

# The Auburn Plainsman

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# The Auburn Plainsman

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BACKGROUND PHOTO FROM ARCHIVE

COVER DESIGN BY BRYCHELLE BROOKS | EDITOR-IN-CHIEF and LANA HA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Nov. 5, 1921  
Political Tapestry  
Jason Smith



The background is a collage of faded newspaper clippings from 'The Auburn Plainsman'. At the top right, there is a detailed illustration of a clock tower. Large, bold letters spelling 'AUBURN' and 'PLAINSMA' are visible across the middle. The central text 'Thank you for reading' is overlaid in a dark brown, bold, italicized serif font.

***Thank you  
for reading***



WELCOME

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**By BRYCHELLE BROOKS**

Editor-in-Chief

Auburn is a special place, rich in sports, traditions and students, but most importantly, Auburn is full of history. This year, we are celebrating 170 years of a place we know as The Loveliest Village. From campus buildings being used as medical centers in the Civil War to Jordan-Hare stadium erupting on game day, there's so much to love.

Though, reader, I bode to you the questions: What is beneath Auburn's surface? Is there something more we don't know? How has Auburn evolved?

Auburn, as we know it, has many secrets, and I urge you to take a step into that unknown. 170 years is a long time. There has to be more than what students learn at Camp War Eagle or what you can access on the first page of Google.

Dig deep. Enjoy the scenery. Take longer on Google. Do what it takes. All in all, it's Auburn's birthday, which means we should celebrate its rich history. So, happy birthday, Auburn — and to you, reader, enjoy what you learn.



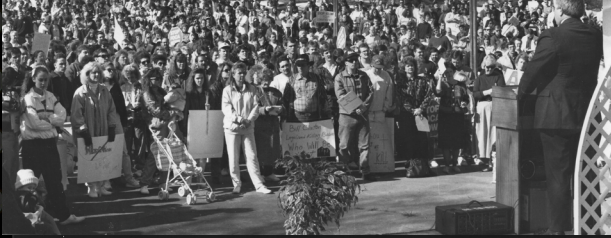
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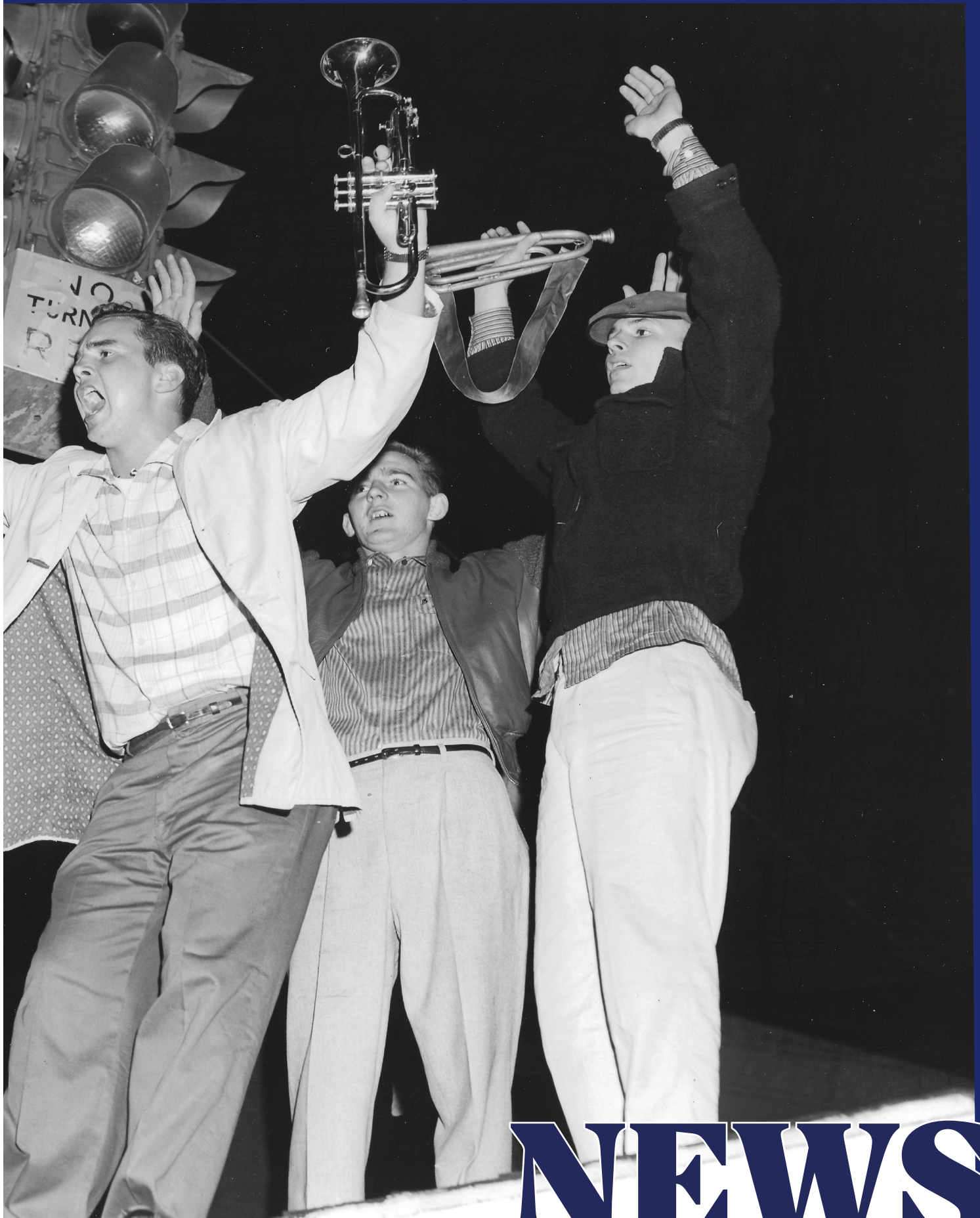
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# NEWS







# NEWS

## NEWS

# WEGP: A history of Auburn's official hostesses and hosts

By **TRIPP HEDDEN**

News Writer

To celebrate the 170th anniversary of Auburn, it is essential to reflect on the organizations that have shaped traditions, preserved history and defined the Auburn experience of today. One group of students that exemplifies the Auburn spirit and dedication to the Creed is the War Eagle Girls and Plainsmen (WEGP). WEGP is a group of 13 women and 13 men, who represent Auburn University as official hostesses and hosts.

The current president of the WEGP, Mcrae Dickinson, senior in accounting, said that the group most often appears at football games, special events and at events upon request. Throughout the years, the organization has adjusted to the needs of the time, but regardless of the event they attend, WEGP is dedicated to serving Auburn.

"The group's role has changed slightly over the years. Some years, we're more involved with the alumni, the president [and] the board, and other years, we are more involved with the athletic department. Our official mission is to serve Auburn and to be the official hosts and hostesses," Dickinson said. "Game days are the biggest and most visible [events for us], but we're busy year-round."

Before the War Eagle Girls, the

tradition of electing someone to serve as the university's official hostess began with Miss Auburn in 1934. During this time, Miss Auburn had an unofficial "posse" of girls who followed her around campus and attended events. Eventually, as time went on, around 1966, one specific Miss Auburn, Chris Akin Adams, wanted to do more with her role, so with the help of then SGA President, George McMillan, the first 25 War Eagle Girls were selected, with Miss Auburn serving as an

them with official male escorts to assist with their duties. After receiving approval from the War Eagle Girls to be joined by their male counterparts, Eden created a constitution for the group, naming the men the Plainsmen. During that fall, WEGP was recognized as the official hostesses and hosts of Auburn University.

Today, whether they are attending the president's Christmas party, giving a campus tour or cheering at the front of the student section, WEGP can be seen wearing their historic orange jackets and sashes.

"The uniform is a good reflection of our group because there are pieces that haven't changed. For the guys, it's the jacket. You see the orange jacket, and you immediately recognize it. For the girls, it's the sash on their dress," Dickinson said.

"They represent Auburn and everything it stands for, the traditions and the values. Those two pieces are passed down throughout the years,

which is a part of keeping the tradition alive."

Dickinson later said they are a tighter-knit group and strive to represent Auburn in the best way possible.

For interested students, interview sign-ups to become a War Eagle Girl or Plainsman open on Jan. 20 and close on Feb. 20.



CONTRIBUTED BY ABIGAIL HOLBROOK

Photo of War Eagle Girls and Plainsmen at Hey Day pep rally in 2025.

honorary member.

In 1968, Tom Eden, the conference director of Auburn University, who was committed to establishing the War Eagle Girls as the face of Auburn, offered to provide



# Train stations to culinary prestige at The Depot

By NICOLLE GENERAUX

News Writer



The Depot on Mitcham Avenue in Auburn, Alabama.

Opening in September 2015, The Depot is a fine dining restaurant serving fresh seafood from a globally-inspired menu. Patrons appreciate the quality of its fried crustaceans and their family-friendly atmosphere, but they may not realize the actual function of the restaurant, which began as Auburn's third railroad depot.

Before The Depot was founded, the location served as a train station. Built in 1847, the station served as a Confederate transportation route during the Civil War. The route stretched through Alabama, including Lee County, Selma and Montgomery, to Atlanta. In 1864, Major General Lovell Harrison Rousseau of the Union Army led an attack on the railroad tracks to interrupt the flow of military supplies to the Confederates. The tracks were left

in shambles until the conclusion of the war in 1865.

In 1870, a second depot was constructed from the remains, but this time, acted as a popular transportation option for travelers and served as the primary transit system in and out of the city. This station was seen as a landmark for Auburn University students, as many would use the train as their mode of transportation.

In 1896, Auburn students took the opportunity to grease the train tracks, causing the train carrying their rivals, Georgia Tech, to slide almost a mile past the station and forcing them to trek all the way back to town. Going on to beat the Yellow Jackets 45-0, this act began the long celebrated tradition of the Wreck Tech Pajama Parade, when Auburn students would march in their pajamas through Downtown

Auburn with floats before football games.

After the depot was struck by lightning and burned down, a third depot was built in 1904, designed by one of Auburn's own architecture students, Ralph Dudley. Keeping the Victorian style of the early 20th century, this depot was designed to revive the romanesque architectural style.

Even as the number of people needing to travel by train dwindled due to car and plane travel options, the depot stayed open for another 66 years to welcome passengers to the Loveliest Village on the Plains. It finally closed in 1970.

After being used by small businesses for another 30 years, the depot fell into disrepair and was nearly forgotten. However, in 2013, Matt and Jana Poirier, owners of Auburn's restaurant The Hound, recognized its historical significance and partnered with the City of Auburn and chef Scott Simpson, who now serves as founding partner and strategic culinary advisor of The Depot, to transform the building into what it is today. The Poirers maintained the soul of the original structure by restoring the black and white floor tiles and the 200-year-old heartwood pine train platforms, repurposing them into unique aspects of the restaurant, including the chef's table, the bar and the hostess stand.

Whether as Auburn's main transportation hub or as one of Auburn's most popular restaurants, The Depot is part of Auburn's rich history.

DANNY ZIMMERMANN | PHOTOGRAPHER



# ROOTED IN TRADITION



**MITCHELL KNIGHTEN | PHOTOGRAPHER**

War Eagle looks off onto Jordan Hare's crowd.

**MAGGIE BOWMAN | PHOTOGRAPHER**

Various photos of Auburn Fans.

**LUCA FLORES | PHOTO EDITOR**

Johni Broome, Bruce Pearl, and Chad Baker-Mazara soak in the moment after winning the SEC Tournament Championship on March 17, 2024.



# When Auburn gives you lemonade: Toomer's Corner

By **SYDNEY GALLARDO**

News Reporter

Sitting on the corner of College Street and Magnolia Avenue lies Toomer's Drugs, the beloved Auburn landmark. Founded in 1896 by Sheldon "Shel" Toomer, the drugstore quickly became a staple of the Auburn downtown area and a hotspot for Auburn traditions.

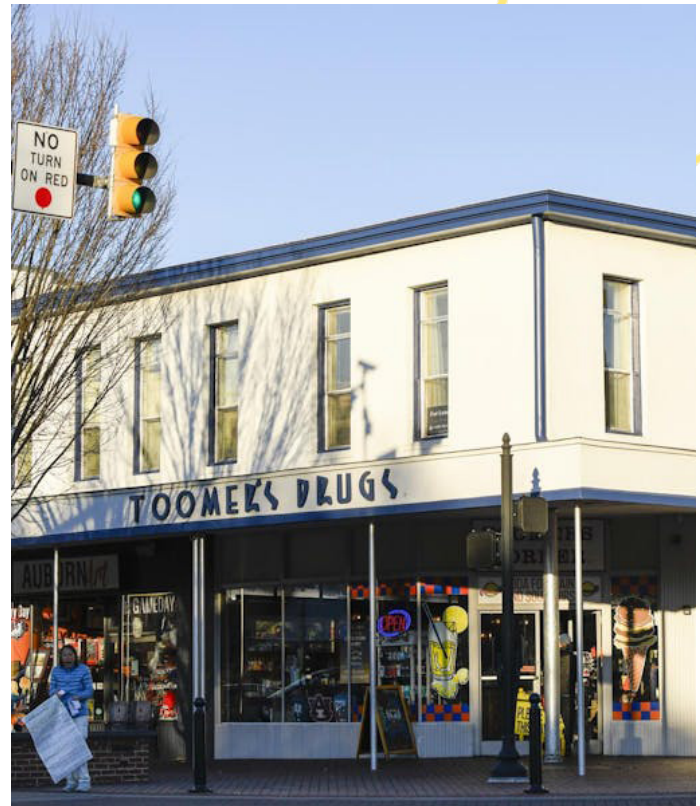
From its beginning, Toomer's has been intertwined with the history of Auburn University. Shel Toomer was an Auburn graduate in chemistry, agriculture and pharmacy. He also played halfback on Auburn's first football team in 1892 and was heavily involved in politics, serving as mayor in 1918 and a city council member for 24 years. Eventually, Toomer served in the Alabama House of Representatives, Senate and later on the Auburn University Board of Trustees.

