

Tiger Tales

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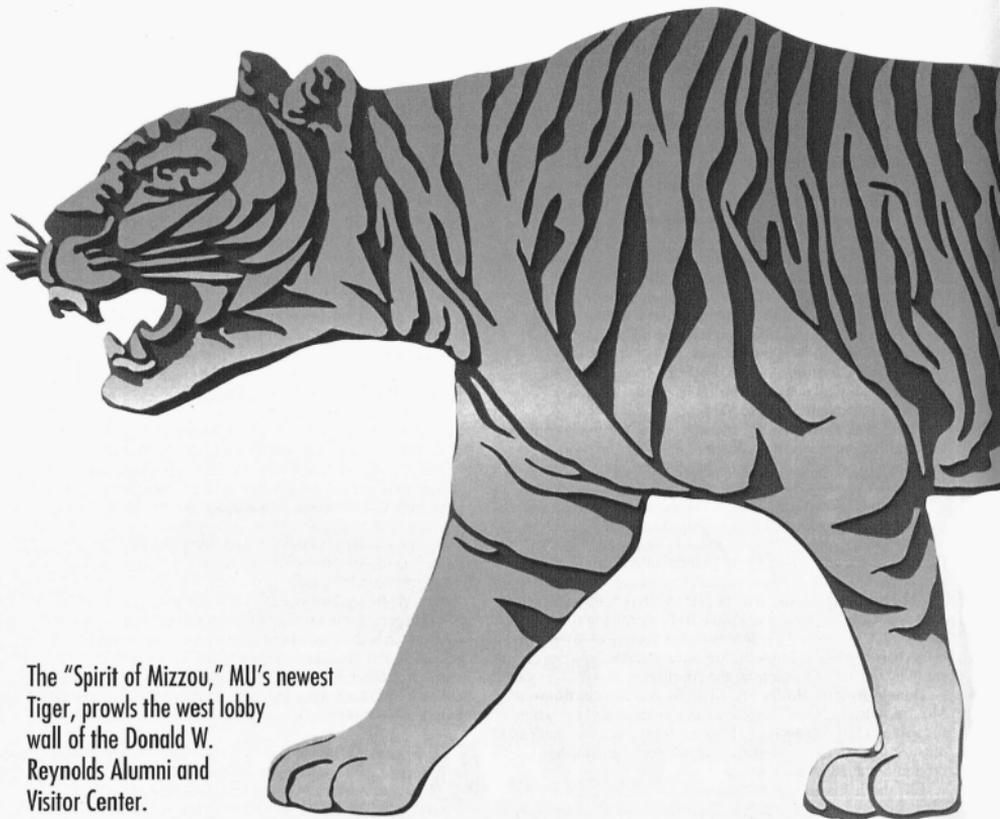
If you doubt the ferociousness of tigers, talk to Bob Stull, MU's football coach spent a day with a 550-pound male tiger, photographing the 1992 football campaign. "Beware the Hungry Tiger."

The cat, 5-feet tall while sitting and nearly 9 feet when up on its hind legs, popped footballs with one quick bite. The ones that were finally photographed were filled with cement to deter the tiger's deadly teeth.

Trainers used large chunks of horse meat on the end of a long stick to get the tiger into position. Stull stepped next to the tiger right after it took a big bite. The camera clicked. As the tiger swallowed, Stull would step back. "When he missed a piece of meat, he quickly turned and looked at

me," says Stull, who had to sign five pages of liability forms before he could stand next to the majestic beast that had just been awakened from a nap.

Yet, it wasn't the ferociousness of the largest member of the cat family that inspired MU to adopt the Bengal tiger as its athletic symbol in 1890—the year the football team began. Instead, the name was taken from an armed guard of Columbia citizens, the Missouri Tigers. During the Civil War, the impromptu troop built a blockhouse and fortified the courthouse to protect Columbia from Confederate army attacks. These rifle-toting tigers never had to display their



The "Spirit of Mizzou," MU's newest Tiger, prowls the west lobby wall of the Donald W. Reynolds Alumni and Visitor Center.

catlike prowess on the battlefield. The troops detoured Columbia and were defeated at Westport, according to Frank Stephens in his *History of the University of Missouri*.

Throughout the Tiger's reign as Mizzou's mascot, many renditions from fierce to silly have found their way into student and official publications. A hungry, ready-to-strike tiger has been used by the athletic department since 1980 to represent Mizzou's prowess in sports. Truman, the lovable team mascot, portrayed by students in costume, got his name in 1984 when the cheerleaders held a contest. Before that time MU had two Tiger mascots, a male and female that entertained at games. In 1986, Truman's suit was redesigned into its present form. Tru-

man is so popular that last year 45 students competed to wear the costume to games and events around the country.

Football fans also will recognize the tigers drawn by Amadee Wohlschlaeger for the football programs. Often with a smirky grin instead of a snarl, this tiger has been outsmarting other schools' mascots for the past 30 years. Wohlschlaeger, who is 80 years old, retired from *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1981 where he drew sports cartoons and the paper's weather bird.

Cartoon tigers have been popular throughout the mascot's 102-year history at the University. Although many were drawn by students, some famous artists used the Mizzou Tiger for inspiration. In 1956, Charles Schulz, creator of "Peanuts," drew the "Peanuts Tiger" for the Homecoming edition of *The Maneater*. A

year later, *Showme* magazine, a student-produced humor publication, created a pattern of the Schulz sketch with directions on how to make a felt tiger suitable for a jacket or poodle-style skirt. The tiger isn't completed until you embroider lines below it. These lines, indicating that the tiger is hopping up and down, are similar to the ones Schulz uses to show the exuberance Charlie Brown's dog, Snoopy, often feels in the comic strip.

The newest MU Tiger is more regal. At the center of campus in the Donald W. Reynolds Alumni and Visitor Center, a 10-foot-long tiger sculpture hangs stately on the wall. Striding forward and ready for action, this cat represents the spirit of Mizzou as the University leaps into its next century of serving Missouri. "This symbol is appropriate for the Reynolds Center because this building will bring together students, faculty, staff and alumni as we strive to address the demands of the future," says Chris Koukola, assistant vice chancellor for university relations. 

