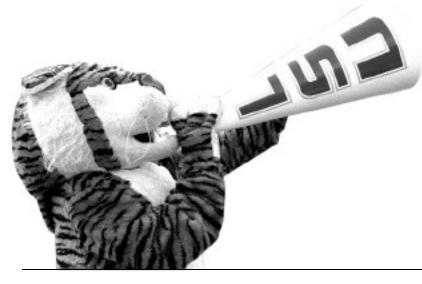
Mike IV reigned over Tiger athletics for 14 years after being donated to the school by August A. Busch III from the Dark Continent Amusement Park in Tampa, Fla, on Aug. 29, 1976. Born on May 15,1974,Mike's age and health were determining factors in his retirement to the Baton Rouge Zoo in 1990.The centerpiece of the Zoo's cat exhibit, Mike weighs in at 500 pounds.His only hiatus from the LSU campus before 1990 was the summer of 1981 which he spent at the Little Rock Zoo while his cage was being refurbished. Ironically, the Little Rock Zoo was the birthplace of the first Mike the Tiger. Mike IV died of old age in March of 1995 at the age of 21.

#### **MIKE V**

The newest tiger mascot was donated by Dr. Thomas and Caroline Atchison of the Animal House Zoological Park in Molten, Ala. Avid LSU supporter Charles Becker, a member of the LSU booster group the Tammany Tigers, put







#### **FIGHT FOR LSU**

(LSU fight song)

Like Knights of old, Let's fight to hold The glory of the Purple Gold.

Let's carry through, Let's die or do To win the game for dear old LSU.

Keep trying for that high score; Come on and fight, We want some more, some more.

Come on you Tigers, Fight! Fight! Fight! for dear old L-S-U.
RAH!

#### **HEY, FIGHTIN' TIGERS**

(Adapted from the original composition "Hey, Look Me Over" from the Broadway production "Wildcat")

Hey, Fightin'Tigers, fight all the way Play Fightin'Tigers, win the game today.

You've got the know how, you're doing fine, Hang on to the ball as you hit the wall And smash right through the line

You've got to go for a touchdown Run up the score. Make Mike the Tiger stand right up and roar ROAR!

Give it all of your might as you fight tonight and keep the goal in view.
Victory for L-S-U!

#### **TOUCHDOWN FOR LSU!**

Tigers! Tigers! They've come to town, They fight! They fight! Call a first down, Just look them over, and how they can go, Smashing the line with runs and passes high and low.

Touchdown! Touchdown! It's Tigers'score. Give them hell and a little bit more. Come on you Tigers, Fight them, you Tigers, Touchdown for LSU. Rah! U. Rah!

#### **TIGER RAG**

(Hold That Tiger)

Long ago, way down in the jungle Someone got an inspiration for a tune, And that jingle brought from the jungle Became famous mighty soon.

Thrills and chills it sends thru you! Hot! so hot, it burns you too!

Tho'it's just the growl of the tiger It was written in a syncopated way, More and more they howl for the "Tiger" Ev'ry where you go today They're shoutin'

Where's that Tiger! Where's that Tiger! Where's that Tiger! Where's that Tiger! Hold that Tiger! Hold that Tiger! Hold that Tiger!

#### **LSU ALMA MATER**

Where stately oaks and broad magnolias shade inspiring halls,

There stands our dear Alma Mater who to us recalls

Fond memories that waken in our hearts a tender glow,

And make us happy for the love that we have learned to know.

All hail to thee our Alma Mater, molder of mankind,
May greater glory, love unending be forever thine.
Our worth in life will be thy worth we pray to keep it true,
And thy spirit dwell in us forever...L-S-U.