According to Elizabeth Lipscomb, an Opelika native and the 97-year-old wife of late Toomer's Drugs owner McAdory "Mac" Lipscomb, Toomer was always in touch with his community, especially the university. When the awning for the storefront needed to be redone, he held a design competition for architecture students. The winner's design was used for the awning, which remains in the internal awning structure today.

Even after Toomer sold the business to Lipscomb in 1952, Toomer's Drugs remained a fixture in the city and the university's culture. It was during this time that the store established two beloved Auburn customs: rolling Toomer's Corner and the drug store's lemonade.

In the 1960s, the drugstore was the only place in the city with a telegraph. When employees heard about the football team's away game victories, they would roll power lines with ticker tape. Eventually, students also began participating, and Auburn embraced the tradition. As time went on, power lines went underground, and ticker tape was traded for toilet paper. Today, rolling Toomer's Corner remains as a celebration for any Auburn victory.

Despite its now-famous status, Toomer's lemonade was not always a staple of the drugstore. According to Nim Lipscomb, the son of Mac Lipscomb, James Echols was the one who perfected and popularized



ELIZABETH MARSH | PHOTOGRAPHER

the drink. Described by Lipscomb as an "integral employee," Echols was a beloved member of the store who delivered medicine and worked the counter, which included making and serving drinks. To this day, his photo is displayed in the store.

"One day, when I was working in there, he mixed up a lemonade and set it down on the counter," said Nim, reflecting on the past. "I looked at him and said, 'What's this for?' He said, 'In about two minutes, the guy's gonna come through this, and he's gonna ask for this drink, so give it to him.' I gave it to him, and the guy goes, 'I want him to make it,' so I said 'Well, he made it. He saw you coming.' James was a fixture, for sure."

Today, the Toomer's Drugs business is owned and operated by Betty Haisten, while the building itself belongs to the Lipscomb family. The drug store still sells its famous lemonade along with other beverages, ice cream and Auburn-themed souvenirs. Residents, students and alumni alike still come to the store to celebrate their love for what Toomer's represents: the Auburn Family.

LANA HA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Doodles of lemons. Orange and blue toiletpaper.

## LIFESTYLE

# Evolution of Auburn Greek life

By **MARGARET GRIFFIN**

Lifestyle Writer

Auburn University's Greek life involvement continues to be an ever-present tradition on campus and in the Auburn community. Spring, summer and fall formal recruitment are options for potential new members to join sororities and fraternities every school year. Over 35% of Auburn students are involved in Greek life organizations, participating in events to enhance the Auburn community with philanthropic and social endeavors.

Greek life at Auburn has transformed significantly since its establishment in the late 19th century. Initially, Greek membership at Auburn was exclusively open to men, with the first fraternity chapters including Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Alpha Tau Omega and Phi Delta Theta in the late 1870s. Decades later, the first sororities including Chi Omega and Kappa Delta were introduced to the campus community. Now, in 2026, Pi Kappa Phi is celebrating its 100th anniversary on campus.

In the beginning, Greek membership represented a smaller portion of the student body,

and recruitment involved far fewer participants than today. Over time, Greek life has become a platform for student engagement, leadership and service, with consistent increases in interest and participation. Panhellenic recruitment has also transformed into a highly structured experience, as the classes of new members have been at all-time highs for the last several years.

The 2025 Panhellenic recruitment season was once again a record-breaking year, with historic numbers of over 2,500 potential new members (PNMs) participating in formal recruitment, more commonly known as 'rush.' With 18 sororities, the Panhellenic Council works to provide positive experiences when PNMs step foot on campus for rush before the fall semester starts.

"It was crazy how many PNMs there were this past year. Every incoming freshman I talk to is planning on rushing, even if they are from out of state," said Mary Prescott, a sophomore involved in Greek life.

**DANNY ZIMMERMANN | PHOTOGRAPHER**

The Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity house at Auburn University on Dec. 13, 2025.



**ESTELA MUNOZ | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR**

A member of Delta Zeta embraces a new member of the sorority on Bid Day, Aug. 16, 2025. New members of Phi Mu pose for a photograph on Bid Day, Aug. 16, 2025.



## LIFESTYLE

**ESTELA MUNOZ | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR**

New members of Delta Delta Delta embrace on Bid Day,  
Aug. 16, 2025.

**CARTER ZANE | FORMER GRAPHICS ARTIST**

Greek letters Omega, Lambda and Pi.

**ARCHIVE PHOTO**

The Kappa Chi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha poses for a Founders Day Picture.

**CONTRIBUTED BY KAPPA ALPHA PSI**

Newest members of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity on May 18, 2025.

In 2009, all Auburn Panhellenic sororities moved to the University's housing, known as the Village, increasing member participation and organization recognition. Each chapter has a specific area in the Village, and now, sorority members can choose to live in their sorority's respective building, usually when they are a sophomore.

"I am so grateful to be able to live in my sorority hall with others, and our open-door policy is so much fun. The entire hall lets others share their spaces and so we really get to know each other and bond throughout the year," said Hadley Moore, a sophomore involved in her sorority.

Along with the Panhellenic sororities, Auburn's fraternity life on campus provides social opportunities for their members. In the spring and summer, PNMs interested in joining one of the 28 fraternities on

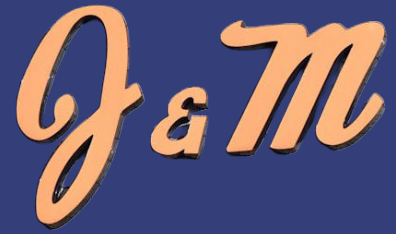
campus will communicate with older brothers to find the best fit for their potential Greek community.

Also on Auburn's campus, the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) is home to the Divine Nine, the historically Black fraternities and sororities. For those interested in joining the Divine Nine, all chapters host a Meet the Greeks event early each semester, while each has its own unique recruitment events during the year.

While Greek life continues to expand at Auburn, the organizations welcome members, even those not involved in Greek organizations, to participate in events hosted by chapters. This inclusivity is unique to Auburn, with the Greek community fostering opportunities for fellowship throughout the year and continuing to evolve on campus.

## NEWS

# The history of an Auburn staple:



By **ERIN COSBY**  
Legal Reporter

Toomer's Corner is home to many iconic landmarks that have shaped the Auburn community, and one such location is J&M Bookstore, which has been serving the Auburn area for over 70 years. Rain or shine, J&M is there to provide a warm welcome, quality service and a "War Eagle!"

Famous for its family-friendly atmosphere, Auburn is next to impossible to visit without feeling like part of the Auburn Family, and J&M is an example of this.

Officially opening in 1953, J&M started as a family-owned bookstore. Over its years in operation, J&M expanded and transitioned to mostly selling Auburn merchandise. Today, countless Tigers stop by J&M on game day to purchase Auburn souvenirs, as the bookstore has managed to grow its operations to manage the game-day crowds.

Another aspect of the Auburn staple is its rich history. Although it has encountered challenges, J&M Bookstore has adapted to changing times and has continued to be an overwhelming success.

Before J&M Bookstore became what it is today, it was the Hawkins Bookstore. One of its founders, George Johnston Jr., also known as "Big George," grew up in the Auburn area. Johnston enlisted in the military in World War II, and when he returned after his service, he studied business at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now Auburn University.

During that time, he worked at the Hawkins Bookstore until its owner passed away suddenly while on vacation. Johnston continued working at the store until new owner Paul Malone, who sold textbooks in Tuscaloosa, took over. On May 19, 1953, the Hawkins Bookstore officially became J&M Bookstore.

"[Paul Malone] bought it from the Hawkins family. The store became Malone Bookstore in the late '40s," said Trey Johnston, the son of Johnston Jr. "Daddy stayed and worked with him, as he went to school. Anyway, in 1953, Mr. Malone gave Daddy

an opportunity to buy into the store, and that's when it became Johnston & Malone."

At the time of its founding, the store was relatively small, but that did not last long. Under the guidance of Johnston Jr. and Malone, the store grew exponentially. Nestled in the heart of campus, the location was the nearby spot for students to buy

## JOHNSTON & MALONE

# SINCE 1953

their textbooks.

When its neighbor, Burton's Bookstore, closed in 1963, J&M absorbed and expanded, extending J&M's history back to when Burton's was founded in 1878.

J&M also saw expansion upwards, as more was built overhead. These were some of the only real renovations to the storefront, so its original charm, design and history remained intact, even after decades of operation. J&M later opened another location, which experienced a lot of initial success.

As the internet exploded in popularity and textbooks became available online, J&M phased out the selling of physical textbooks and shifted its focus primarily to game-day merchandise. However, the bookstore continued to supply materials for the architecture, design and engineering programs.

This adaptation allowed the main store location to continue to thrive; however, this shift and the COVID-19 pandemic led to the closing of the bookstore's second location. Despite the initial popularity and later decline of the second J&M Bookstore, the downtown location continued to draw in visitors.

Trey discussed the magnetism of the downtown location for visitors of all ages.

**ARCHIVE PHOTO**

Pat Sullivan receives his Heisman ring in J&M Bookstore.



“They want to come to J&M downtown. They want to smell victory, smell where Coach Jordan walked,” Trey said.

Despite its changes, many other aspects of J&M have been preserved.

“We’ve been blessed over the years as far as history, legacy and being a traditional spot to go shopping, especially on game-days. As you can see, we’ve expanded, but we still have the art, architecture, graphic design and technical supplies one needs at Auburn University,” Trey said.

J&M has its roots as a family business dating back to George Johnston Jr. and his wife, a former Miss Auburn, who took pride in maintaining standards at the store and ensuring guests felt welcomed.

Later, their son Trey, who had worked at J&M since high school, took over the business and became CEO. Now retired, Trey can still be found at the store, personally greeting and making sure guests are cared for to this day.

Today, the store is still bustling with happy customers. The business also functions as a sort of recruiting center for the University, as Auburn alumni return and bring their children to pick out Auburn merchandise.

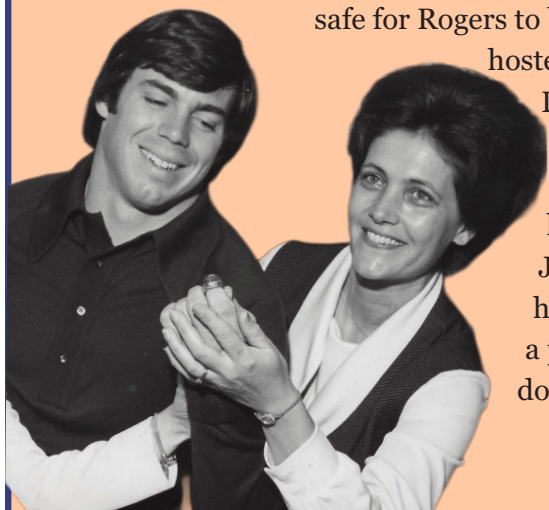
J&M has also seen many Auburn legends and athletes visit, with recruits exploring and picking out Auburn gear to represent the school. On his way to the Iron Bowl, professional golfer Payne Stewart also made a stop at J&M, where he joined Trey in greeting guests and passing out stickers.

In addition to athletics, former Director for National Security Agency Michael Rogers visited J&M, where

Secret Service cleared the store to ensure it was safe for Rogers to browse. J&M also

hosted UFC President Dana White and several fighters.

With years of history behind it, J&M Bookstore has become a pillar of the downtown area.



WYATT LOFTIN | PHOTOGRAPHER

“J&M is a great place,” said Ben Duncan, inventory manager. “It’s a family place. It’s been here for a long, long time. It’s a special place, it’s been part of the community for years, and it’s a special place to work, visit and shop at.”

All employees at the store expressed a deep love for J&M, including Victoria Malinowski, sophomore in hotel and restaurant management.

“I’ve worked here since I was 15, and it’s been so good that I’ve stayed here through college and whatnot,” Malinowski said. “It means a lot, and it’s a good place to work.”

Malinowski also described the enthusiasm members of the J&M Bookstore family have for adding to visitor’s experiences in Auburn.

“We’re always willing to go an extra step to see that they get what they need and what they want, especially when it’s a win or a loss, a good football season or a bad football season,” Malinowski said. “We’re kind of there to help celebrate and be a tradition.”

This sentiment was shared by fellow employee Millie Walker.

“I think it’s a very steady place in the midst of all this change, and I think the locals really appreciate things like that,” Walker said.

As Auburn continues its legacy in academics, athletics, community and hospitality, J&M Bookstore will continue to serve and be a part of the Auburn community.



