

History of the Wackiest Wolves: NC State's Many Mascots

By Hayden Love

As a member of the Wolfpack, I am sure you can guess what our mascot may be. We actually have multiple! To name a few, there's the beloved Tamaskan dog Tuffy III, Mr. and Ms. Wuf or "Wolf-Monster" aka "Hell," a demonic-looking robot suit that terrorized students during the 1946 season. Well, you may not have heard about the last one, but NC State has a long history of mascots that have represented the school for various allotments of time. Today, you will discover the fascinating history of the weirdest and wackiest mascots this school has seen, and gain an appreciation for the modern mascots we have adopted today!

To begin, we should go all the way back to our first ever mascot, Wallace Whitfield Riddick. If that sounds like a boring human name, well, that's because it is! Thought to be our first ever mascot in 1899, Wallace Whitfield Riddick was the 5-year-old son of the future chancellor Wallace Carl Riddick. While this is a far fetched idea to modern college students and alumni, it was a pretty standard practice back in the day. Mascots were not

Tuffy III winks at the crowd before kickoff at the football game against Furman at Carter-Finley Stadium on Sept. 18, 2022. Tuffy III became NC State's live mascot in the summer of 2021 after Tuffy II died from heart disease. File Photo by Danielle Meyer.



thought of as staple banners of a school like they are today, but more so good luck charms. Thus was the case with Wallace Whitfield Riddick, who was the source of good luck for the 1899 baseball team. Due to this philosophy around mascots, though, this chancellor's son was probably not officially recognized or even thought of as a school mascot. That wouldn't come for another 40 years with the introduction of our first wolf mascot, State.

State was the first ever wolf-like mascot the college saw sometime in the 1940s. When I say "wolf-like," I should say, an actual wolf. State was a timber wolf that NC state managed to pick up. While more tame than a typical wolf, he was quick to show his wild side when presented in front of a far more wild audience of enduring sports fans. Due to this fact, in 1946, NC State sold their first mascot to a traveling zoo for the low price of \$25. NC State wouldn't see another animal mascot for over a decade, but it wouldn't take long for a new wacky mascot to hold the title.

In 1959, another timber wolf named Lobo I was introduced as the new official mascot to the Wolfpack, who unfortunately passed within 2 weeks of arriving at the college due to his sickly state. Trying to quickly fill the void, Lobo II was introduced in 1960. Lobo II appeared at a couple football games, but due to the stress induced by large crowds of roaring fans, he quickly escaped from his keepers. Despite their best efforts, Lobo II was never found. Lobo III finally stayed around. Lobo III was marketed as a timber wolf, just like his two predecessors. It was quickly discovered, though, that Lobo III seemed to have a lot more in common with a coyote. This sparked a lot of talk among students, with phrases such as "Kyotes Are Kool" becoming popular. In 1970, due to becoming more untamed, the beloved "kyote" was retired to a happy home, where he lived out the rest of his life.

Costumed mascots came more into style during the 1960s-70s, but NC State made sure to be ahead of this curve with the creation of their first costumed mascot in 1946. Ira Helms, a mechanical engineering student, crafted a mechanical wolf-man thing to be shown off at football games. Due to its large and horrifying

appearance, it quickly became known as "Hell" or "Wolf-Monster" to students. It was originally intended to be a robot, but due to running out of time, Ira was forced to wear the suit. Other students followed closely behind with a remote control to give the idea of it being fully autonomous. After a short and terrifying reign, the hellish beast was laid to rest at a tasteful funeral following the 1947 Gator Bowl.

That wouldn't be the end of scary mascots for NC State though, as a decapitated Ms. Wuf would show herself to the world in 1978. During an NC State club hockey game, Ms. Wuf's head was snatched clean off by a scheming Chapel Hill student, who then ran off to a getaway car. In fear of getting into legal turmoil, the thieves eventually turned in the head to Chapel Hill's cheerleaders, who then returned it to their rightful owner. With Ms. Wuf whole again, our mascots will never see another horrifying iteration for the (hopefully) foreseeable future.



Pictured here is Ms. Wuf walking a previous live mascot sometime in the 1970s. According to information given by Special Collections Research Center, this image was actually taken by a Technician photographer at the time of its creation.

"Ms. Wuf takes the mascot for a walk" photograph, University Archives Photograph Collection, Athletics Photographs, UA 023.004, Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh, NC.

For more intriguing information on the history of our school mascots, scan the codes below or find both parts of the article by Clara Wilson on lib.ncsu.edu.

Mascot Mania: The Evolution of NC State's Mascot

Part I



Part II



NC STATE

The Division of Academic and Student Affairs

Welcomes the Class of 2028

dasa.ncsu.edu



Follow @NCStateDASA to get involved and find your communities.