The Rawk is 50

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HISTORY & TRADITIONS

WITH 2023-24 EVENT DATES!
Hello, and Welcome to the Spartan Family!

Just as UNCG is now part of your story, you are part of its story. The history and traditions in this booklet are yours, and I hope in your time here you’ll enjoy them and create traditions and memories of your own.

Your decision to attend UNCG will benefit you for a lifetime. I speak from experience — before I came to work here, I earned two degrees from UNCG, and am now in progress on a third! I’ve learned that everything I put into this special place, it gives back exponentially.

Fortunately, while you’ll spend a handful of years as a UNCG student, you’ll be a proud Spartan alumnus forever. With that in mind, I hope you’ll find an opportunity to visit the Alumni House while you’re a student. The house represents the proud accomplishments of all the alumni who have made this institution part of their lives, and I invite you to get acquainted with it.

Until then, best wishes in your academic pursuits, and go Spartans!

Beth Carlin '14, '17 MA
Interim director
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How it’s going
The 2003 installation of a supersized bronze sculpture (left, a gift from the class of 1953 and created by a UNCG alum) outside the EUC sent Minerva to icon status and invited student interaction. Sometime around 2010 students began the tradition of leaving her apples at exam time to increase their odds of good grades (inset left).

How it started
Minerva was designated the school symbol by founder Charles Duncan McIver. In addition to being on every diploma the school has ever awarded, she adorns ceremonial objects including our mace, flag, and seal, and her profile has graced jewelry, apparel, and swag (like pennants, right) since forever.

An earlier, plaster statue of Minerva stood in various locations from 1908 through the early 1970s. Time and transitions took their toll until eventually it was beyond repair.
How it started
A true classic, the daisy — symbolizing friendship — was chosen as the school flower by the class of 1893. Records show the first daisy chain was made in 1900 with flowers from nearby fields, with the chains soon appearing at commencement and other festivities. Above, students bring in the harvest circa 1965.

As a show of respect to their senior class sisters, it was the job of sophomores to fashion the commencement daisy chains.

How it's going
We still love our daisies! The flower abounds, with daisies and daisy chains taking center stage at NAVIGATE and Red Carpet Reception and swaths of the cheery blooms planted across campus.
How it started
Service and giving are UNCG’s core. The first graduating class (10 students) chose “service” as the school motto. During WWI, students ran campus with construction, farming, and maintenance teams — in 1918, the Carpenterettes (above) cleared land and built a YWCA structure at the end of College Avenue by Peabody Park that was used into the 1940s. WWII efforts included rolling bandages, making clothes, and raising money.

How it’s going
By now, simply being a Spartan means giving and serving, and students continue to rally around their school. During Believe in the G (below), an annual event to support scholarships and academics, students encourage gifts, make gifts, thank donors, and (of course) enjoy treats and swag. At commencement, grads who give at least their class year (i.e., $20.23) can wear a philanthropy cord to show their commitment to UNCG. And in the community, hundreds of students volunteer each year for Spartan Service Day (during Rawkin’ Welcome Week) and the MLK Day of Service.

MLK Day of Service 2024 is Monday, Jan. 15. Believe in the G is Monday, March 12, and Tuesday, March 13.
How it started
Obviously, school spirit has been around since the beginning, but we’re talking organized, regularly scheduled school spirit on a grand scale. And in the beginning, there was May Day. The first was held in 1906 and the vibe was Renaissance England – dances, pageants, maypole, heralds (right), and a procession down College Avenue. When the event wound down in 1955, it had evolved into more of a beauty pageant.

How it’s going
Storm the Streets, a mile march from campus to the Greensboro Coliseum to mark the men’s basketball home opener, launched in 2018 and took off. Because who doesn’t like a reason to paint themselves blue and stop traffic? If you’re after something low-key, put on your school colors for Blue & Gold Friday.

Storm the Streets is in November, at the start of basketball season.
How it started
Founders Day began after the death of school founder and first president Charles Duncan McIver and included decorating his gravesite (above, in 1939) and laying a wreath at McIver’s campus statue.

How it’s going
Alumni reps still decorate the resting places of late school leaders, but the 1960s introduced an element of fun, and these days students celebrate with cake (inset).

There’s a duplicate of the campus McIver statue on the Capitol grounds in Raleigh.
How it started
In 1922, the Aydelette family opened the West End Ice Cream Company near campus. The name eventually changed to Yum Yum Better Ice Cream (inset right, circa 1970). For decades, to the delight of students and locals, it steadfastly has served up pink hot dogs, Cheerwine in glass bottles, and ice cream made on site. So intrinsic is Yum Yum to the Spartan experience that while it’s technically not part of UNCG, we had to include it.