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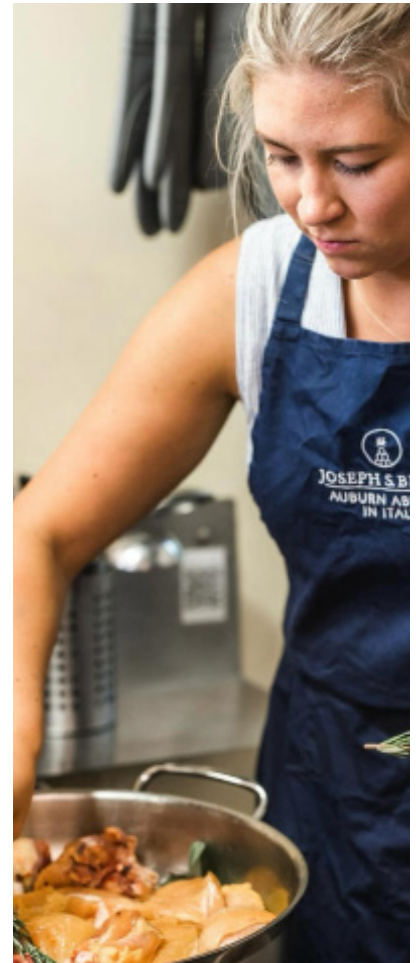
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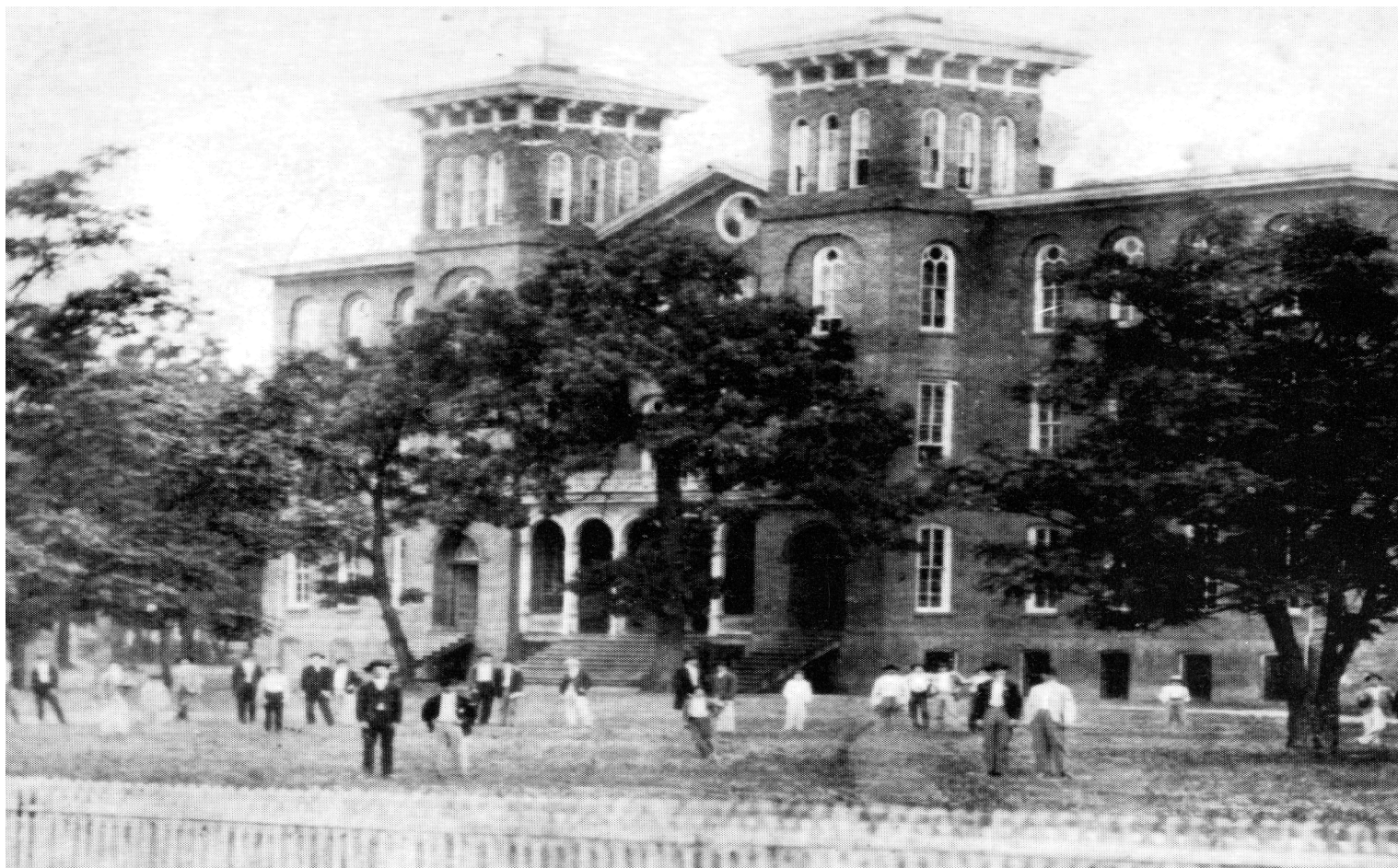
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## NEWS



## ***The forgotten buildings of Auburn University***

**By AUSTON KUCHOLTZ**

News Writer

It is rare to find any student, professor or administrator who can confidently recollect every building on Auburn's sprawling campus. While most are familiar with the Haley Center and Melton Student Center, or have fond memories at Jordan-Hare Stadium and Neville Arena, some buildings at Auburn remain far more unacknowledged than others. After the long substantial history of Auburn's campus, many buildings have simply been left nearly forgotten.

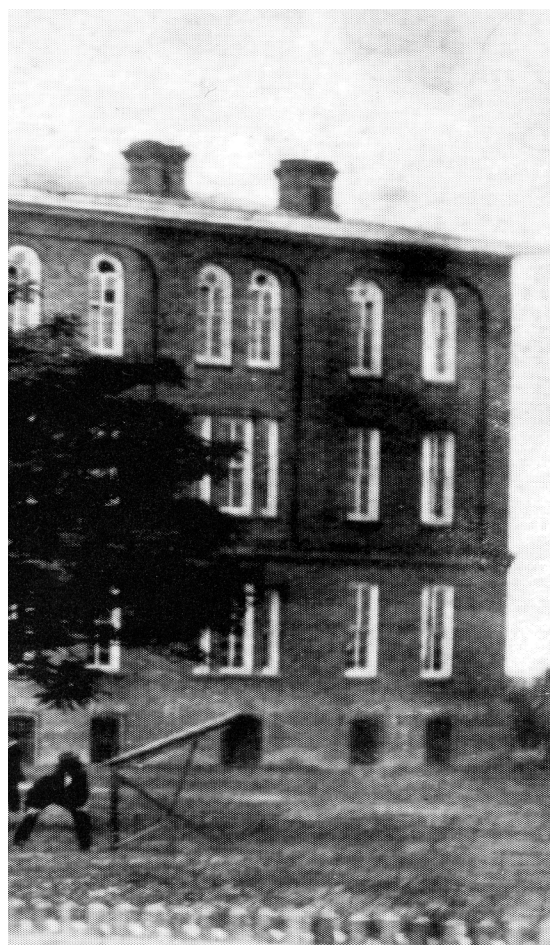
### **Old Main Hall**

The Samford Hall clock tower seems to have always been a fixture at Auburn, but many students may not know that it is actually a replacement for another building that used to stand in the same spot: Old Main, the first building on Auburn's campus. Less familiar, however, is the history of that original building.

Old Main Hall, completed in 1859, was a four-story, symmetrical brick building where some of the earliest classes at Auburn were held. The building accom-

modated six faculty members who taught the then 80-person student body. During the American Civil War, Old Main served as a hospital for Confederate veterans, as the university was closed for the duration of the war. In 1887, the same year the Hatch Act was passed, allowing Auburn to purchase more land for expansion, the building was destroyed by a fire. Samford Hall would be built on the same site as Old Main Hall, incorporating the ruins of the destroyed building into its design.





**CONTRIBUTED BY AUBURN SPECIAL  
COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES**

Photo of students on the lawn on Old Main Hall.

### **Graves Center and Cottage**

During the 1930s, Auburn University, then known as the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, looked to expand its agricultural program, specifically to provide on-campus housing for agriculturalists visiting for conventions. This led to the construction of the Graves Center, a complex consisting of 30 small cottages, an amphitheatre and a dining hall.

The complex, located just south of the modern ACLC building, was built in the Greek revival style and would be repurposed several times over the ensuing decades. The Graves Center even

temporarily housed the Auburn University football team in the late 1940s. As time passed, much of the complex was relocated or demolished to make space for other campus buildings. The Graves Cottage, the last of the existing buildings, still stands, hidden away on Auburn's campus, and the amphitheatre lies just outside Dudley Hall.

### **Boiler Houses**

From the 1920s to 1940s, Auburn experienced rapid campus growth, with many campus dormitories and classroom buildings built over the two decades. During the Second World War, Auburn University also hosted a number of military training programs.

While many of these were later removed as demand subsided, some boiler houses remained, heavily modified to serve as steam distribution hubs and chilled-water plants in the modern day. These buildings, essential for Auburn's transition into a modern university, lie hidden away from sight; some can be found near Broun Hall, as well as south of campus, nestled within the agricultural research areas.

### **Auburn Sports Arena**

Opened in 1946, the Auburn Sports Arena, nicknamed "The Barn" by students, served as home to the Auburn University basketball team until 1968. Located just south of Jordan-Hare Stadium, the venue would continue to host Auburn's women's gymnastics team, as well as other student events.

On Sept. 21, 1996, during a home football game against LSU, fans noticed a large plume of black smoke emanating from just outside the stadium. As investiga-

tions would later reveal, the embers of a grill at a nearby tailgate likely started a fire that quickly enveloped and ultimately destroyed the Auburn Sports Arena. The venue was completely demolished following these events. Today, the former site of the arena has now been repurposed as a parking deck.

### **Beard-Eaves Memorial Coliseum**

Following its opening in 1968, the Beard-Eaves Memorial Coliseum replaced the Auburn Sports Arena in hosting basketball games and still stands on campus today, just south of the Auburn Recreational Center. However, since the opening of Neville Arena in 2010, the coliseum sees far less usage in the present day.

For many Auburn students, the oval-shaped concrete building stands as a relic of the past, although the coliseum has not been completely disregarded. Originally planned for demolition in the early 2010s, the stadium has since been used as a concert venue, a COVID-19 testing facility and a site for student and Greek life events. The future remains uncertain for the Beard-Eaves Memorial Coliseum, as demolition, renovations and expansions all remain options.

Abundant with student life, academics and sporting events, Auburn's campus has always boasted a unique history as sprawling as the university itself. However, some of Auburn's most historic buildings lie hidden away on campus or in historical records, once celebrated and now overlooked. Even in their antiquity, their stories remain, waiting to be told.



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## NEWS

# A spirit that is not afraid since 1893: The Auburn Plainsman

By KRISTEN KLOMAN

News Writer



first student newspaper. They dubbed it *Orange and Blue* after the football team's colors, launching a publication that would eventually become a living chronicle of campus life, student voices and the evolving story of Auburn University.

## Volume 1, Issue 1

On Nov. 17, 1894, the inaugural article was published, covering the football team's 20-4 loss to Vanderbilt. The black-and-white print opened with a bold front-page headline: "Our Defeat: The First Game of the Season Lost."

## The Plainsman Progresses

*Orange and Blue* began as a small, biweekly paper before reorganizing into *The Plainsman* in 1922, adopting a modern journalistic style and increasing publication frequency by 1928. Its coverage moved beyond athletics to policy ("Anti-Prohibition Forces Win Fight in Senate 63-23," Feb. 18, 1933), campus developments ("Chem. Building Be First Built With New Funds," Feb. 10, 1929) and contemporary issues.

During the Great Depression, *The Plainsman* documented economic strain by covering budget cuts and campus unrest. Editorials criticized Alabama's indifference toward education amid school closures ("Less Prosperous Condition of South Hit By Dr. Johns," Nov. 18, 1932).

World War II transformed the paper into a platform for wartime updates and student guidance, reporting on global events ("D-Day Landings Greatest World Has Ever Known," June 9, 1944), assisting

with draft registration ("Students to Report on Draft Status," Dec. 12, 1941) and elevating women into leadership roles, including Shirley Smith '44 as the first female editor-in-chief.

## A Shifting South: Through The Plainsman's Eyes

The Plainsman made progressive strides by covering racial injustices that much of the contemporary media avoided. In 1957, a column by Anne Rivers '58 criticizing segregation was censured by university officials, signifying administrative resistance to such coverage.

Despite the administration's efforts to suppress it, *The Plainsman* continued to give voice to student expression. In his editorial, "Cluttered Heart Cries for Expression on Issues" (May 9, 1962), Jim Dinsmore '64 wrote, "It is coming. Auburn will be integrated in the near future; and while the act of integration will hurt us momentarily, the final outcome will mean a better America."

In the '70s, Auburn wrestled with gender equality. Some of *The Plainsman* championed it — one cartoon proclaimed "Big Red believes in equal rights for women" (Oct. 16, 1970), while interviews with state officials suggested opposition to such advancements ("Trustee Red Bamberg thinks Auburn 'as big as it needs to be,'" Jan. 11, 1973).

*The Plainsman* continued confronting controversy throughout the '80s and '90s. State funding cuts upended Auburn's administration ("Proration likely for new budget," Oct. 9, 1980), pushing



## A Voice Takes Shape

More than 130 years of Auburn history began with a rivalry. The Wirts and Websterians, two literary societies devoted to debate and oratory, set aside their competition in 1893 to create the University's



President Hanley Funderburk into fiscal constraints and eventual resignation (“Magnolia dorm denied funding,” Oct. 23, 1980; “Funderburk gives up fight, resigns post,” March 3, 1983). By the early 1990s, the end of the Kappa Alpha “Old South” parade stirred both praise and criticism (“Parade Shows Dark Side,” Feb. 11, 1993), as emerging technology introduced new academic challenges (“Computer leads to course test answers,” July 19, 1990).

By the late ‘90s, *The Plainsman* had become a central directory of Auburn life (“The Plainsman—where everybody knows your name,” May 8, 1997). In ‘97, it launched online for the first time. As the 2000s and 2010s progressed, national news, such as the 9/11 attacks (“Blasts felt close to home; Auburn looks to help,” Sept. 13, 2001), and more local crises (“Toomer’s Oaks Poisoned,” Feb. 17, 2011) continued to be covered.

### 2020s

COVID-19 reshaped life at Auburn. *The Plainsman* published weekly infection reports and hard-hitting editorials, as well as a series titled “Auburn Voices from the Pandemic,” highlighting how the pandemic affected students, faculty and staff across campus.

In 2021, after 127 years, *The Plainsman* published its final weekly print edition, transitioning primarily to an online format. Editor-in-Chief Jack West noted in his Feb. 14 column that rising costs and the shift toward digital journalism drove the decision. This advancement, while sentimental, was met with a reluctant acceptance: “Going online is a difficult decision but the right one.”

### The Plainsman Today

For *The Plainsman*, 2025 was another year of fearless reporting, unflinching analysis and bold

engagement with the issues that mattered most. Reporters detailed administrative controversies, editorials called for accountability and letters to the editor highlighted concerns over censorship of race-related literature in Alabama schools.

More than a century later, *The Plainsman* continues to give a voice to the campus community—furthering the mission it was founded to carry out on that November day in 1893.



LANA HA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

### ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Various people reading or working on *The Auburn Plainsman*.



LUCA FLORES | PHOTO EDITOR

A photo of *The Plainsman*'s staff during the fall 2025 semester.





