Since 1912, our University has proudly sent well over 100,000 graduates into the world. These scholars have gone on to shape our community and our future, and they have each played a part in writing our history and creating our traditions.

The UofM Alumni Association welcomes you to our Tiger family. We charge you to uphold these traditions and write your own story during your time on campus. Use this guide to learn about our Tiger Tales.

For over a century, UofM has inspired and united the city of Memphis. Join together with your classmates to complete the activities in this guide before you graduate. Take those memories with you after you leave and continue to spread your Tiger Pride. Remember, wherever you are, you’re a Tiger!
UofM's official school colors of blue and gray were chosen in an effort to show unity in a nation that was still recovering from the divisive effects of the Civil War. The student body thought that by picking the colors of the North and South, the school could set a positive example and foster a spirit of togetherness.

HISTORY OF UofM

- **September 10, 1912** West Tennessee Normal School opens with Dr. Seymour Mynders as president.
- **1912** First football game is played at Red Elm Park pitting the WTNS Normals against the Memphis University School Turtles and ending in a 0-0 draw; school colors of blue and gray officially chosen.
- **1913** John Willard Brister becomes second president.
- **1914** Normal School women play their first intercollegiate basketball game against Whitehaven High School, winning 24-0.
- **1916** Football Normals’ defeat Somerville High School 115-0, the highest scoring game in Memphis history.
- **1918** Andrew A. Kincannon becomes third president.
- **1925** Name changes to West Tennessee State Teachers College.
- **1929** Football ‘Teachers’ post an 8-0-2 record and win the school’s first conference championship; President John W. Brister unveils the new Alma Mater, which he composed that spring.
ALMA MATER

Stand Firm, O Alma Mater
Through All The Years To Come;
In Days Of Youth And Beauty
Thy Halls Have Been Our Home.
In Time Of Preparation
Great Lessons Didst Thou Teach
Till Now O Alma Mater,
The Stars We'll Strive To Reach.
Lead On, O Alma Mater
Thy Sons To Higher Ways,
Give Light And Truth Unto Them
For All Their Coming Days.
To Thee We'll Give All Honor,
Our Hopes Abide In Thee,
For Thou, O Alma Mater,
Hast Made Us Ever Free

1930 The school’s name is changed to State Teachers College, Memphis.
1938-39 is the first perfect season for Memphis football in the history of the school. The team finishes 10-0 and is the highest scoring team in the nation that year.
1939 Richard Claiborne Jones becomes fourth president; the tiger is named the official mascot of the college.
1941 Name changed to Memphis State College as it becomes a full four-year institution.
1943 Dr. Jennings Bryan Sanders becomes fifth president.
1946 Name changed to Memphis State University.
1957 The University accepts its first eight African-American students, known as the Memphis State Eight.
1959 Dr. Cecil C. Humphreys becomes seventh president; Pouncer becomes first costumed mascot.
1960
FIGHT SONG

(Shout) Go Tigers Go
Go Tigers Go
Go Tigers Go
Go On To Victory,
Be A Winner Thru And Thru;
Fight Tigers, Fight 'Cause We're
Going All The Way —
Fight, Fight
For The Blue And Gray And Say —

1963 Tigers enjoy their 2nd ever undefeated football season. The city throws a parade down Main Street to celebrate.

1965 Tiger football begins playing home games at Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium.

1972 A Bengal tiger cub named TOM makes his first official appearance as mascot at the MSU-University of Cincinnati football game in Memphis. The Tigers win 49-24.

1973 Dr. Billy Mac Jones becomes eighth president.

1980 Dr. Thomas Carpenter becomes ninth president.

1982 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1984 The Student Ambassador Board sponsors the inaugural Mudball Tournament.

1985 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1986 Dr. George Lee becomes tenth president.

1987 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1988 Dr. Hank Bounds becomes eleventh president.

1989 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1990 Dr. John Dettwiller becomes twelfth president.

1991 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1992 Dr. David Rudd becomes thirteenth president.

1993 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1994 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes fourteenth president.

1995 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1996 Dr. David Rudd becomes fifteenth president.

1997 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

1998 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes sixteenth president.

1999 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2000 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes seventeenth president.

2001 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2002 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes eighteenth president.

2003 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2004 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes nineteenth president.

2005 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2006 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twentieth president.

2007 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2008 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twenty-first president.

2009 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2010 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twenty-second president.

2011 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2012 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twenty-third president.

2013 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2014 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twenty-fourth president.

2015 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2016 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twenty-fifth president.

2017 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2018 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twenty-sixth president.

2019 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.

2020 Dr. William J. Ferriter becomes twenty-seventh president.

2021 Memphis basketball is voted No. 1 in the country by both the Associated Press and UPI polls for the first time.
When West Tennessee Normal School first fielded a football team in the fall of 1912, no one had selected a nickname for the squad. Early references to the football team included the Blue and Gray Warriors, the Normals and the Teachers. After the final game of the 1914 season, participants in a student parade shouted, “We fight like Tigers!” The nickname was born.

