After years of faithful service, UNC's mascot dies

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Staff Writers

Homecoming festivities weren't complete last Saturday — Rameses, the 14th ram mascot of the University, was not in his place on the field, presiding over the Tar Heel football game. The seven-year-old blue-horned ram died Saturday morning, according to Dot Hogan, one of the owners of the mascot.

Hogan said Rameses had been sick several days before his death. The Hogans have chosen another ram to take over as the mascot; however, Rameses' successor is not used to the throngs of fans who are at the games, and is being trained to behave while on the field.

The Hogans have kept the University's rams for the last 50 years on their dairy farm in Chapel Hill. Bob Hogan and family members take care of the rams. Previously, the rams were cared for by Hogan's father. In an interview last week before the ram's death, Bob Hogan described taking care of the University's symbol of school spirit, Rameses.

Hogan feeds, cares for and watches out for the ram. The mascot has to have his horns painted every Saturday before the game. This task is not always easy.

"He does get kind of upset when you're getting him ready for the game," Hogan said. "It takes two or three of us to wash him. We have to trick him to paint his horns, though. We feed him and get him quiet, grab his horns and paint them real fast."

The ram does not feast on student fare such as Lenoir food or the game-time hotdogs and pretzels, but grazes out in a field instead, munching on grass and greenery.

"He eats basically what the cows do," Hogan said. "He eats hay, grass and cow food. We don't buy anything special for him."

Before his death, Rameses had been plagued by a weight problem, and the owners had been trying to get him to lose weight, Hogan said.

Exercise could be a possible solution for a ram's weight problem, but most of the animals are very tenderfooted.

"We try to walk him some, but rams tend to have a weakness in their feet," he said. "They get tender, especially on concrete and gravel, and that slows them down."

Home football games must be the most exciting events for the ram, the highlight of a boring week on the farm. Actually, the ram doesn't get into the same spirit about the game as the fans — after all, he stays tethered close to the gate.

"After they bring him on the field, there's really nowhere to put him," Hogan said. "He's usually tied to the fence. He hides in the shrubbery, eats some grass and goes to sleep. Kenan Stadium does have more room than most stadiums, though."

The mascot sometimes leaves the game, but not always because he wants to. Sometimes he is stolen.

"Oh gosh, I've lost count," Hogan said. "It's been a while since he's been stolen. I believe the last time, ECU got him. But Duke and State are always a threat.

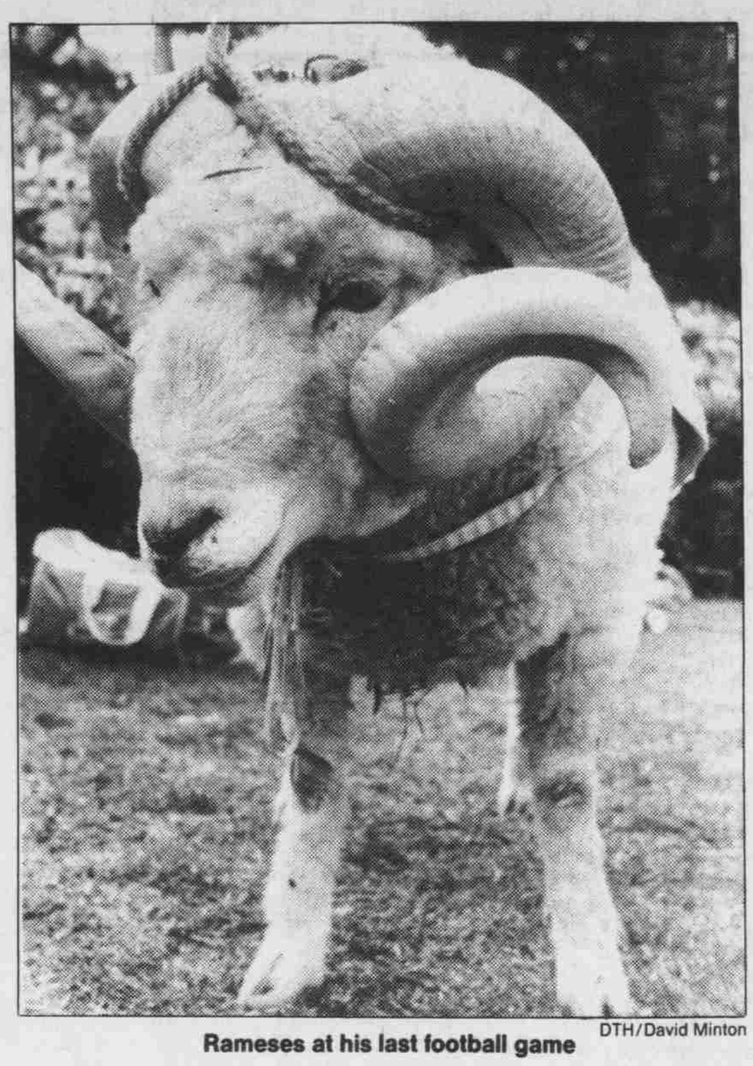
"ECU took him last time and painted his horns purple. They usually turn him loose at the ball games. It doesn't seem to bother him. He's pretty tough. Eating paper and tin cans makes you mean," he said.

