

The Most Beloved Mascot in College Sports

Colonel Reb



Colonel Reb Foundation
2010 Truth Kit



More than a mascot

In 2003, University of Mississippi Chancellor Robert Khayat led an effort to remove Colonel Reb as the official mascot and symbol of Ole Miss. That year's student body government then had an emergency election, and the students voted 94 percent to keep the Colonel – a fixture at Ole Miss since 1937, when Colonel Reb and the Ole Miss Rebels moniker were created simultaneously. After an uproar of displeasure, what did the administration do? Nothing. For seven years, despite the wishes of nearly all students, alumni and fans, Khayat and athletics director Pete Boone decided to go mascot-less.

The Colonel Reb Foundation (CRF) was established that fateful year of 2003, with a mission to restore Colonel Reb as the official Ole Miss mascot. Led by then sophomore Brian Ferguson, the foundation immediately made an impact on the mascot fiasco. The foundation's pressure and media presence, coupled with influential alumni voicing displeasure of Khayat and Boone's decision, led the University to cease its bid for a new mascot.

In the years since, the Colonel Reb Foundation has constantly fought a grassroots campaign to restore the Colonel. In 2004, the foundation purchased a mascot somewhat resembling the University's original Colonel mascot, and had this Colonel start rooting the Rebels on and bringing delight to young and old alike. Over 300,000 "Colonel Reb Is My Mascot" lapel stickers have been purchased and distributed by the CRF on Rebel gamedays. Furthermore, the foundation started making collectible throwback football schedules featuring the Colonel. To date, over 40,000 of these colorful posters have been given out free to Ole Miss fans.

Why go through the trouble? Colonel Reb is one of the most historic and recognized mascots and logos in collegiate sports. He personifies the tradition and pageantry of Ole Miss. As a logo, the words "Ole Miss" do not have to be near his likeness, and fans will still recognize him as the Ole Miss mascot. His 70-plus year history at Ole Miss is worth fighting for. For Ole Miss is simply not Ole Miss...without Colonel Reb.



The Lies-ceum

After Robert Khayat's retirement in 2009, Dr. Dan Jones took over as the University of Mississippi's 16th chancellor. Handpicked by Khayat, Jones decided to follow-through on what his predecessor could not do – get a new mascot. The Jones administration decided to make this a "student spirit issue." Working out of his office in the Lyceum, the University's administrative headquarters, Jones appointed Dean of Students Sparky Reardon to take the lead on the change. Here is where the "Lyceum's lies" skyrocket:

- In the summer of 2009, the Ole Miss athletic department helps create The Cardinal Club student spirit group, whose main purpose is to get a new mascot.
- At the start of the 2009-10 school year, the William Winter Institute's student group One Mississippi commenced a petition asking Ole Miss students if they wanted a mascot. Many students indicated "Yes," because the petition didn't exclude the return of Colonel Reb.
- In the fall of 2009, the University submits bids for a design agency to help with the mascot change. The Ramey Agency in Jackson, Miss., wins the bid – months before the ASB actually commences a student vote. The mascot committee now proclaims it hired Ramey, when in reality it was the other way around. In October 2009, Ramey begins registering new mascot websites, including OleMissLandsharks.com

- In January 2010, the Associated Student Body (ASB) welcomes the One Mississippi petition, and decides to put the idea before them if students want a mascot. The ASB approves a February 23 student vote, where students will be asked if they want a new on-field mascot. The vote purposely did not include Colonel Reb as an option.
- The week before the vote, ASB president Artair Rogers visits Greek houses, threatening students that a "No" vote would give the University complete control of getting a new mascot.
- The day before the vote, The Daily Mississippian publishes a confusing front page feature. The story echoes Rogers' strategy to scare voters, and get "Yes" votes.
- The mascot vote was completely electronic, with no paper ballot. There was no way to question the results.
- Five minutes after the polls closed on Feb. 23, senior executive associate athletics director John Hartwell calls the Rebel Shop and asks them to begin removing all Colonel Reb merchandise. Within the week, it is announced that the 70-year-old logo will be placed in a "vault," and not licensed anymore.
- At no time during the student vote process was the Colonel Reb logo brought into question or even implied. The University kills the logo, despite record sales of Colonel Reb products.
- During the summer of 2010, the mascot committee holds sessions throughout the state to get alumni feedback. At these sessions, the vast majority of attendees indicated they wanted Colonel Reb as the mascot. The new mascot designer, Eric Rickabaugh, confesses in these meetings that he suggested to the University that it not proceed with a new mascot if it will not be well-received.
- After an embarrassing summer of new mascot ideas and polls, the mascot committee releases the final three choices and designs on Oct. 5. The 25-page accompanying PDF falsely promotes a "student-led process." The PDF also promotes that the committee has had an "inclusive and transparent process," when in fact it spurned Colonel Reb-friendly students.
- An unreported amount of University and/or UMAA funds have been diverted to fund this new mascot crusade. Some of these funds went to purchasing and destroying Colonel Reb merchandise.
- University officials tell Colonel Reb Foundation members that they can't canvass in the free speech zone outside the Student Union.
- The CRF's mascot is denied entry into Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, although published stadium rules do not exclude his entry. "It's a Colonel Reb thing," was the reasoning behind the ban.
- Outside the stadium at the Fresno State-Ole Miss game, security attacks the CRF mascot and shoves the Colonel against a fence. This simple assault was captured on video and posted on YouTube.

www.SaveOleMiss.com

TRADITION MATTERS



Over 3,500 Ole Miss students proudly proclaim, "Colonel Reb Is My Mascot!"

We declare that Colonel Reb is our one and only preference for the official mascot of the University of Mississippi. We strongly oppose the current administration's schemes to replace Colonel Reb under the misleading claim that this is a student-led effort, and we strongly oppose any and all replacement mascots. We believe that devising a new mascot is embarrassing and ridiculous. We demand that the current Ole Miss administration and the Athletic Department conform to the will of the overwhelming majority of students and alumni, which is to restore Colonel Reb to his rightful place as the celebrated symbol and primary logo of the University of Mississippi. With our signatures below, we petition for the complete restoration of Colonel Reb as the undisputed and cherished Ole Miss mascot. We also want the Colonel Reb Foundation to be a fully recognized on-campus student organization, and for the foundation's fill-in mascot, "Colonel Too," to not be banned from Rebel sporting events. To support this noble cause, we hereby become student members and supporters of the Colonel Reb Foundation.

Don't listen to the University of Mississippi's lies and intimidation. Colonel Reb is the choice of Ole Miss students, alumni and fans. Dan Jones, Pete Boone and Sparky Reardon, give true Ole Miss fans what they really want...Colonel Reb.



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