

OF BRUIN AND BRUIN JUNIOR

George Fox College is represented by the nickname and mascot "Bruin." And it was not a vote of popularity or accident that installed the Bruin name rather than "Wildcats," "Tigers," "Eagles," etc.

The original Bruin mascot was for real. The nickname comes from a real bear captured in 1887 just two years after Pacific Academy (the college's predecessor) was established. The small cub was captured in the Coast Range foothills west of Carlton when its mother was shot. The young cub was brought to campus by a student and later lived with faculty members.

When it grew to adulthood it was kept in a pit in what is now known as Hess Creek Canyon south of the campus.

But the active Bruin had troubles staying in his cage and escaped one too many times, the last time getting into a neighbor's chicken house and doing considerable damage. In 1889 a local butcher suggested a solution: steak for the dining table and a hide preserved on a frame and displayed in an early campus museum. After years of display it deteriorated and was taken to a campus furnace room to be destroyed, but the framework proved a problem in dismantling so it was left sitting in the corner.

Students found the old Bruin skin and began skirmishes over ownership, a tradition that lasted for decades, 85 years, in fact. Moths and other problems--including the struggles with students--caused the skin to lose its charm and it was assigned to the college furnace in the mid-thirties. "Bruin Junior," a replica, replaced the original skin. Under an established set of guidelines passed down through the years, students periodically held class competition with the class able to physically drag the Bruin replica off campus

declared the rightful owner until next "flashed" or shown on campus.

Bruin Junior, usually a canvas and/or leather replica, disappeared from campus several years back after one of the skirmishes and has not been seen since. Now he's being revived, brought to life again, so the current generation of students can continue a long-time Bruin tradition.

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