TRIGER

CRAZY HORSE CAFE IS O  
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TUE AUBURNS ONLY TRUE  
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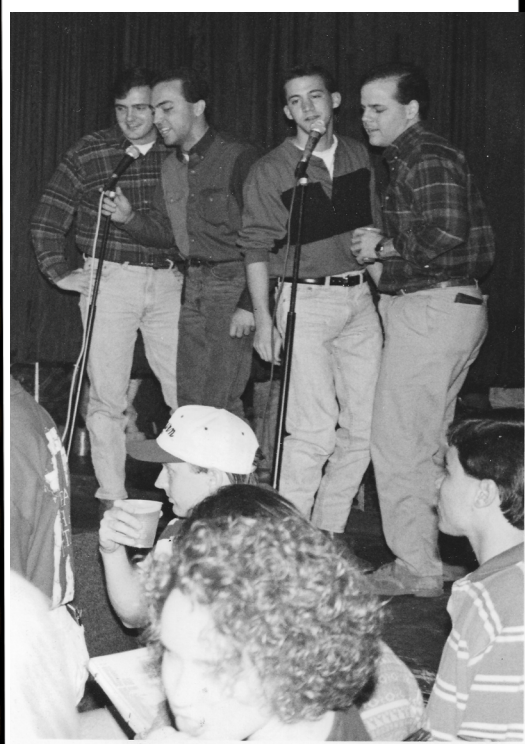
LIFESTYLE



# LIFESTYLE



Nov. 8 '92 Political Tapestry Juan Smith



## LIFESTYLE

# What does Auburn mean to students?

By LORELEI YOUNG

Lifestyle Writer

For the past 170 years, Auburn University has provided countless students with higher education. Since its charter on Feb. 1, 1856, Auburn's educational scene has shifted significantly, and as of 2026, the university offers over 150 majors to undergraduate students. For the university, the student body is the defining factor, serving as the heart and soul of engagement, enjoyment and education. However, that invites one to question: what does Auburn mean to students?

Among the student body, Auburn is regarded as the best school in Alabama. However, whether they hail from Alabama, from a different state or even from a different country, Auburn students are often drawn to this university because of its accessibility.

"I had to go in-state, and this was the only affordable option for me. And so, Auburn was just the best to stay in-state in Alabama," said Abby Culbreth, senior majoring in English literature.

Many students recognize Auburn for its quality and reputation as one of Alabama's best institutions for postsecondary education. For students, being a part of Auburn means being a part of something that is recognized for excellence. Attending Auburn helps students find a sense of belonging in a place that succeeds in many areas.

Auburn students have a wide variety of extracurriculars available to them beyond academics. With

over 550 organizations, Auburn allows students to explore interests, make connections and create a place where they can feel connected and valued within their selected field of interest, both academically and recreationally.

to do stuff, and ask people to do stuff, and go out and have fun," Rush said.

As well as social events and recreational clubs, students see Auburn as a community, offering a welcoming environment and

a sense of companionship. Students come to Auburn seeking a place to belong, and the hospitable community makes their search so much easier.

"My favorite thing about Auburn is the people,"

said Emilia Accardi, sophomore in political science.

Auburn means a place where people can meet others who share the same interests and beliefs. It is a community

where those with widely varying outlooks, hobbies and educational interests can come together.

Even though no two students are exactly alike, Auburn allows those from many different backgrounds, who all have unique identities, to connect and celebrate differences with one another.

Auburn holds many different meanings for countless Tigers, but a single truth applies to every member of Auburn's past, present and future communities: They believe in Auburn and love it.

"Having somewhere to be is very nice. I like just getting to exist around people," said Gray Rush, sophomore in English literature and public and professional writing.

For Rush and many other students, Auburn is a place to make friends and delve into their interests with clubs and university-sponsored events. With the multitude of communities available for students across campus, the ability to seek out a place to belong is a major part of what this university means to them.

"In high school, I was so introverted, but now, I'm less afraid



LANA HA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

A graphic of toilet paper, an A+ grade and a stuffed tiger.



## More than a mascot: A deep dive on Aubie

By KATELYN SMITH

Lifestyle Editor



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

The energetic, head-bobbling beloved mascot of Auburn University, Aubie the Tiger, has been a fan favorite now for over 60 years. His charm and ability to get the crowd on their feet have consistently won over new and longtime fans alike. It's hard to imagine a time before this lovable mascot was the face of Auburn, but Aubie has not always been around.

Aubie was first drawn as a cartoon for the cover of a football program in 1959 by Birmingham Post-Herald artist Phil Neel. The cartoon tiger, more like a normal tiger than the Aubie everyone knows today, continued to appear on Auburn football programs for 18 years in a comic-like scenario, typically scaring that week's opponent.

Eventually, the cartoon tiger began to walk on two feet and wear clothing.

Aubie made his first real-life appearance in 1979 at the SEC basketball tournament in a costume inspired by Neel's football program illustrations. The first Aubie, Jamie Lloyd, helped to bring the tiger to life.

"I feel like that's kind of just when Aubie as a whole began to

be the goodwill ambassador for Auburn, and since then, it's just kind of taken off," said Ella Coons, the director of scheduling for Aubie.

The first Aubie costume, designed by Brooks-Van Horn Costumes, featured dark colors and the iconic orange. There were thin black stripes, spots of white and thick blotches of gray. Unlike today's Aubie, he usually didn't wear clothes, just like the early football programs he appeared on. His first well-known costume was at the 1979 Iron Bowl when he dressed up like the University of Alabama's coach at the time, Paul "Bear" Bryant, poking fun at his suit jacket and iconic houndstooth hat.

Regardless, Aubie left an impression not only on the fans, but also on the games. During his first appearance, he cheered on the Tigers, as they defeated the Vanderbilt Commodores, and he continued to bring good luck in many games after that.

Soon after his historic first appearance, Aubie began attending campus and community events beyond games. Fans could also start requesting Aubie's

appearance at their events. Today, Aubie is requested for approximately 1,500 events a year.

"We get stuff for SGA. We get requests for involvement, for athletics," Coons said. "We get requests for events in other states all the time. Aubie does travel a good bit. He's been all over the world."

Aubie's wardrobe and props have also expanded over the years, and he has received an upgraded costume suit with larger eyes and brighter colors. During football games, Aubie often appears in four or five different outfits, some with their own props. Some of his popular costumes include candy corn, Aubie Claus, superheroes and more.

"Aubie loves to shop," Coons said. "Aubie's also very crafty, so all of his props he makes with the help of the Aubie Committee."

Although Aubie has changed a lot over the years, his impact and charming personality are widely felt throughout the Auburn community. As one of the most decorated college mascots in history, this beloved tiger will continue to be the face of Auburn for many years to come.

## LIFESTYLE

## Dr. Rex Dunham: Making waves in aquaculture since 1978

By CHLOE GLASS

Lifestyle Writer



CONTRIBUTED BY REX DUNHAM

Professor Dr. Rex Dunham has been affiliated with the School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences since 1978, making him the current longest active professor at Auburn University. During Dunham's 48 years at Auburn, he has made extraordinary waves in his research surrounding aquaculture and is recognized as a global pioneer in the genetic improvement of catfish.

Originally from Peoria, Illinois, Dunham has been interested in becoming a catfish farmer ever since he was a child, as he recalled that living on a farm fostered his love for wildlife. In his undergraduate years at the University of Illinois, Dunham decided he wanted his career to become more specialized and was drawn to the nationally-renowned Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture at Auburn University. While Dunham was almost certain that Auburn would be his home, he toured the college to be sure that it was where he wanted to attend.

"I did a tour and went through the South, and I love ponds, and the moment I stepped on this facility and saw all those ponds, I was in love," Dunham said.

After receiving his master's and Ph.D. from Auburn, Dunham joined the University's staff upon graduation. Now, he likes to joke that they could never get rid of him.

Dunham's research is centralized on catfish genetics, including specialized areas such as selective breeding, hybridization, gene transfer, gene mapping and reproductive physiology.

In his time at Auburn, Dunham has been at the forefront of major

breakthroughs involving the genetic improvement of catfish, including the creation of an interspecific hybrid between a channel catfish and a blue catfish. Dunham recalls that it is the most impactful project he has done in his career, as it immensely benefitted catfish farmers.

"It's the best example of genetic improvement in aquaculture ever, really," Dunham said. "What our farmers were originally able to grow in one acre of water, they're able to grow nine times more catfish than they did in 1980, and not all but a good proportion of that is because of the use of hybrid catfish, which is not universal, but it accounts for about 70% of U.S. agriculture production."

Dunham is also the first to complete a gene transfer in catfish using xenogenesis, a reproductive surrogacy technology that creates an easier way for farmers to make hybrids between channel and blue catfish. Xenogenesis can rapidly expand an endangered species, which has applications in natural resources, population management and conservation, just a few of Dunham's core values.

"If there was some type of environmental catastrophe, and we lost all the large mountain bass in the world, but we had a semi-related species left, we could thaw those cells out and put them into a host and bring back an extinct species," Dunham said.

In his research, Dunham is dedicated to preserving important genetic lines of catfish breeds through logical methods and supporting the global catfish farming industry. He hopes for

more sustainable farming practices in the future, which can impact growing food in smaller spaces and therefore preserve natural populations and resources.

Dunham also teaches and mentors hundreds of students both at Auburn and countries abroad where Auburn Fisheries are teaching students aquaculture technologies.

One of Dunham's biggest takeaways from his time at Auburn has been the impact his teaching has had on his students and their careers.

"It's quite rewarding and makes the other headaches worthwhile," Dunham said.

With over 400 published scholarly works and multiple honors recognized around the world, Dunham has embraced the Auburn Creed throughout his career. Dunham has built a legacy at Auburn that will be remembered for generations.

"My Auburn experience has been fulfilling, and I would do it all over again," Dunham said.



## LIFESTYLE

## Danyelle Hillman: Auburn's first African American cheerleader

When Auburn University marketing alumna Danyelle Hillman decided to try out for the AU Cheerleading Team in 1995, she did not realize the lasting impact her role would have on the University. 30 years after becoming Auburn's first African American female cheerleader, Hillman, now an instructional technology specialist for Muscle Shoals City Schools, reflects on how she has carried the spirit of Auburn with her throughout her career in business and education.

Hillman graduated from Auburn with a marketing degree in 1999. After her first steps on the Plains during orientation, Hillman "fell in love" with Auburn.

Raised as a church musician, Hillman was involved in off-campus church choirs

I had always enjoyed doing, and this was just another step," Hillman said. "When they called my name and my life just changed [...] I think some days that it's still surreal to me."

Hillman remembers being nervous for her first game as a cheerleader, which was a home game against Ole Miss. After the announcer boasted of an attendance of 83,000 fans, she admits feeling a "little sick." Once she conquered her nerves, game days as a cheerleader became the highlight of her Auburn experience.

"The whole experience was great — very unforgettable, to say the least," Hillman said.

The student community fully accepted and supported Hillman during the cheer season. She learned later in life that her

**By JENNIFER SANTIAGO**  
Newsletter Editor

***"I love Auburn. I am Auburn, so I would not trade that experience for anything in the world."***

and the AU Gospel Choir. It was one Wednesday evening at an Gospel Choir rehearsal when she learned about cheer tryouts.

Some alumni had expressed concerns that although there were many football players who were minorities, the cheerleading squad was not reflective of a similar representation. Hillman was aware of a push for better representation on the cheer team, but she did not choose to try out for diversity alone, as she already had years of experience in cheerleading.

Hillman's passion for cheer grew during her childhood. From the second grade to community college, she cheered in her hometown, Russellville, Alabama.

"I thought, 'I'm done with cheer, but why not let me just see what happens,'" Hillman said.

Tryouts spanned three days, with cuts made every evening. When Hillman discovered she made the cheer team, it felt "unbelievable" that her name was called.

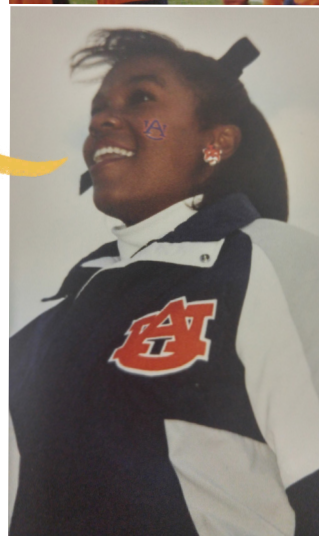
"I never thought about it [as] making history. It was, you know, something that

peers in the stands kept a protective eye on Hillman while she cheered, watching to make sure she wasn't dropped.

After graduation, Hillman worked in the business industry for six years. She later completed a master's degree in education with a focus in marketing and eventually earned a doctorate in education to help students thrive in the professional world.

"I was a cheer coach for 15 years, and a lot of the things that I learned from being a cheerleader at Auburn, I instilled in all of my cheer squads. Preparing them for life was my ultimate goal," Hillman said. "My marketing degree and the cheerleading experiences that I've had, both on and off the field, is what I carry with me, and that foundation that I got at Auburn has helped to get me to where I am today."

Rooted in faith, family and her favorite poem, Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," Hillman encourages those feeling hesitant to try something new and to not let anything stand in their way.



**CONTRIBUTED BY DANYELLE HILLMAN**

Danyelle Hillman cheering at Auburn University.

## LIFESTYLE

# From dives to rooftops: War Eagle Supper Club

By LAYLA HYATT  
Assistant Lifestyle Editor



CONTRIBUTED BY JOHN BRANDT

Outside of War Eagle Supper Club.



CONTRIBUTED BY JOHN BRANDT

Kenny Chesney performing at the War Eagle Supper Club in 2004.

What started as a brothel in the mid-1940s transformed into a club for generations of Auburn students to enjoy. After closing in 2015, War Eagle Supper Club has been reborn as a restaurant on the rooftop of the Graduate Hotel.