In 1922, under Coach Lester Barnard, Memphis’ football team gave a ring of truth to that old student yell about Tigers. The team adopted a motto “Every Man a Tiger” and went on to score 174 points while allowing its opponents just 29 points. The Tiger nickname continued on with students and alumni, eventually being adopted as the official nickname for the university in 1939.

In 1972, a live tiger cub was adopted by the Highland Hundred Football Boosters. A naming contest was held and TOM (“Tigers Of Memphis”) emerged the winner. TOM the Tiger passed away in 1992 after serving as the mascot for 19 years. That year, tiger cub TOM II was introduced as the new mascot. TOM II succumbed to cancer at the age of 17 in 2009. TOM III was adopted in 2008 and attends all Tiger Football home games and other University events throughout the year. UofM is one of two universities in the U.S. that feature a live tiger as a mascot.

MASCOT
UofM also has a costumed mascot lovingly known as Pouncer. Freshman J. Wayne Johnson was the first to wear the mascot costume in 1960.
The object in the middle is a mace. Flanked by laurel leaves, the mace itself, a symbol of leadership and authority, is a visual embodiment of tradition in academic circles. The Roman numerals MCMXII represent 1912, the year the university was founded. The words “imaginare, cogitare, facere” are Latin for “dreamers, thinkers, doers.”
One of our University's longest standing traditions is Homecoming. Each fall, alumni return to their alma mater and join students for a spirited week-long celebration. Join a student organization to create a float and circle the campus at the annual Homecoming Parade, followed by singing the Fight Song and cheering our Tigers to victory at the pep rally. From games to 5Ks to music to step shows, students and alumni have an almost endless variety of activities to choose from—all culminating with the Homecoming game at the Liberty Bowl.

BLUE FRIDAYS
Every Friday, UofM students, faculty, staff, alumni and supporters are encouraged to wear Tiger Blue, no matter where they are. But remember, it's not just blue, it has to be TIGER BLUE.
To commemorate the school’s 100th anniversary, UoF M commissioned a bronze statue of a tiger in front of the University Center. The statue is an exact replica of TOM III, right down to the stripes.

UoF M didn’t want a snarling tiger, but an approachable one. TOM was rendered “at ease” with one foot set just over the edge of the base, toes curling over it. The base was designed to have the tiger moving upward and forward, to symbolize graduates moving into the world beyond school.

In recent years, it’s become campus tradition to rub TOM’s front paw for good luck (especially before exams).

In honor of the University’s Centennial, the Alumni Association placed life-size Tiger statues around the city of Memphis in January 2012. Each statue has been uniquely decorated with artwork by Mid-South artists, students and alumni. The Tiger statues are sponsored by local fans, alumni and businesses and are currently on display at their chosen locations and on the UoF M campus.

All students are expected to take a selfie with all 100 tiger statues (and post on social media tagged with #tigersaroundtown) by the time they graduate.
UP TIL DAWN

Up ‘til Dawn was founded here at UofM nearly two decades ago. Since it began, it has spread to over 250 schools nationwide and now generates nearly $5 million annually for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Up ‘til Dawn unites students, staff and the Memphis community, all with the goal to help the children of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Individuals or teams work together all year long to raise money. At the end of the program, campuses host a Finale Event and stay “Up ‘til Dawn” celebrating their achievements and honoring the patients at St. Jude.

Since the program began, UofM Up ‘til Dawn has raised more than $2 million for St. Jude. Visit Memphis.edu/uptildawn to learn how you can get involved.

RAMESSES II

For over 20 years, this statue of Egypt’s pharaoh-god stood in front of the Memphis Pyramid arena. When the Pyramid was converted to a Bass Pro Shop, Ramesses II didn’t quite fit the store’s theme, so it was decided that UofM should be his new home (quite appropriate considering UofM’s renowned Egyptology program). Ramesses II now stands right off of Central Avenue, between the Music Building and the Art and Communication Building. The 25-foot fiberglass statue, built in 1991, was a gift from the Egyptian government.

Walk like an Egyptian over to UofM’s Egyptian Gallery, located in the Art and Communication Building.
FROSH CAMP

Frosh Camp is a four-day, extended orientation program for incoming UofM freshmen, held every year in Pleasantville, Tennessee, at Camp NaCoMe. Frosh Camp is a great way to meet new friends, to learn about getting involved at UofM and to get connected to campus before classes even begin. Meet lifelong friends and make memories that you’ll never forget!

RING CEREMONY

The Memphis Ring is a timeless, tangible symbol of the bond between all UofM graduates and the institution. Before they're distributed, each ring is taken to TOM III’s habitat and “blessed” for good luck. Pouncer then presents each recipient with his/her ring at the annual Memphis Ring Ceremony, held the weekend of each December Commencement. Students who have completed 90 or more credit hours are eligible to purchase a Memphis Ring.
Tiger Lane is where thousands of UofM football fans cheer on our team in Blue. The spirited entrance to the Liberty Bowl is located on East Parkway. Students, alumni and fans join together to play games, eat BBQ and gear up for the big game.

