



Origin of the Salukis



Several members of the Southern Illinois University athletic staff suggested a new nickname in 1951. The teams had been known as the Maroons since intercollegiate athletics began in 1913.

The name became official on March 19, 1951, when the student body overwhelmingly approved "Salukis" as the new symbol of SIU athletics. Salukis received 536 votes, followed by "Rebels" with a mere 144 votes. Other names on the ballot included Knights, Flyers, Marauders and Maroons.

The oldest pure-breed dogs in the world with records dating back to 3600 B.C., the Saluki is an ancient Egyptian hunting dog

known for its speed and hunting prowess.

So why is the name Salukis relevant to Southern Illinois?

Natives of southern Illinois know that the region is frequently referred to as "Egypt."

Historian Baker Brownell, in his book "The Other Illinois," explained how the region came to be known as Egypt.

He wrote, "There was a drought in the northern counties (of Illinois) in the early 1800s... the wheat fields dried up, the streams died in their beds.

But in southern Illinois, rain fell and there were good crops, and from the north came people seeking corn and wheat as to Egypt of old. Thus, the name, Egypt."

The 19th century drought in Illinois parallels the Biblical account of the country of Egypt.

"There was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. All the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was so severe. And (Jacob) said, 'Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain



for us there, that we may live, and not die.' So 10 of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt." (Genesis 41:54b, 57, 42:2-3).

In Egypt at that time,

Salukis were accepted as the finest animal a family could possess. Adopting such a well-respected dog as its mascot fit perfectly for a school in a region known as "Egypt."





History of Saluki Mascots

Since its adoption as SIU's sports symbol in 1951, 22 different Saluki dogs have graced the campus as the team mascot.

The first, and most well known, was King Tut who came to SIU in 1953, but was killed in an automobile accident just one year later. Tut was buried in the northeast corner of McAndrew Stadium by the Sigma Pi fraternity that housed him, and in 1961, he was honored with a small stone pyramid marking his grave.

During the 1956 Homecoming game, two beautiful new mascots, Burydown Datis and Ornah Farouk of Pine Paddocks,

Saluki Dogs

King Tut	1953-54
Burydown Datis	1956-65
Ornah Farouk	1956-65
Desert Dusk	1957-69
Desert Dawn	1957-69
Lord Sundanya	1957-69
Lady Syriana	1957-69
Amira	1968-78
Sarra Aribi	1968-69
Yembo Aribi	1968-79
Billa-de-Esta	1969-77
Bir Sheba Cairo	1970-78
Debbie	1979-83
Bandit	1979-85
Shariff	1980-82
Khalid	1980-90
Thunder	1982-91
Shabaka	1987-97
Tut II	1998-2004
Grace	2004-05
Fabian	2004-05
Khalila	2004-05

made their debut. The two pure bred dogs were donated by W. W. Vandever, an SIU alumnus and president of Ashland Oil Co.

Burydown Datis, a male, was imported from England, while Ornah Farouk, a female, was a direct descendant of a champion from the kennels of King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia.

These two produced a litter of seven, of which SIU kept four: Desert Dusk, Desert Dawn, Lord Sundanya and Lady Syriana. All four represented SIU at football and basketball games at various times during the 1960s.

In 1968, Dr. Bert Hanicke of St. Louis donated 18-month-old Amira. In the same year, Dr. Leon Striegel, a Carbondale veterinarian, bought and presented two 9-month-old sisters, Sarra Aribi and Yembo Aribi. Three months later, Sarra escaped and was found struck by a car.

In 1969, an SIU fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega, bought and donated four-month-old Billa-de-Esta Iben Saude.

In 1970, the University acquired Bir Sheba Cairo from Wendell Allen of Wichita. Shortly thereafter, Billa bore eight pups. Most were sold, one was kept, and two were presented to Shelby State College of Memphis, who took the nickname "Saluqis."

By 1979, only one Saluki remained from that litter. The University acquired Debbie and Bandit, and the dogs were housed and cared for by the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity.

Then in 1980, Gary Strong of St. Louis presented SIU with two more dogs, Sharif and



Karen Magee (left) escorts Fabian, while Jamey Lambert escorts Grace.

Khalid. Sharif would become sick in 1982 and die, but would be replaced by Thunder, who was donated by Mary Capron.

In 1986, two alums, John and Linda Saunders, took over the duties of caring for the remaining mascots, Thunder and Khalid. Upon the deaths of Thunder and Khalid in 1987, one of the Saunders own dogs, a beautiful Saluki named Tavanai Shabaka JoLinSco, became the first outside, or independently owned Saluki to represent SIU as its official mascot.

Shabaka was a dual AKC Conformation and Field dog show champion. He also earned

the distinction of being the first Saluki mascot to lead the SIU football team onto the field.

Upon his death in 1997, the official mascot duties were assumed by another of the Saunders' dogs, Tavanai TUTI-ISIU JoLinSco (pronounced Tut 2 S.I.U.), also known as Tut II. Named after the original Saluki mascot, Tut II brought the mascot full circle. Sadly, Tut II was put to sleep in July of 2004, at the age of 13.

Saluki fans Don and Karen Magee, Scott and Jamey Lambert, and many others have since lended their Saluki dogs to serve as mascot.