In 1937, South College Street was lined with farmhouses and cotton fields, instead of bustling businesses. However, one of the few businesses, which was then on the outskirts of Auburn, was the site that would one day be known as the War Eagle Supper Club. Originally serving as a brothel, the building burned down in the 1940s and was replaced with Stoker's Steak and Seafood Restaurant in 1953.

The business was co-owned between H.H Lambert and Homer Stoker, but when Stoker left Auburn in 1957, Lambert changed the steakhouse into a pizza joint. In 1962, when Lambert purchased a private club license, War Eagle Supper Club was born. The membership for students was one dollar but was only available to white male students.

In 1977, Lambert sold the business to the Gilmer family, consisting of Hank, his brother Jeff and their father Henry Jr.

"When we first took it over, the place was doing absolutely no business at all the two years prior to us taking it over. It did \$38,000

in total sales in 1976 and \$42,000 in 1975. Probably six years later, we had it doing close to a million in sales," Hank said.

For this transition, the Gilmers enacted several changes to the Supper Club, including making the membership available to all students regardless of race or gender. At the time, the Supper Club was also the only nightlife in Auburn.

"We brought something to town that didn't exist yet, which was good, high-quality entertainment. We were able to stay open late at night, and we provided a good, fun atmosphere," Gilmer said.

The live music made up a large part of the Supper Club's identity. Throughout the years, musical artists, such as Kenny Chesney, Zac Brown Band and Widespread Panic, all performed at the Supper Club.

However, the Supper Club eventually started having issues with transportation. Because of the distance between the Supper Club and Auburn's campus, patrons often drove, which led to an issue with drinking and driving. Without the help of modern transportation apps like Uber, the Supper Club solved the problem in a creative way.

"We bought an old school bus and painted it white, orange and blue and started running a shuttle that we didn't charge money for.



## LIFESTYLE

We would pick you up and take you home anywhere,” said John Brandt, employee and co-owner of the Supper Club in the 1980s.

The shuttle became a symbol of the club. It was a way to prevent driving under the influence while also fostering a sense of community amongst patrons. Once the original bus was too old to use, it was replaced with an airport bus. The original bus was parked in the back of the Supper Club and converted into a bar.

When the Gilmer family decided to sell, they chose someone who already knew the ins and outs of the Supper Club.

Brandt had started working at the Supper Club in 1980, rising through the ranks from working the door to management. In 1985, Gilmer sold Brandt his interest. For the next thirty years, Brandt and two business partners ran the Supper Club until the landlord of the building decided not to renew their lease. With less than a year’s warning, the Supper Club shut its doors for the last time on Dec. 31, 2015, ending their reign with a New Year’s Eve show from the band Telluride.

“We were known for a lot, so a lot of bands came back to play one last time, so that last year was really good. It was a lot of good memories,” Brandt said.

That is not the end of the Supper Club’s story, though. At the height of COVID-19 in 2020, Auburn alum Vince Thompson lost a lot of work at his sports marketing agency. It was during this time that he came up with the idea of reviving the Supper Club in an entirely different way.

“I had stayed in some of the Graduate Hotels and learned that they were going to hopefully



#### CONTRIBUTED BY HANK GILMER

Memorabilia from the War Eagle Supper Club on display at the Supper Club restaurant.

develop a hotel in Auburn. Upon further investigation, I learned that they always put a famous, local, legendary bar on their rooftop, which is kind of their trademark and signature. So, I pitch them about working together,” Thompson said.

With Brandt’s blessing, Thompson trademarked the Supper Club and began the planning process. Brandt donated memorabilia from the original Supper Club, such as posters and their famous pizza recipe.

Today, War Eagle Supper Club serves its guests from the rooftop of the Graduate Hotel in downtown Auburn rather than from a dive bar on South College Street. Though the restaurant is vastly different from the Supper Club that most Auburn alumni knew, the goal of serving the Auburn community remains the same.

“Same spirit, different environment for the times,” Thompson said.

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#### CONTRIBUTED BY JOHN BRANDT

Ad for the War Eagle Supper Club in the Auburn Plainsman.



## LIFESTYLE



## Forged by freedmen: Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church

By **BRYCHELLE BROOKS**

Editor-in-Chief

Ebenezer Missionary Baptist (MB) Church is one of the oldest churches in Alabama, with its doors first opening in 1870. Now, 156 years later, the church continues to be one of the most historic sites in Auburn.

Originally founded in 1868 – and possibly as early as 1863 – by Reverend Thomas Glenn, Ebenezer MB Church was built by newly emancipated slaves. Located at 450 E. Thach Ave., the church was built on land donated by congregation member Mary Clower who received half an acre of land from Lonnie Payne, an assumed slave owner.

On this land, the church was erected using hand-hewn logs, which were transported by mule from the nearby Frazer plantation. Now called the Frazer-Brown-Pearson Home or Noble Hall, the plantation serves as a historical site north of

Auburn.

A majority of Ebenezer's first congregation was newly freed from enslavement, and the building and many other predominantly Black churches in the South allowed for the freed to leave behind the custom of going to church with their masters.

Ebenezer is located west of the Baptist Hill community cemetery. The four acres of land is also assumed to have been donated by a former slave owner. However, it was the Black community's first separate cemetery in Auburn. The cemetery gained this nickname due to the influence Ebenezer had on this side of Auburn and the amount of Black citizens on this side of Auburn.

The original location of Ebenezer MB Church served its congregation until its closure in 1969, five years after Auburn's integration. After this closure,

a new location was built from brick. Though the original location and Baptist Hill were left behind, they were picked up by the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 after being restored by the Auburn Heritage Association in 1970.

Currently located at 451 Pitts St., Ebenezer MB Church is a small and dedicated congregation. Their mission statement is as follows: "The primary mission of the Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church is to teach and preach the word of God and to bring people to a closer relationship with God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. . . . The church seeks to further the Kingdom of God on earth by having a Christian influence in the community, the nation and the world."

**ARCHIVE PHOTOS**

Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church.



## ***The Loveliest Village: An Irish poem turned Auburn moniker***

By **BRYCHELLE BROOKS**

Editor-in-Chief

Auburn, in its 170 years of schooling, has claimed many names, vocations and slogans. Two of Auburn's most recognized slogans have origins from Oliver Goldsmith's 1770 poem "The Deserted Village."

Goldsmith was an Irish author, widely known for being a hack writer, or an author that is paid to write on short deadlines. These writers are usually paid by the word instead of the quality of their work.

Goldsmith's most notable work was "Citizen of the World," which was first published in Public Ledger magazine. Though, something more stuck out to fans: "The Deserted Village."

The poem is an early act of socio-political commentary. Goldsmith is subtly condemning the pursuit of extreme wealth, rural exodus and emigration from the village to the United States.

"The Deserted Village" holds two notable lines that Auburn holds near and dear: "Loveliest Village on The Plains" and "Tigers."

### **Loveliest Village:**

"Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain"

The poem opens with this line, one meant in regard to Auburn, Ireland, where Goldsmith grew up. Opening with this line paints the picture of a quaint village, where the citizens aren't bombarded by ever-growing city life.

Goldsmith furthers on this line by playing with the phrasing: "Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn [...]"

Auburn University, as we know it, also holds true to both of these lines. With its clean campus and friendly atmosphere,

Auburn, Alabama has become a place to love, just as Goldsmith loved Auburn, Ireland. The line has been taken and marketed everywhere for years, and the University has held true and kept things beautiful.

### **Tigers:**

"Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey"

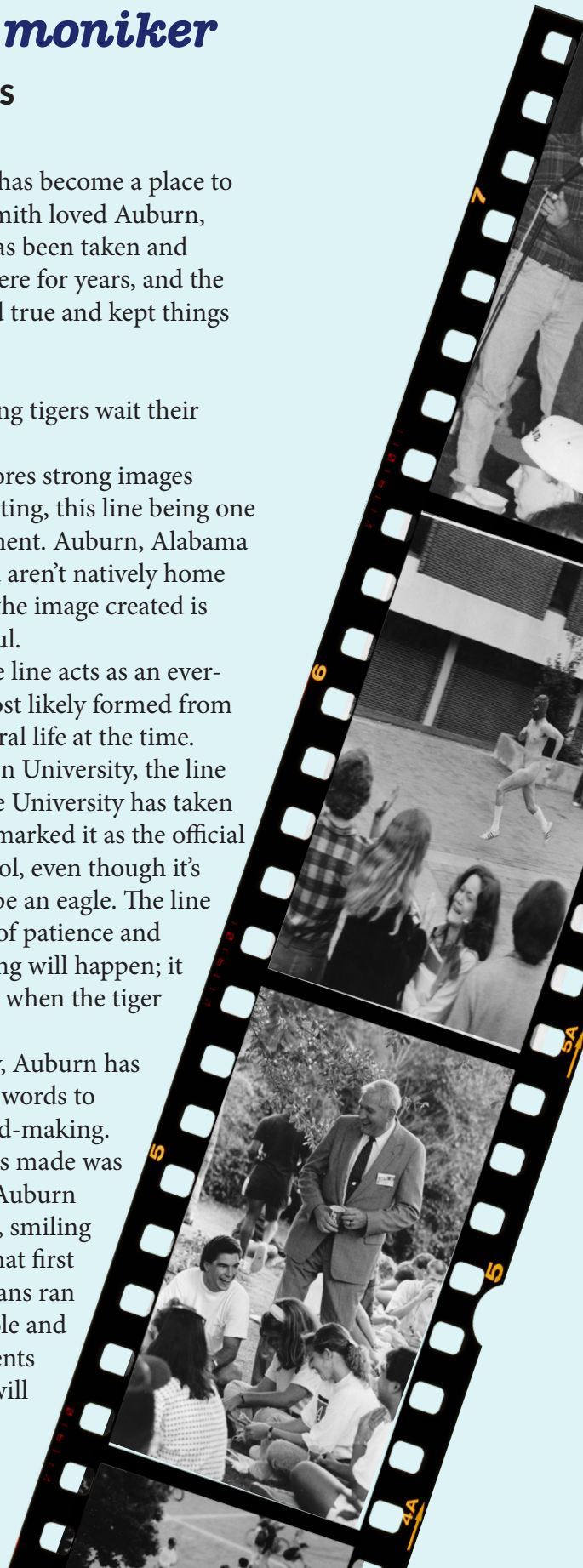
Goldsmith explores strong images throughout his writing, this line being one of the most prominent. Auburn, Alabama or Auburn, Ireland aren't natively home to tigers. Though, the image created is something powerful.

For the Irish, the line acts as an ever-present danger, most likely formed from the desertion of rural life at the time. Though, for Auburn University, the line is the opposite. The University has taken this line and trademarked it as the official mascot of the school, even though it's often mistaken to be an eagle. The line itself acts as a line of patience and knowing. Something will happen; it all just depends on when the tiger strikes.

As a community, Auburn has found Goldsmith's words to be poetic and world-making. That world that was made was the foundation of Auburn University: patient, smiling and clean. Those that first adopted these slogans ran them up the flagpole and Auburn fans, students and citizens alike will salute.

### **ARCHIVE PHOTOS**

Student life at Auburn.



## LIFESTYLE

# The legacy of Harold A. Franklin

By GRACIE GOODMAN

News Writer

62 years ago, Harold A. Franklin, P.h.D., walked on Auburn University's campus and registered for classes. This wasn't just meeting with an advisor or scheduling a Zoom call like it is today. In fact, to get to the Office of Registration, Franklin had to be escorted by FBI agents to ensure his safety.

Franklin was born in 1932 in Talladega, Alabama and was raised alongside his nine siblings. While he was in high school, Franklin decided to leave school to support the United States as a member of the Air Force during the Korean War. In 1962, Franklin graduated from Alabama State College with a degree in government and psychology. He was later convinced by civil rights attorney Fred Gray to attend Auburn University to continue his education.

Despite meeting academic requirements, Franklin's application was initially denied. The refusal of admission prompted Gray to file a lawsuit against the school, saying the denial "violated constitutional rights." This case would ultimately lead to Auburn opening its doors to all students, no longer discriminating against students on the basis of skin color and helping lead to the integration of higher education in the South.

Today, outside the Ralph Brown Draughton Library, Franklin's legacy is recognized on campus through two plaques, which are

decorated with statements and stories from his life. The plaques tell the story of the obstacles Franklin faced during his time at Auburn. Though, some students and faculty argue that the plaques falls short of Franklin's impact, questioning if the acknowledgements measure up to



the courage it took Franklin to walk through the admission doors that day. Even after becoming a student at Auburn, Franklin's thesis was continuously rejected by the graduate committee in the history department.

Those rejections led Franklin to transfer schools and pursue a scholarship he received from the University of Denver, where he earned his master's degree in history. Since 1965, Franklin has taught at Alabama State University, North Carolina A&T University, Tuskegee University and Talladega College.

Auburn now offers an endowed

scholarship that holds the name of Dr. Harold Franklin, giving students the opportunity to attend school despite financial hardships.

"Auburn is a better institution because of Dr. Franklin's bravery 57 years ago," former Auburn President Jay Gogue said in an article by Neal Reid. "His spirit of internal fortitude will continue to inspire us."

Despite his success in his career, there was still an air of incompleteness from his experience at Auburn University. During his time there, he was continuously denied the ability to defend his thesis in the department of history, but 37 years later, he was presented with an honorary Doctor of Arts. The honorary degree was appreciated by Franklin, but something was missing. Franklin did the work and attended his classes, but never walked the stage at graduation to receive his degree. It wasn't until 2020 when Franklin was finally able to

walk and receive his Auburn Creed. He expressed relief, recognizing that his experience has been anything but easy.

"I'm just about speechless after all these years," Franklin said. "I realized it wasn't going to be easy when I came here as the first African American to attend Auburn, but I didn't think it would take this long. It feels pretty good."

