

News

Heaven-sent bulldog stood in as wartime mascot

Dog or mascot?

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More than 60 years ago, during the last years of World War II, Mr. Angel watched over Sanford Stadium, much like Uga VI will do this Saturday.



Like Uga VI, Mr. Angel was a bulldog who wagged his tail during his tenure from 1944 to 1946.

Mr. Angel's caretaker, Dr. Warren A. Coleman, passed away years ago, but his daughter, Marie Coleman Wilson, is on a mission to bring Mr. Angel's story out from out beneath history's haze.

Mr. Angel, the bulldog who represented the University during World War II, poses with University cheerleaders during a home football game. (SPECIAL | The Red & Black)

"It is just a shame he has slipped through the cracks in history," said Wilson. "He is a part of the history of Georgia."

Mr. Angel is not found among Butch, Mike, all six Ugases and even a goat in the football media guide today. The catalogue shows a gap from 1894 to 1947 without a mascot.

"I don't know why he was not written up," said Wilson. "He was there during the war years, which were not the happiest times to be at school."

Wilson, 81 and residing in Lilburn, was a student at the University from 1944 to 1946. She remembers hearing the names of students who passed away in battles against fascism and that Mr. Angel provided a distraction from the stresses of war.

"He was available and eager to do it," said Wilson. "He was such a sweet dog, so sweet."

Mr. Angel served his post during the war on the sidelines as a source of school pride, much like his bulldog successors Butch (1947-50), Mike (1951-55) and the line of Ugases who have served the University since 1956.

Contrary to the media guide's neglect, Mr. Angel was a part of University in some capacity. Wilson provided The Red & Black with photographs of Mr. Angel at football games and with cheerleaders.

In addition, Mr. Angel is pictured on the field during the 1944 and 1945 homecomings in Pandora yearbooks.

Former head of sports communications and legendary tennis coach Dan Magill said he did not know about Mr. Angel when he first compiled information on mascots in the 1950s.

After seven decades in the program, Magill is considered the historian of Georgia athletics.

However, while Magill was serving in the Marines during Mr. Angel's tenure, he said that the dog could have been one of many "volunteer mascots" that would show up to the games.

"Several alumni would just bring their bulldogs to the games," Magill said. "There was no official mascot at that time."

Yet, according to a picture in the 1945 Pandora, Mr. Angel was at center field during the 1944 Homecoming, as film star Janet Blair spoke about war bonds with University officials.

Magill said he would look at the evidence and see if Mr. Angel should be added to the historical record on mascots.

Wilson is not sure of the exact year of Mr. Angel's death, but he is buried in Eastman.

The Red & Black attempted to reach current Athletic Association officials for comment but were denied repeated requests for a timely interview.



MR. ANGEL (SPECIAL | The Red & Black)