Ever wonder where all those tiger tails on campus come from? After New Student Convocation (which takes place on the first day of classes), the UofM Alumni Association treats new students to UofM spirit raining down from the sky—literally! Tiger tails are dropped out of a helicopter over campus, making students scramble to catch one before they’re all taken.
There’s no denying it. Memphis is a sports-crazed town. And UofM is a sports-crazed campus. Tiger basketball at the FedExForum is an obsession. Tailgating at Tiger Lane with thousands of blue-clad Tiger Football fans is a must. Whether it’s football, softball, baseball, soccer, volleyball, golf or tennis, UofM has a sport for every fan.

Some of the most accomplished musicians and performers in the world teach at and attend UofM. At any given time, there’s usually a live performance happening on campus (it’s even rumored that Elvis once performed on campus!). Choral ensembles, orchestra, bands, theatre, performance art, dance, opera—you name it, we’ve got it. Most performances are free for students with student ID.
COMMUNITY SERVICE

UofM works hard to cultivate a campus-wide culture of service and stay connected to the needs of our community. There are countless ways for students to give back through weekly volunteer initiatives, Alternative Spring Break, tutoring programs and Service on Saturday. Go to memphis.edu/service to see all the ways you can get involved.

INTERNSHIPS

Every year, nearly 5,000 UofM students set out for internships all over the Mid-South in Fortune 500 offices, art galleries, community programs and research labs. In fact, UofM is ranked in the top 10 in the nation for internships. Top spots include FedEx, International Paper, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, AutoZone, ServiceMaster and the Memphis Grizzlies.

ALUMNI PROGRAMS

FAM (Future Alumni of Memphis) is the student extension of the UoFM Alumni Association. Basically, FAM expands your social circle and gives you access to alumni networking (crucial in today’s job market!). All current undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to join.

The UoFM Young Alumni program is a division of the UoFM Alumni Association that’s priced for recent grads trying to get their foot in the door and their career off the ground. Grads who received their diploma within the past five years are eligible to join.

Making all of this possible is the UoFM Alumni Association. When you join UMAA, you’re not just giving back to your alma mater. You’re giving back to a community and a vibrant, growing network. UMAA helps alumni stay connected and help each other out, while providing student scholarships, alumni programs and events.

DAILY HELMSMAN

The Daily Helmsman, an independent, award winning student-run newspaper began as a protest newspaper in 1931 called The Tiger Rag. The name was changed to The Helmsman in 1972, and again in 1981 to The Daily Helmsman, when it began publishing four days a week.

Be sure to pick up a copy Monday-Thursday to see the latest news and upcoming events on campus.
NAME CHANGES

On September 10, 1912, West Tennessee Normal School opened in Memphis (a normal school is a school created to train high school graduates to be teachers. Its purpose is to establish teaching standards or norms, hence its name). The name changed in 1925 to West Tennessee State Teachers College. In 1941, the school was changed to Memphis State College, when the college expanded its liberal arts curriculum. In 1957, the school received full University status and changed its name accordingly to Memphis State University. On July 1, 1994, Memphis State University changed its name again to the University of Memphis.

MIGHTY SOUND OF THE SOUTH

Love the Tigers’ fight song? Thank this group. The Mighty Sound of the South is UoM’s school band. The band performs at Tiger football games as a marching band and at Tiger basketball games as a pep band. The band is officially charged with preserving the traditions of the Memphis Tigers and for performing “Go! Tigers! Go!,” the University of Memphis Tigers’ fight song.
These pioneers set Memphis State—now the University of Memphis—on a new path of equality, fairness and acceptance that has remained a hallmark of the University. In 2009, the University presented the Memphis State Eight with the Arthur S. Holmon Lifetime Achievement Award.

For the past decade, the University has been recognized as one of the nation’s top institutions for African-American graduates with baccalaureate and advanced degrees. And the percentage of African-American graduate students at the UoM is more than double the national average.

In the fall of 1959, some 4,500 students enrolled at Memphis State University. Among them were eight African Americans, the first to break the University’s color barrier. They were Bertha Mae Rogers (Looney), Rose Blakney (Love) and Marvis Kneeland (Jones), graduates of Hamilton High School; Luther McClellan and John Simpson from Manassas High School; Ralph Prater and Eleanor Gandy from Douglass High School; and Sammie Burnett (Johnson) from Booker T. Washington High School. They became known as the Memphis State Eight.
Founded in 1843 by the Memphis Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, Lambuth University achieved a national reputation as a premier liberal arts university.

In 2011, Lambuth became part of the University of Memphis system and has since grown into the most comprehensive four-year public university in Jackson, Tennessee.