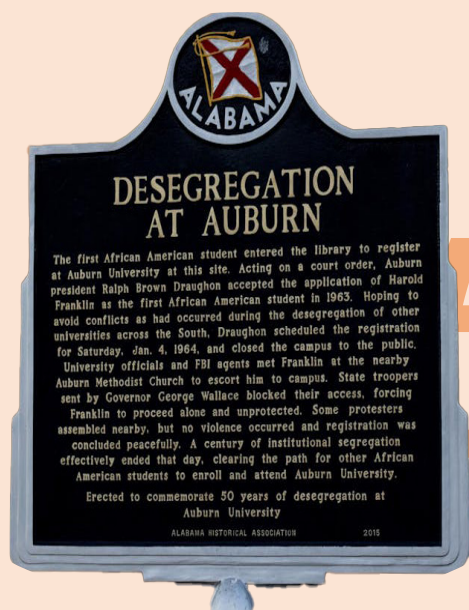
Franklin's perseverance has paved the way for fellow Black students and other marginalized communities, but also for the betterment of Auburn University.



## LUCI JOHNSON | PHOTOGRAPHER

A secondary marker, located near the Harold A. Franklin marker, that tells the story of the desegregation of Auburn University, taken on December 30, 2025.

# HAROLD A. FRANKLIN



# HAROLD A. FRANKLIN

**"I'm glad I could do something to help other people, and my mom and dad always taught us that when you do something in life, try to do something that will help others as well."**

# HAROLD A. FRANKLIN

## ARCHIVE PHOTO

Harold A. Franklin speaks before the unveiling of the historical marker on Mary Martin Hall Greenspace commemorating the 1964 desegregation at Auburn University on Sept. 24.



## A black and white photograph capturing a dynamic moment in a basketball game. In the foreground, a player from Auburn, wearing jersey number 10, is suspended in mid-air, his body arched as he reaches up to shoot the ball. His mouth is open in a shout, and his eyes are focused on the basket. Behind him, a defender from Georgia, wearing jersey number 3, is also jumping, attempting to block the shot. The background is filled with a large, dense crowd of spectators in a stadium setting. A referee in a striped shirt is visible in the lower left. The word "SPORTS" is written in large, stylized, outlined letters across the top of the image. A banner for "J. H. HARRISON" is visible in the lower right.





SPORTS



## SPORTS

# Auburn football's rivalries through the years



By **JACKIE DOMINGUEZ**

Sports Editor

Throughout the years of Auburn football, the Tigers have had many rivalries with other Southeastern Conference (SEC) schools. Here are some of the most notable football rivalries, inactive or current, in Auburn history.

## Alabama Crimson Tide

Auburn's only in-state rivalry has been raging since 1893 (minus a pause from 1907 to 1948), and the two teams have played 90 times since. The annual rivalry football game, coined the Iron Bowl in 1964 by Shug Jordan, is the highlight of every football season in the South and the pinnacle of college school spirit in the state of Alabama. The Iron Bowl has led to some of the best plays in both schools' histories, and playoff seeding or selection often rides on the game's outcome.

This rivalry is the most well-known of Auburn's, and transcends football, with meetings between the two schools often dubbed the Iron Bowl of the respective sport.

## Georgia Bulldogs

Known as the Deep South's Oldest Rivalry, Georgia is another one of Auburn's SEC rivals. The two teams played each other for the first time in 1892 when Auburn football was first created. It was at this first Auburn-Georgia game that the War Eagle cheer was first proclaimed. Since then, the two schools have played almost every year, totaling 130 games. Of those 130 times, Georgia has won 66 times, and Auburn has won 56 times, with the remaining eight declared ties.

## LSU Tigers

The rivalry between LSU and Auburn has been described by famed commentator Brad Nessler as one "where anything can hap-

pen." Dubbed the Tiger Bowl, the two teams had their first meeting in 1901 and met annually as conference opponents from 1992 to 2023. With notable games like the Earthquake Game in 1988 or the Barn Burner in 1996, this matchup was highly competitive for many years. LSU leads all-time 33-24-1.

## Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets

This intense rivalry between the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets and the Auburn Tigers is best known for its legendary prank in 1896 and Auburn's Wreck Tech Pajama Parade before every meetup. Coach John Heisman also served as the coach for both teams at different points during the rivalry. Auburn played the Yellow Jackets every year from 1944 until 1987, even after Georgia Tech left the SEC. Auburn leads the series 47-41-4, and the teams haven't played each other since 2005.

## Florida Gators

While no longer an active feud, the Gators were once a big-time rival of the Tigers. The teams were annual opponents from 1927 until 2002 and have only met on the field a handful of times since then. Especially in the '90s, when the Gators were coached by Steve Spurrier and the Tigers by Terry Bowden, the annual meeting between the two teams was a highly contested and electric matchup. With these two SEC powerhouses, the head-to-head outcome often impacted the SEC rankings, making it a high-stakes, high-intensity rivalry for decades.

**MAGGIE BOWMAN | PHOTOGRAPHER**

Perry Thompson (3) during the final play of regulation versus Vanderbilt on Nov. 8, 2025.

**LUCA FLORES | PHOTO EDITOR**

Robert Woodyard Jr. sacks Georgia Gunner Stockton on Oct. 11, 2025.



# The Tigers and the Tide: The history of the Iron Bowl

By REID FARRIS

Assistant Sports Editor

The Iron Bowl is the most important game of the regular season for many Alabama residents and carries great weight for many other college football fans across the country. The rivalry is often heralded as one of the best — if not the best — in college football.

The two schools have the most combined claimed National Titles at 27 total, with 18 coming from Alabama and nine coming from Auburn. The Tigers and the Tide are also both among the top 15 winningest programs in Division I college football, with 38 SEC titles combined.

This in-state rivalry creates a competition that begins at birth for many Alabama residents. For example, when one is born and raised in Alabama, from the time they can understand to the day they declare their allegiance, they are asked a simple, but important question: “Alabama or Auburn?” The answer to that question, often determined by parent affiliation, then becomes a lifelong fandom on one side of the heated rivalry.

The beginning of the discontent between the programs stretches all the way back to 1862, when the state legislature was deciding which location to give land to under the Morrill Land Grant Act. Many University of Alabama supporters and alumni assumed it would go to them, as they were the largest university in the state. To their surprise, it instead went to the then-named East Alabama Male

College in Auburn. For decades after, political disputes between the colleges increased, as they argued over funding, resulting in more and more tension and serving as a blossoming point for the rivalry.

In the history of the Iron Bowl, the two teams have faced off a total of 90 times, with the first matchup in 1893 when Auburn won 32-22. The all-time record belongs to Alabama, which leads 52-37-1.

The great rivalry has spawned many ridiculous and innumerable moments both on and off the field. One of the wildest moments off the field came out of a financial dispute following the series-only tie in 1907, which led to a 41-year hiatus in games between the universities.

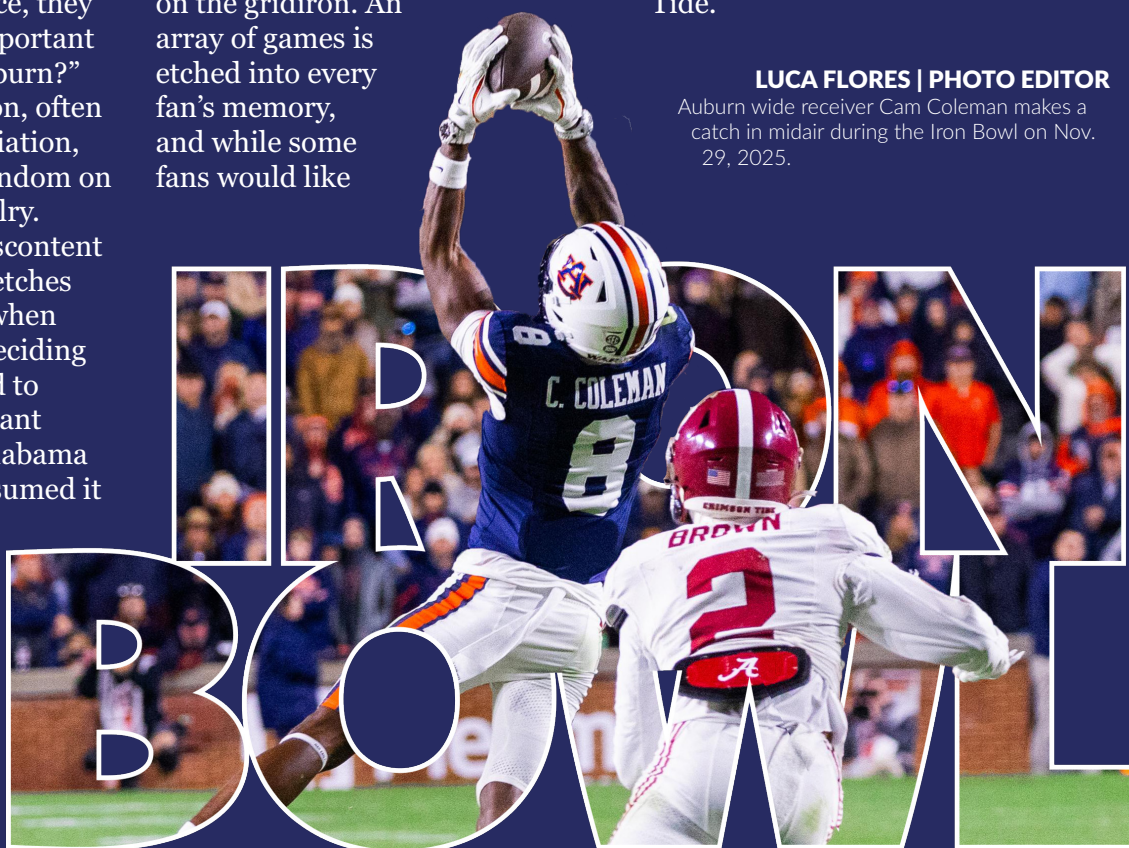
Of course, the Iron Bowl would not be the Iron Bowl without the memorable moments on the gridiron. An array of games is etched into every fan’s memory, and while some fans would like

to forget some, they will cherish others, such as Bo Over the Top, Wrong Way Bo, and the all-time Auburn favorite, Punt Bama Punt. In just the last decade and a half, we have seen the historic Gravedigger play in 2023, the four overtime game in 2021, and the Camback in 2010.

Among all of these in recent memory, one stands out among the rest as arguably the greatest moment in the history of the sport: the 2013 Kick Six, when Auburn returner Chris Davis returned a missed field goal 109 yards for a game-winning touchdown. Throughout the history of Auburn and this rivalry, there has been no shortage of excitement, and many of those iconic moments can be attributed to the best rivalry in college football: the Tigers and the Tide.

LUCA FLORES | PHOTO EDITOR

Auburn wide receiver Cam Coleman makes a catch in midair during the Iron Bowl on Nov. 29, 2025.



## SPORTS

# Top 10 most memorable moments in Auburn football history

By JACKIE DOMINGUEZ, REID FARRIS AND and RORY GARVIN

Auburn football is a staple of the university culture, providing traditions, memories and entertainment for students and families alike. Looking back over the years, our sports editorial staff ranked the ten most memorable moments Auburn football has delivered since its founding in 1892.

## 1. Kick Six (2013)

The Kick Six is the most iconic moment in all of Auburn football. In the 2013 Iron Bowl, when Auburn and Alabama were tied at 28-28 with one second left on the clock, Alabama set up for a game-winning field goal. Auburn's Chris Davis stood in his own end zone in hopes of the kick being short. Alabama missed, and Davis fielded it, running a miraculous 109 yards for the touchdown and winning the game for Auburn.

## 2. Championship winning field goal (2010)

The championship winning field goal in 2010 is a kick that will be remembered forever on the Plains. Set up by an impossible run by Michael Dyer, kicker Wes Byrum drilled a 19-yard field goal to help Cam Newton and company capture the 2010 BCS National Championship over Oregon.

## 3. Bo over the top (1982)

In the 1982 Iron Bowl, Alabama was riding the longest winning streak in the history of the rivalry, with nine straight wins over the Tigers. It was fourth

and goal on the one-yard line, and Auburn was down 22-17 with under three minutes remaining, meaning they had to go for it. The Tigers opted to give the ball to their true freshman and eventual Heisman winner Bo Jackson, who jumped over the pile of players to score the game-winning touchdown.

## 4. The Camback (2010)

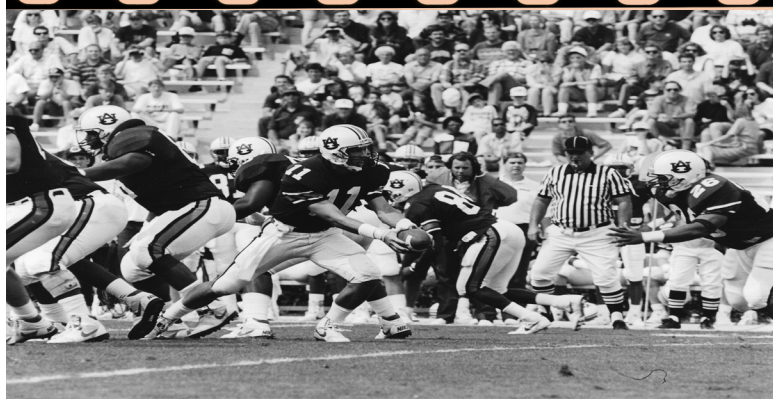
Affectionately named after Auburn's former quarterback Cam Newton, the Camback is one of the most legendary comebacks in all of college football history. Auburn trailed 24-0 in the 2010 Iron Bowl on the road, and then the unthinkable happened: Newton led the Tigers all the way back to a 28-27 victory, capped off by Philip Lutzenkirchen's game-winning touchdown in the fourth quarter.

## 5. Prayer in Jordan-Hare (2013)

The Prayer in Jordan-Hare is one of the luckiest plays in all of college football and was part of an iconic win over the Georgia Bulldogs in 2013. Down 36-38 on a fourth-and-18, Nick Marshall heaved a Hail Mary pass way down the field in search of receiver Ricardo Louis. Instead, the pass bounced off the Georgia defenders' hands and facemask, and Louis grabbed the deflected ball, scoring a 73-yard touchdown and winning the game for Auburn.