How it’s going
Despite a couple changes, Yum Yum — among N.C.’s oldest restaurants — can probably claim icon/landmark status. After UNCG acquired and, in 1973, razed the original structure for the Mossman Building, the business moved across the street and a block west to its present location. In 2020, the Aydelettes sold Yum Yum to a new owner committed to tradition. Otherwise, thankfully, Yum Yum is same as it ever was — hot dogs, ice cream, Cheerwine, and crowds of the faithful.

Until its new ownership in 2020, Yum Yum was strictly cash-only.
How it started

Built in the neo-Georgian architectural style, the Alumni House opened its doors in 1937 and was partly funded through the federal Public Works Administration. It sits between College Avenue and the EUC — you see the back of the house from Taylor Garden (right).

How it’s going

During graduation season, the Alumni House is THE destination for cap and gown photos. The day before commencement, the Alumni Office celebrates graduating seniors at the house with the Red Carpet Reception, where a professional photographer snaps complimentary pics of grads and guests (left).

For a time, after moving from Foust in 1966, the chancellor’s office was located in the lower level of the Alumni House.
How it’s going
A simple act more than 50 years ago sparked a beloved tradition that now includes displays across campus, including the Vacc Bell Tower (inset left). Led by fraternities and sororities, this remains a student effort. The switch flips each fall on Reading Day.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS
tradition since 1969

How it started
Supplied with white paper bags, 2,000 candles, a giant pile of sand, and the blessing of school leaders, students organized to assemble the luminaires and then line campus walkways with them. Above, the Alumni House in the tradition’s early days.

DEEP CUT
Vacc Bell Tower is on the site of the original chancellor’s residence, a two-story, ten-room house built in 1892. Known as the McIver House, the structure was torn down in 1952.
THE RAWK
tradition since 1973

How it started
Here’s what we know about the Rawk:

- Alpha Phi Omega fraternity donated the 12.7-ton rock in 1973 to serve as a campus message board specifically so that students would stop painting the McIver statue.
- It cost $31.78 and came from a quarry in Jamestown.
- Its original location was along Gray Drive (right).
- It’s been referred to as the Rawk since the beginning.
- Also since the beginning, good form dictates that a message remains untouched for 24 hours.

Neighbor of the Rawk, the Clock (inset right) — the one you shouldn’t walk under if you want to graduate on time — was a 1991 gift from the class of 1941.

How it’s going
According to a 1985 student news article, on Aug. 21, 1973, the Rawk was “formally designated as the official campus object to be painted.” Since then:

- It moved to its present spot, beside Jackson Library, in the mid-’80s to make way for construction.
- When paint builds up, it’s sand-blasted.
- 2023 marks 50 years on the UNCG campus.

That’s it. That’s all that’s happened. It’s a rock. What do you expect?
How it started
Homecoming — held each October with a royal court, men's soccer game, and daylong party — launched in 1982, and students were quick to get in the spirit (above, at the 1987 Homecoming parade).

How it's going
UNCG Homecoming is going strong. Thousands attend each year, and while the parade is no more, a Friday night opening bonfire (inset right), introduced in 2013, is so popular it's quickly become a tradition of its own — it's now the biggest college bonfire in N.C.!

Homecoming 2023 happens Friday, Oct. 20, and Saturday, Oct. 21, on Kaplan Commons.
**SPARTAN TRADITIONS**

**CHECKLIST**

- Leave an apple for Minerva
- Contribute to a daisy chain
- Participate in Believe in the G
- Wear a philanthropy cord at commencement
- Participate in the MLK Day of Service
- Have cake on Founders Day
- Storm the Streets for the basketball opener
- Wear your blue and gold on Friday
- Eat at Yum Yum
- Take a graduation photo at the Alumni House
- Attend the Red Carpet Reception
- Distribute luminaires
- Paint a message on the Rawk
- Avoid walking under the clock
- Enjoy the Homecoming bonfire
- Join the Homecoming lawn party
Scene of the 1937 dedication of the Alumnae House, as it was then named. In 1971, after the university became coed, it was renamed the Alumni House.

**SOURCES**

Historical information and archival photos collected primarily from the following:

- "Changing Assignments: A Pictorial History of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro," by Allen W. Trelease
- Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, UNCG University Libraries
- University Archives & Manuscripts Timeline of UNCG History (https://library.uncg.edu/info/depts/scua/exhibits/timeline/pages/)

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