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FEATURING



**Ron Popeil
Pioneer**

page 2



**Retirement
decisions**

page 3



**Dreams of
being on TV**

page 4



**Grandpa
Groucho**

page 5



**Famous cap
helps sell
hot dogs**

page 7

INSIDE

Crossword..... 10

Footprints of Columbus 1

Marci's Medicare..... 9

Savvy Senior..... 11

Seventies Flashback..... 2

Tinseltown Talks..... 7

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FOOTPRINTS OF COLUMBUS

Brutus Buckeye turns 60

By Tracy Stuck
and Dave Isaacs
Columbus Historical Society

This October 30 marks a milestone for one of the most beloved collegiate mascots in the nation. Over the past six decades, Brutus Buckeye has lived through many eras—some more colorful than others—but his well-lived life has made him an enduring symbol of Buckeye pride.

The Founding Era

In the fall of 1965, the idea for a mascot was taking shape inside the Ohio Union during a meeting of Ohio Staters, Inc., a student service organization. Probationary member Ray Bourhis proposed creating a mascot to represent Ohio State, and on October 14, the group voted to allocate \$250 to bring the idea to life. The plan was to spend \$50 on



Brutus has been a beloved Buckeye tradition roaming Ohio Stadium since 1965. (Photo credit: The Ohio State University)



The original 1965 fiberglass Brutus Buckeye, complete with mop eyebrows and a movable mouth that could turn up into a smile—or down into a frown. (Photo credit: The Ohio State University)

an initial model to test fan reaction at the Homecoming game against Minnesota.

Ray enlisted the help of his then-girlfriend, Sally Huber Lanyon, and her Pi Beta Phi sorority sisters. On the Pi Phi lawn, they hand-crafted a papier-mâché buckeye nut, worn by cheerleader Mike Corporal. On October 30, 1965, the mascot concept made a dramatic debut—descending the Ohio Stadium ramp to cheers from the crowd. The verdict was clear: the mascot was here to stay.

Knowing papier-mâché

wouldn't survive Ohio weather, the remaining \$200 was used to create a fiberglass version with mop eyebrows and a broom-stick-operated mouth that could smile or frown. Ohio Staters also held a naming contest, and on November 19, 1965, student Kerry Reed submitted the winning name—Brutus—earning a \$50 Union department store gift certificate.

Once the project was off the ground, Ohio Staters passed it to Block O, the student spirit organization, to create new Buckeye traditions.

side the Columbus airport after the Rose Bowl until a janitor rescued him.

Brutus nearly couldn't go to the 1974 Rose Bowl when Block O couldn't afford to send him. After a student-led campaign and local newspaper coverage, the athletics department agreed to fund the trip—on the condition they take over the mascot program.

The Athletics Era

Athletics immediately redesigned Brutus for easier travel. The 1975 debut—sporting a smaller, more aggressive head—lasted just three games before being replaced with a friendlier 1977 version featuring a Woody Hayes-style hat. That year also marked the first woman to portray Brutus, Sandra Glowacki Foreman.

In the late 1970s, the role shifted from a cheerleading squad runner-up to an open tryout. Costume tweaks continued with the “small head” design debuting in 1981 and the striped rugby shirt the next year.

The Coaching Era

In 1987, athletics hired its first full-time cheer and Brutus coach, Judy Bunting, expanding Brutus's



Brutus Buckeye lent a helping hand at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank during Ohio State's Rose Bowl trip, showing that Buckeye spirit extends far beyond the field. (Photo credit: The Ohio State University)

side it in a Block O sweater.

Legendary mishaps became part of his lore: he was stolen and painted maize and blue before “The Game,” kidnapped by The Lantern staff for a mock ransom and once left out-

reach to campus events and community service. Eventually, a role dedicated solely to Brutus was created with Ray Sharp taking that role in 2013. Today, Brutus appears at more
See **BRUTUS**, page 11