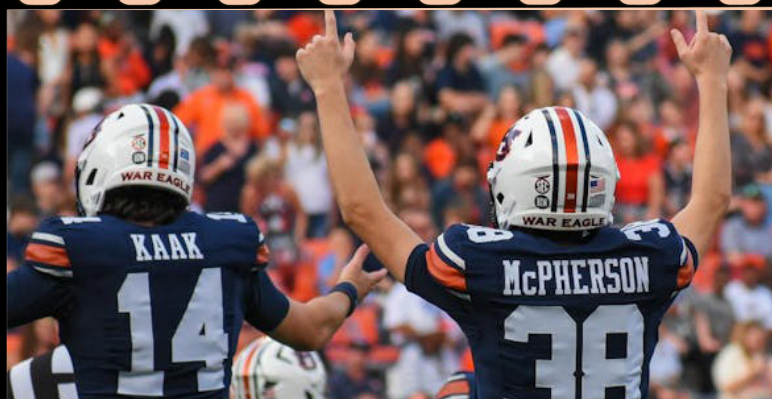
### ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Auburn football from the 1990s.



### PAYTON SMITH | PHOTOGRAPHER

Alex McPherson (38) celebrates after a successful kick against Mercer in Jordan-Hare Stadium on Nov. 22, 2025.





## SPORTS

**6. Punt Bama Punt (1972)**

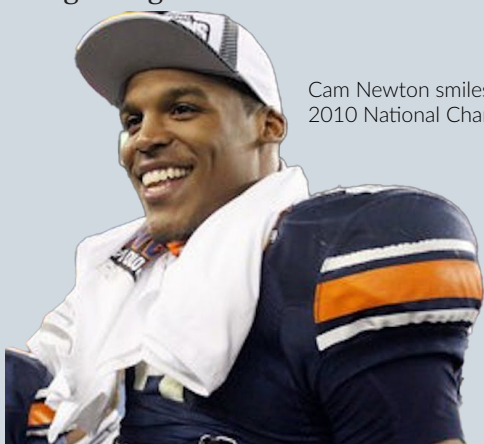
In the 1972 Iron Bowl, Alabama had taken a commanding 16-0 lead going into the fourth quarter. The Tigers would come back from the deficit with back-to-back blocked punts on consecutive drives. Both were returned for touchdowns by the same player, David Langner, resulting in a stunning 17-16 victory over the Bear Bryant-led Tide.

**7. War Eagle invented and 10-0 win over Georgia (1892)**

In Auburn's first game against Georgia in 1892, Auburn was tied with the Bulldogs at zero. An Auburn faculty member, who was a Civil War veteran, was in the crowd, and with him was his eagle named Anvre that he had adopted and nursed back to health after a battle. The aged eagle suddenly flew across the stadium, and the crowd chanted "War Eagle," which ultimately helped cheer their team to a 10-0 victory.

**8. First Iron Bowl (1893)**

One of college football's most iconic rivalries began in 1893 at Lakeview Park in front of a very small crowd. Auburn took down Alabama 32-22 in what the Crimson Tide considers its final game of the 1892 season. However, the Tigers consider it as the first game of the 1893 season, so the two schools were in disagreement from the beginning.

**ARCHIVE PHOTO**

Cam Newton smiles as he celebrates the Auburn 2010 National Championship.

**ARCHIVE PHOTO**

Chris Davis circa 2013.

**9. Pat Sullivan wins Auburn's first Heisman (1971)**

In 1971, Auburn quarterback Pat Sullivan became the school's first recipient of the legendary Heisman Trophy. Sullivan led the Tigers to a 9-2 record and a Sugar Bowl appearance during his senior season. In his three-year tenure, the quarterback totaled 73 touchdowns, tying the all-time NCAA mark. The Birmingham, Ala. native was the first Heisman winner from a school coached by John Heisman, the trophy's namesake.

**10. Wreck Tech (1896)**

This legendary prank by the Auburn student body is the embodiment of what makes college football so great. Back in 1896, Auburn students greased the train tracks, causing Georgia Tech's football team to slide past the station and forcing the opposing players to walk back about five miles to Auburn before the game. The Tigers pulled off a 45-0 victory, forever cementing this prank in college football lore.

**DANNY ZIMMERMAN | PHOTOGRAPHER**

Wide receiver Malcolm Simmons hypes up the student section in Jordan-Hare Stadium on Nov. 24, 2024.



Photo: Ryan Gray

from White Sports 4-24-92

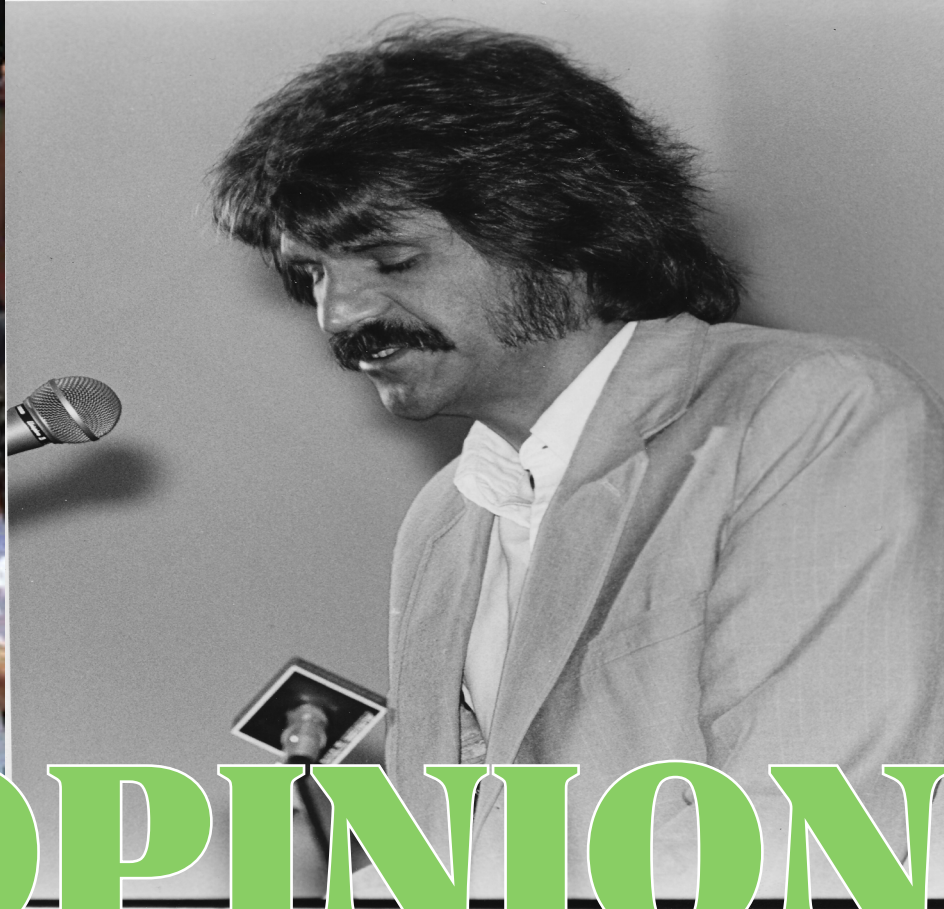




# OPINION







# OPINION





GREEK LIFE

# A LEGACY OF LEADERS

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# SATIRE | The last humanities professor

By JAMES DEWBERRY

Columnist

The Auburn Plainsman, Feb. 1, 2196 - The last humanities professor

Last Thursday was a humid spring day, and flowers pierced through the grey in violet and violent colors. But amongst the verdigris, one would have found cameramen, technicians and the national press, instead of bees and butterflies. On this fateful spring day, Auburn University's beloved Dr. Elizabeth Brians announced her retirement.

Dr. Brians was the last remaining humanities professor on Auburn's campus. Over the past few decades, state mandates have ensured that universities have either closed or shut down their language, philosophy and art departments, so it was only reasonable that Dr. Brians would leave her position.

"I was tired," Brians said. "My classrooms were empty. Oftentimes, I only had two or three students, and those were the ones who were going to leave the country anyway. I didn't feel like I was doing any good anymore."

Following the statement, the professor declined to take any questions.

A minority of students appeared outraged following the incident,

attempting a campus protest. The student organizers have since been suspended.

"I refuse to believe that Dr. Brians retired," said one student who attended her classes. "Because there were so few of us [her students], we all knew her well. She had no plans of retiring."

Some took to Instagram, claiming that she was let go, though the University quickly had those taken down.

Contrary to what critics might argue, it is clear that our University is stepping out of the shadow of a former age and embracing the future. Dr. Brians obviously realized this. The set of fortunate events began 170 years ago, when our wisest state legislature passed Alabama Act 2024-34 (SB 129), and our University began to cleanse our education department, finally ridding it of regressive ideas, such as feminism, socialism and the false accusations of a racist cultural or governmental system existing in the United States.

Professors like Dr. Brians are relics of a bygone era, wrought with disinformation and propaganda. Auburn University recognizes that our society has no need for English or art classes, because our university stands on the truth, and the truth is that literature is full of rebellious ideas – it is literature that has led mankind down the path of war and destruction, and art that has corrupted and desensitized the minds of our youth.

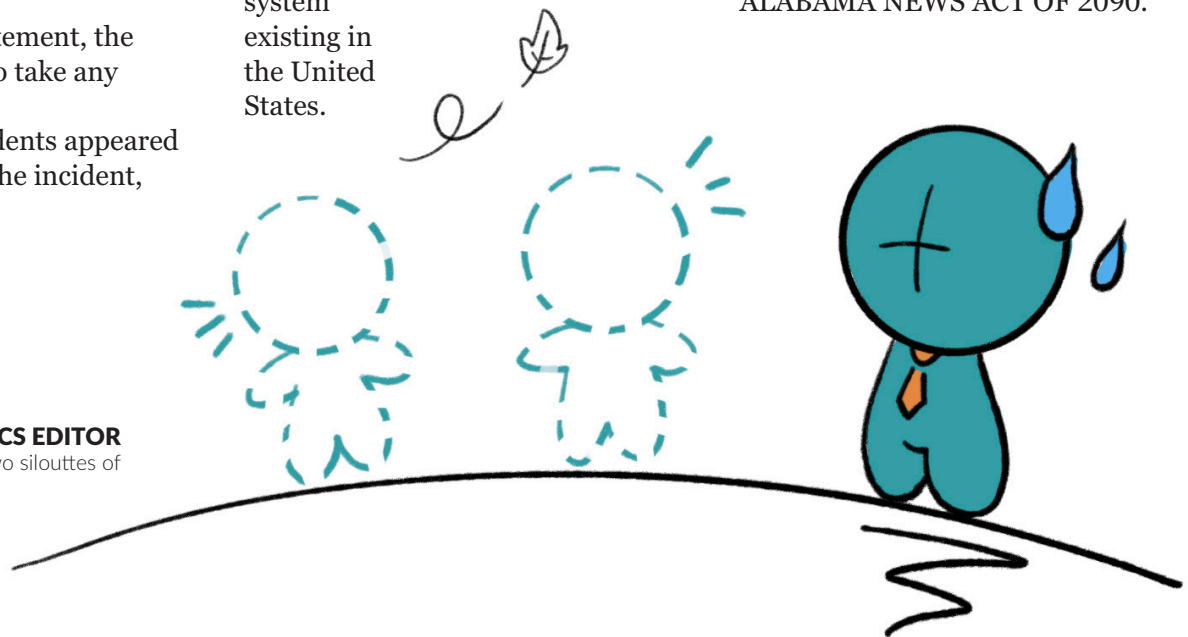
"The humanities teach empathy," Dr. Brians claimed. "This is why my career could not survive."

She is correct. Empathy is unnecessary, because everyone is taught to believe the same truths. Empathy is useless, because being an American means believing the same Christian ideals. Our University is not a home for divisive topics or ideas, so empathy and the humanities don't belong here.

This article was written by AI. For more information, review the ALABAMA NEWS ACT OF 2090.

LANA HA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

One person standing and two silouettes of other people.



## OPINION

# COLUMN | Myths of Auburn University

By **LOGAN MYERS**

Columnist

In its 170 years, Auburn has had a multitude of myths populate across campus, some more infamous than others. Nine of these have been compiled for your consumption, ranging from sports traditions to secret tunnels.

## 9. “Auburn’s never won a game in orange”

Although it is a commonly heard myth around campus, Auburn has won several games in their orange jerseys in both the modern era and the olden days of the university. The Auburn Uniform Database and other aggregators have documented a variety of orange-jersey games in the late 1970s and onwards to more recent appearances, often resulting in both victories and losses. While the blue and orange are arguably more iconic, this myth has been proven false.

## 8. Auburn wore green?

In 1938, under coach Jack Meagher, the Auburn football team donned

green uniforms for a series of games. Meagher had come from coaching Notre Dame and was reportedly singlehandedly responsible for the uniform change. Compared to the orange or the blue, the uniforms were relatively short-lived, with the players allegedly not being keen on the green. The green uniforms haven’t made a return in modern years, staying firmly in the annals of Auburn football history. Perhaps a retro wave could temporarily bring them back alongside Alabama’s white helmets, but for now, Auburn’s football future remains orange and blue.

## 7. The Secret Tunnels Beneath Auburn University

There have been longstanding rumors of abandoned tunnels beneath campus, connecting older buildings, such as Samford Hall, Langdon Hall and Comer Hall. According to the myth, some of the tunnels were sealed after students used them for pranks, hazing rituals and unsanctioned meetings in the mid-1960s.

Several entrances to these tunnels have been documented in online forums and communities dedicated

to finding and exploring the Auburn underground, with some even claiming that they were intended for training or storage during the Second World War.

