



# **Smokey: The True Stories behind the University of Tennessee's Beloved Mascot**

*Thomas J. Mattingly, Earl C. Hudson*

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The band blares “Rocky Top” and the crowd roars as the University of Tennessee football team storms out of the tunnel and onto the field through the giant “T,” their beloved mascot Smokey leading the way. The iconic Bluetick Coonhound has been part of the pageantry and tradition at the University of Tennessee since 1953, delighting fans both young and old.

For this entertaining and enlightening book, UT sports historian Thomas J. Mattingly has teamed up with longtime Smokey owner Earl C. Hudson to tell the stories of the nine hounds that have been top dog on campus for more than half a century. It was the Rev. Bill Brooks, Hudson’s brother-in-law, whose prize-winning dog “Brooks’ Blue Smokey,” became the first mascot by winning a student body-led contest at a home football game in 1953. The Coonhound breed was selected because it was native to the state, and several (no one remembers exactly how many) were brought onto the field at halftime to compete. But Smokey stole the show when he threw back his head and howled. The crowd cheered, and Smokey howled again. The raucous applause and barking built to a frenzy. The enthusiastic hound won the hearts of the Volunteer faithful that day, and he and the dogs that followed have remained among the University of Tennessee’s most popular symbols ever since.

The authors have interviewed Smokey’s former handlers, university archivists, sports journalists, and local historians as well as legions of longtime fans. Their recollections provide not only the background of the mascot but a history of UT athletics as well. Vol fans will enjoy reading about Smokey’s adventures throughout the years, from his kidnapping in 1955 by mischievous Kentucky students to his confrontation with the Baylor Bear at the 1957 Sugar Bowl to the time he suffered heat exhaustion at the 1991 UCLA game and was listed on the Vols’ injury report until his return later in the season.

Filled with photographs and memorabilia, including vintage game programs, football schedules, letters, cartoons, and more, this book brings to life the magic of UT football and the endearing canines that have become such an indispensable part of the experience.

THOMAS J. MATTINGLY is the author of *Tennessee Football: The Peyton Manning Years*, *The University of Tennessee Football Vault: The Story of the Tennessee Volunteers, 1891-2006*, *The University of Tennessee All-Access Football Vault* and *The University of Tennessee Trivia Book*. He writes about Vol history on his Knoxville News Sentinel blog, “The Vol Historian.”

EARL C. HUDSON’s family have cared for the Smokeys since 1994.

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