"Some Duke fans followed me home once and took him. I got a note saying he'd been taken by the Ramnappers. They've never hurt him, though."

One of the more colorful stories Hogan had to tell involved rival university N.C. State.

"The last time I carried him to State, they didn't want to let me in. They said, 'No live animals are allowed.' So I said, 'But what about your fans?' That kinda made them mad. I just went to another gate and got in, but after I did, they said they would throw me out. I said, 'Go right ahead.' Our band started chanting, 'We want the ram, we want the ram!' After all that, they let us stay.

"I don't know what would happen if we ever gave him up," Hogan said. "He's one of the few live mascots left, and he's really something to be proud of."



Rameses at his last football game DTH/David Minton

Falwell

from page 1

accountability and disclosing finances to the public, he said in a pre-speech press conference.

In his speech "The Religious Right in 1988," Falwell traced the alignment of the American religious right to the 1973 Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. The desire shared by evangelicals, fundamentalists and Catholics to fight for the dignity of unborn human life brought the groups together, he said.

Because Falwell's evangelical movement opposed mixing politics and religion, it hampered the move toward a conservative alignment. In addition, the groups had to learn to coalesce for a common cause without violating individual religious beliefs.

Falwell touched on a number of issues, including endorsing George Bush for the presidential nomination in 1988. He said Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., is the only other person as qualified as Bush.

In a question-and-answer session after the speech, Falwell said that ministers who run for political office prostitute the religious principles of all ministers. He said Pat Robertson, former head of Christian Broadcasting Network, should not run for president, especially after disclosing that his son was conceived out of wedlock.

Referring to the media's disclosures that ended the presidential candidacies of former Sen. Gary Hart, D-Col., and Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., Falwell said the press is finally fulfilling its role as a moral watchdog for the public.

He attributed increased scrutinization by the press to a raised moral consciousness in this country.

Addressing international issues, Falwell said he supports the Nicaraguan contras because of the likelihood of Soviet forces in the region.

As for the apartheid regime in South Africa, Falwell advocated using economic leverage to end racial discrimination.

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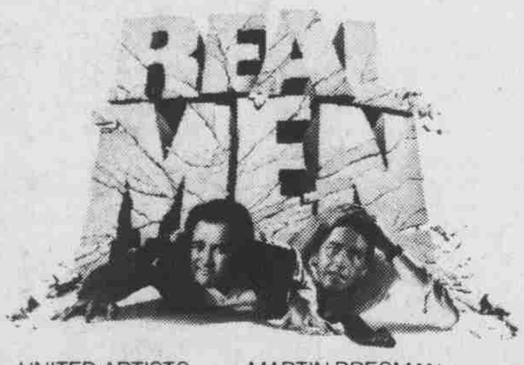

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