## 6. The Haley Center “time loop”

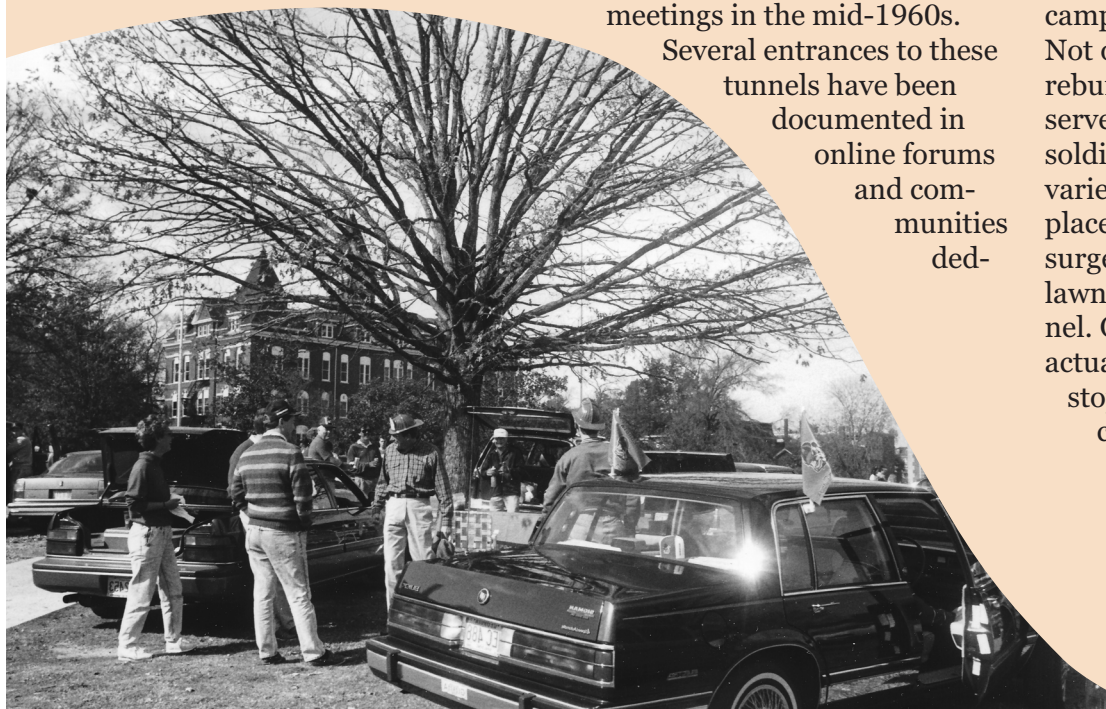
Built in 1969, the infamous Haley Center is a Cold-War-era relic home to one of Auburn’s strangest myths. Students often say they’ve fallen prey to a “time loop” within the Haley halls, a seemingly endless array of liminal construction that wouldn’t be out of place in the Backrooms. During this alleged time loop, students lose track of time, miss classes they swear they had plenty of time for or emerge hours later than expected. While this can be chalked up to a popular joke, it has garnered an online conspiracy theory or two, the crowning achievement of any good myth.

## 5. The Ghosts of Samford Hall

Samford Hall naturally attracts campus myths like a fly to honey. Not only was the campus landmark rebuilt after an 1887 fire, but it also served as a hospital for wounded soldiers during the Civil War. A variety of ghost stories haunt the place, from a wandering Civil War surgeon to phantom soldiers on the lawn to a spectral bell-tower sentinel. Obviously, Samford Hall is not actually haunted, but that doesn’t stop sightseeing tourists and curious students from poking around at the midnight hour.

### ARCHIVE PHOTOS

People congregating near Samford Hall and Beard-Eaves Coliseum.





## OPINION

#### 4. The “sound well” beneath Jordan-Hare

A long-standing myth among the stadium’s staff is that Jordan-Hare sits atop a natural “sound well,” a geological formation that amplifies noise upward and inward. Instead of chalking the echoing roar up to the stadium’s acoustics, the legend claims the amplification predates the stadium itself and was noticed during early land clearing.

#### 3. Saved by the Creed?

Beyond its official meaning, some alumni have claimed that early copies of the Auburn Creed were protective incantations. During the Second World War, soldiers from Auburn carried copies with them, with people chalking up their safe return to the Creed acting as a talisman of sorts. Indeed, coach Ralph “Shug” Jordan reportedly held a copy with him when he stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. Over the years, the myth grew alongside the natural wartime stories of soldiers surviving improbable circumstances.

#### 2. Auburn held America’s first Homecoming?

In 1909, following a decisive Auburn victory over Georgia Tech, the Montgomery Advertiser and the Columbus Daily Enquirer reported on an event described as a homecoming held by Auburn, as the university invited alumni to celebrate the victory. Historically, Auburn’s first homecoming has been considered to be in 1913, a more formal homecoming with mailed invitations to all alumni, more akin to the traditional template that we are now familiar with. However, if this 1909 date is to be accepted as a valid homecoming, then Auburn predates the University of Missouri’s 1911

homecoming, which was previously considered the start of the tradition. Pending further investigation and certification, this myth is true.

#### 1. The Auburn Seal

One of Auburn’s oldest and most enduring superstitions surrounds the seal embedded in the ground in front of Langdon Hall. According to the legend, if a student steps on the seal, they won’t graduate in four years, won’t find their true love at Auburn and will be cursed with seven generations of Bama fans in their family. One shudders to even think of it. I can’t validate the truth behind this myth, but I wouldn’t recommend testing it out ... just in case.





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## COLUMN | *The many names of Auburn University*

By CHASE MORGESE

Columnist

Auburn University's pervasive culture and strong sense of tradition suggest a rich and extensive history, set in stone by George Petrie's famous Creed — which is painted, engraved and plastered across campus.

The enduring influence of the Auburn Creed gives the impression that the University has undergone little change over the years, that it's sort of always been the way it is today. Yet, when Petrie penned these proverbial words in 1943, Auburn University went by a different name altogether: the Alabama Polytechnic Institute.

Before it received this title in 1899, it was known as the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama and, before that, the East Alabama Male College from 1856 to 1872.

Auburn University only became known as Auburn University in 1960, 17 years after the Creed's first penning.

Implicit in these name changes is the evolution of American culture, as well as the corresponding, often lagging, evolution of Southern culture.

East Alabama Male College began as a private Methodist university of the liberal arts, but its operations were suspended throughout the Civil War, during which it served as a Confederate hospital. When the war ended, an insufficient student population

— perhaps due to the nation's practical, restorative attitude at the time — forced the school to shut down.

It was quickly replaced by a public land-grant institution, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama, laying the foundation for Auburn's current standing as an acclaimed agricultural and engineering institution.

Despite establishing this academic basis early, the college initially admitted only white males. In 1892, 20 years after its founding, it finally accepted its first female students, Katherine Broun, Willie Little and Margaret Teague. It was also during this period that Samford Hall, likely the most recognized landmark in Auburn, and the school's football program were established.

As enrollment increased and the local economy grew, the University sought to expand its scope, and it was accordingly renamed the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API). This era saw much of the cultural development responsible for Auburn's identity today, including the creation of Hey Day, the composition of the fight song and, of course, the establishment of the Auburn Creed.

Amid this growth, however, API remained deeply mired in the Jim Crow tradition of the

South and failed to admit a single Black student.

In 1960, Auburn University finally took on its current name, reflecting a broader goal to identify with the surrounding community and attain national recognition. It was not until four years later that the first African American student, Harold A. Franklin, was accepted.

Despite the University's seemingly timeless charm, its many name changes illustrate a complex, frenetic history, which reveals just how young Auburn is in the context of its development. It is important to acknowledge this fact when considering Auburn's future.

Each generation, generally more progressive than its predecessors, holds the belief that it's got the right idea, so to speak, even if that idea hasn't been put into practice. Nonetheless, when posterity looks back on history, it invariably finds that its ancestors tolerated — and often approved of — truly unconscionable behavior.

We must therefore recognize that, no matter how grand Auburn appears, there remain issues to be fixed, issues that were missed or ignored by those before us. Let us be the ones to set them right.



LANA HA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Open and close quotes in shades of orange.

## OPINION

# COLUMN | The Creed speaks for itself

By ISABELLA HIDALGO

Columnist

The Auburn University Creed was published by *The Auburn Plainsman* on Jan. 21, 1944, around two months after George Petrie finished writing it. The originally published issue was brief: “We will not elaborate; the creed speaks for itself, powerfully.”

The Creed’s past and the people who carried it with them remain tremendously important to believing in Auburn and loving it. One such example is worth noting as we step into 170 years of Auburn.

Well known for his title of honor across Jordan-Hare Stadium, Shug Jordan served as Auburn’s football coach from 1951 to 1975. What may be less well known is his role in one of the most strategic and costly assaults on the Axis occupation of Western Europe – and how he took Auburn with him.

Jordan was one of the few brave men to land in Normandy in 1944 and survive as a member of the First Engineer Special Brigade. According to multiple sources, an original clipping of the Jan. 21 *Plainsman* article was tucked into Shug Jordan’s boot as he charged that beach on June 6, 1944. I kept wondering, as I read this story, which lines may have been racing through his mind as he charged through the waves.

Perhaps, it was a quiet prayer for a sound body and a spirit that would not be afraid. I imagine that he whispered to himself as he pushed up the beach and “saw ’em [soldiers] stacked up like cord wood,” as he recalled it later.

Or maybe he kept the Creed in his boot, because he loved the last few lines: “He believed in his country, a land of freedom, his home.” It may be that it was not a quiet prayer, but a defiant shout. This choice could have been for his belief in God, in the men and

women of Auburn and the United States of America.

According to his son, Jordan discussed that day in Normandy, where he recalled the shrapnel that struck his arm 15 minutes after landing. To my surprise, football was on his mind.

Not only the culture of the sport, but the memory of being a player, having seen “many a fine football player, or just an ordinary football player, give it everything he got.” He noted that without these memories, “I don’t know if I would have gotten any further that day.”

Perhaps, remembering his life’s work for the young Auburn football program, Jordan used lines of the Creed to root him in the cultivation of clean sports and sound physicality, which inspired him to continue after being wounded.

Or maybe the clipping of his local paper, sent by a friend, was simply a tangible comfort to him, a reminder of home. Perhaps, human touch, the touch of fellow man sent thousands of miles from the Loveliest Village on the Plains, provided courage irrespective of the words printed in that original article.

So, with the Auburn Creed in his boot and the steadfast inspiration of Auburn football in his spirit, among many other hopes and fears, Jordan made history, charging through bloody sea spray to one of the most pivotal victories of World War II. For his heroism in pressing on after the shrapnel entered his body, Jordan was awarded a Purple Heart.

So, as Auburn treads onward into a new semester, it’s important to reread the words that have inspired the greatest heroes of our past. The Creed speaks for itself. It makes Auburn something worth believing in.





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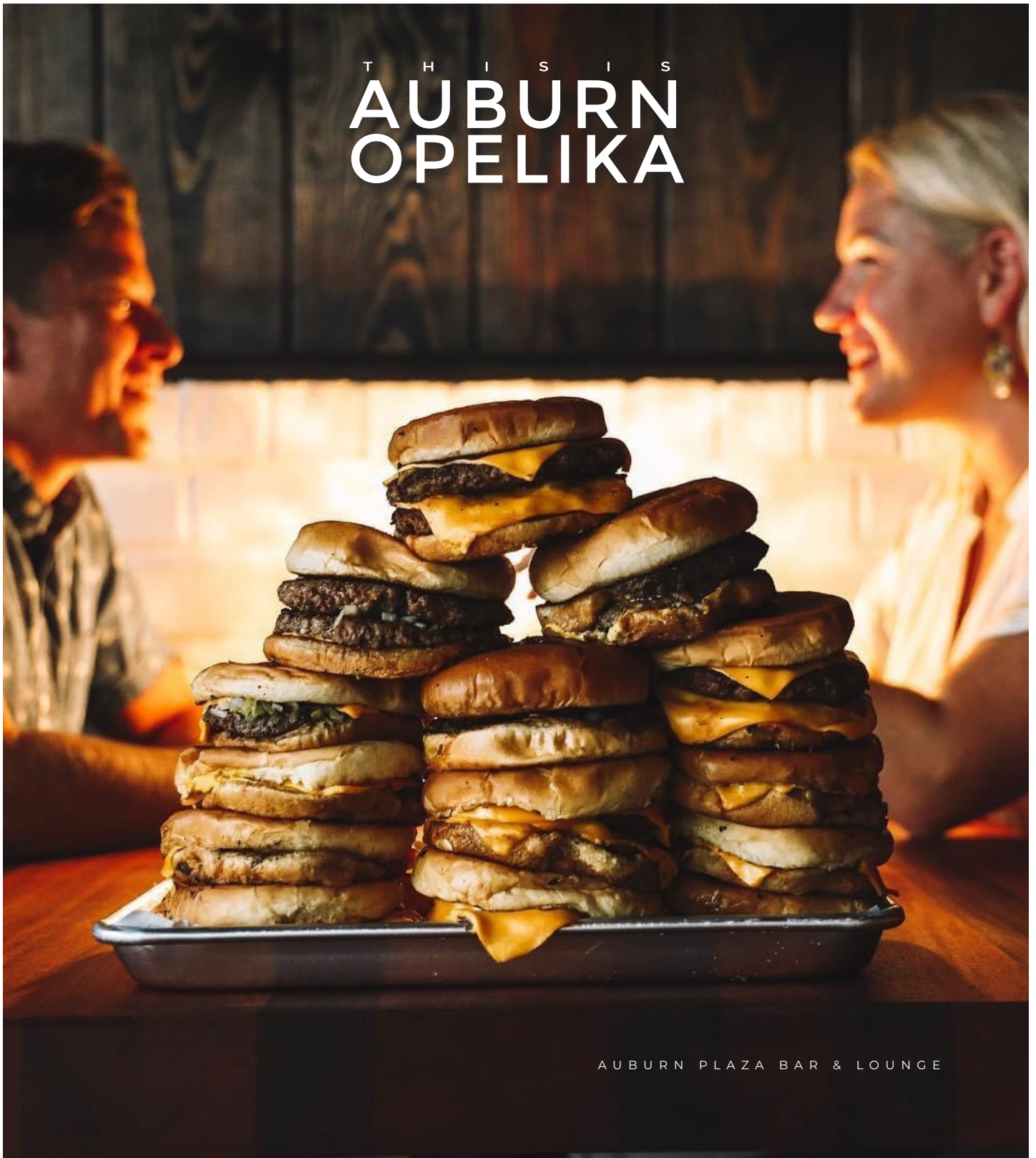
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