



Every Artifact Tells A Story — Lake Erie College's Tiberius Statues

Rooted in a northeast college campus legend is the obscure story of an actual chocolate lab who to this day remains an important campus fixture, a beloved part of college history and fully engrained and commemorated in daily folklore. Formerly an all-girls school, Lake Erie College opened to women's students, empowering them through education. Many women's rights advocates who attended there in the early 1900s documented the arrival of a dog who wandered around campus, attended class and even befriended students. Named Tiberius, this chocolate lab was believed to be owned by the college's dean Harriet Young. While there is no connection between Lake Erie College and the ancient Roman emperor Tiberius, the legend of this barking dog has resulted in a history that from 1910 to today encompasses four statues, various campus traditions, a ghost story and even a special student society- The Order of Tiberius.

Tiberius I came in 1910 with the passing of Dean Young's beloved lab. Crafted in his honor, the statue ended up on campus around 1910 near College Hall. Standing watch and becoming a campus symbol, the statue grew to be beloved. Some fraternity students from Case Western University kidnapped the original statue in the 1950s as a practical joke. Rumored to be somewhere at the bottom of Lake Erie, it was never returned. Tiberius II would then replace the 1910 version after being purchased from an antique shop and donated.





Tiberius' legend continued when on April 13, 1957, a fire broke out in Memorial Hall. The women in their residence rooms woke up to the frantic barking outside. Two women left to investigate and witnessed the blazing flames burning and consuming their hall to the ground. The source of the barking was never found. No one was hurt and the legend of Tiberius as a campus protector and good luck charm arose. Tiberius II lived a good campus life for the next few decades. In 1984, some deviant individuals pulled a Bart Simpson, Walking Dead-like act and beheaded the statue. To make matters worse they even smashed and destroyed the remains. Tiberius III or Baby Tiberius was donated by

students in 2004. Still on campus, he may be found near the Gazebo. In 2008, a larger statue Tiberius IV was placed next to College Hall.



115 years later, Tiberius still stands guard over the men and women students of Lake Erie College. Students still pat his head for good luck before exams. The football team pats his head before their season home opener for luck. Others pat his head before auditions, presentations or other athletic events as a good-luck charm. While a Unicorn and Stormy have replaced him as the campus mascot, the legend of Tiberius endures.

Well-loved throughout campus, Tiberius is a campus symbol, enduring mascot, and central figure in campus lore, college history and often mentioned during campus tours.



Source- The Legend of Tiberius post by Apryl Derby, October 27, 2009 The Wandering Oddball post by Marisa DeRoma, March 23, 2024.

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