

Variety

Middle Georgia town revels in mascot, plans to build memorial at gravesite

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In the small town of Eastman, a four-hour drive from Athens, residents have a new sense of pride because of their newfound connection to the University in the form of Mr. Angel, a bulldog who was between the hedges from 1944-46.

The English bulldog was the property of the deceased Dr. Warren A. Coleman, who worked at the local hospital.

Coleman's daughter, Marie Coleman-Wilson, alerted The Red & Black about the dog, and word spread back to Eastman last week after initial articles about the dog emerged.

Freshman and Eastman native Emily Rae Smith found out about Mr. Angel when she saw the article in the paper last week.

"When I was reading it I thought, 'Could it really be Eastman, Ga.?' Because nothing really comes out of here." Smith said. "It was just kind of cool that a UGA mascot is from Eastman, or at least lived there for a little (while)."

She told her father about the article, who immediately spread the word about the dog across town.

"I was flabbergasted," said Ray Smith, who graduated from the University in 1978 with a degree in history.

"I was just floored that it (Mr. Angel's legacy) got by somehow."

Wilson, 81, now lives in Lilburn, and her former residence has since been transformed into the First Bank of Eastman, where the dog is allegedly buried.

"A lot of people are excited about having a little bit of Athens in Dodge County," said Jolene Carroll, chairman of the First Bank of Eastman.

Coleman said when Mr. Angel died decades ago, he was buried on her residence at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Oak Street under cherry laurel trees.

Wilson said that neighborhood children wept at the funeral and placed white chrysanthemums on the grave.

Eastman has a population of about 5,000, with only three banks in the town.

Carroll said on pay day Friday, customers were talking about Mr. Angel.

Some residents have started making plans for a marker at the place where the dog is buried, which may be near the banks.

"I want to raise money for the dog if we can confirm it is a legitimate mascot," said Mitchell Coffee, 46, a longtime Georgia game attendee.

"We can get 50 to 75 people to raise money for it, if we can confirm it."

The exact spot of the dog's grave is in question, but Wilson is excited about the prospect of a marker.

"I would love it, but I don't know where it would be," Wilson said.

Smith, who studies Eastman's history, plans on contacting Wilson about her dog in the next few days.