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21st NSU President James Genovese is officially invested in the role, kicking off the homecoming weekend festivities. Following the investiture, six distinguished alumni were inducted into the Long Purple Line. The NSU Food Pantry received over 10,000 donated items during the service food drive.

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This year a new class of the N-Club Hall of Fame was announced; read more about one of the N-clubbers and how he has made a legacy on and off the court. While homecoming is centered around the football game, here are how other student-athletes celebrate and join in the festivities.

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High school to college events and activities differ greatly, and homecoming is no exception. Read about how freshman, international and returning students enjoyed their homecoming experience in college. In another student's reactions, they share with us their thoughts on Homecoming.

2024 Homecoming Royalty determined to display their titles as more than a name

BY MADELYN MURPHY

Weeks before homecoming, students at Northwestern State University of Louisiana had placed their votes for the 2024 Homecoming Honor Court. With the anticipation of who won homecoming royalty, it was soon time to announce the winners. Some had been waiting since freshman year for this moment; some never expected it to come.

The male and female who get the most votes earn the title of Homecoming Queen and King. To complete the royalty, nominated seniors have the chance to be named Mr. NSU and Miss NSU.

Terrell "TJ" Woodard, who is a senior biology major and the student body president, was nominated for and won the title of Mr. NSU.

"I was very surprised in a way," Woodard shared, recalling his nomination. "I worked towards getting this honor. It's always been a dream of mine, but to see that there was a possibility of it happening was kind of surreal."

To be nominated for any of the homecoming royalty positions, 4 organizations had to nominate the candidates. Woodard is a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Theta Chi chapter, the co-founder of Black Male Alliance, a member of the Blue Key Honor Society and more. Back in high school, though, he wasn't as involved as he is now.

"I was very shy, very timid. While I was technically a leader in organizations, I wasn't leading. I was waiting for other people to do things, and then I would act. That was something that I knew I kind of had to get out of the habit of when I came to college," Woodard said. "At the end of the day, you're in charge of your own destiny."



Photo by Lalaina Wood. Homecoming King Zach Cooper passes his crown to Christian James, and Kaley Koss receives her Homecoming Queen crown from last year's queen Zoe Johnson with the help of NSU President James Genovese.

To get recognition from his college peers as they nominated him for Mr. NSU, Woodard felt honored and as though his hard work paid off.

"I want to serve as a role model for people to know that, you know, you can get involved regardless of your background or regardless of what you did in high school. You can come to college and make your experience exactly what

you want it to be," Woodard said. "College is really your opportunity to branch out and make something really good for yourself, and that's something that I've been so blessed to have the opportunity to do at Northwestern. I feel like I wouldn't have been given the opportunity at this magnitude at any other university, so I'm forever grateful to be a student here."

Woodard feels he is a representative for what students can be at NSU even more now that he is Mr. NSU.

"My sole goal is to just be the voice of the students and truly represent all the diverse backgrounds of our student body," Woodard said. "So I'd like to intertwine the two roles in the sense that I'll continue to do my outreach that I do with the Student Government Association

(SGA), but do it from a university lens – try and offer support for people that may feel like they're underrepresented on campus and just continue to be that beacon of light to show people that there is hope, and you can be involved or as not involved as you want, but you're still a valued member of our student body."

Woodard recalled when he first found out he won Mr. NSU, while he was in an SGA meeting.

"Everybody started screaming and everything. So it was a cool moment to be surrounded by my cabinet and the people that I love to work with and then also sharing that moment with Hannah," Woodard said. "We've been with each other every single step of the way since freshman year, starting off with freshman connection, and we've done a bunch of similar involvement things up until now. So to be able to share so many different experiences with her was amazing."

Miss NSU Hannah Davis, a senior psychology major and the student body vice president, recalled that same moment from her perspective.

"Me and TJ were in the SGA office. Dr. Yonna was there, and she was like, 'Congratulations, Miss and Mr. NSU,' and like, we all started crying, like, we were falling out of chairs. Everybody was just clapping. It was so sweet. It was such a surreal moment," Davis said. "And then I had called my mom and she started crying again. She was busting out crying, and hugging people at her job and stuff."

It was such an emotional moment for Davis, her friends and her family because it was obvious how much becoming Miss NSU meant to her.

"It made me feel like people actually see the work that I do on campus, and it made me feel really special."

Davis is the Eta Chi president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., in Purple Jackets Club Honor Society, in Order of Omega Leadership Honor Society and various other organizations. Like TJ, however, Davis didn't just start as an all-around involved student.

"I actually came here by myself; I didn't really know anybody. Then in high school, I really wasn't involved at all. I really hated high school," Davis shared. "Then I came here, and when I got into the President's Leadership Program, it bridged me into other things. In my freshman year, I joined SGA, and then SGA literally bridged me to joining my sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. I really look back at myself and I'm proud of jumping out of my comfort zone."

Winning the title of Miss NSU was already a moment Davis was proud of, but sharing this experience with Woodard made it even more unforgettable.

"We've been friends for a long time," Davis said. "It was really sweet having that moment with him because I couldn't imagine doing it with anybody else because, you know, we're president and vice president."

Now that Davis is Miss NSU, she knows the impact she wants to have on others.

"I want to be a friendly face to everyone. Even if they don't remember my name, I just want them to remember that I was a smiling face, and I was always a helping hand if they needed," Davis said. "Because I know, whenever people have



Photo by Lalaina Wood. Terrell "TJ" Woodard and Hannah Davis walked down Turpin stadium as the 2024 Mr. and Miss NSU.

come to me, they've been like, 'oh, you're always smiling,' 'you're always so nice,' and I just want to leave that legacy."

This year's 2024 Homecoming King Christian James, a senior communication major, plans to use his title in a positive light.

"It's a huge honor, but I take it as more of a mentor opportunity because everybody knows you're homecoming king," James explained. "All eyes on me, so I use it as an opportunity to lead by example and just be somebody that everybody can follow."

James went on to explain he wants to be an inspiration for transfers and freshmen, as he has only been at NSU for just one year.

"I'm a transfer student, and it's hard to transfer somewhere and do something to motivate other people because it is hard," James said. "I want everybody to know that no matter how long you've been there, no matter how much time you spend somewhere, you can do anything. You can do it as quickly as you want."

Not only is James a transfer student, but he is also a first-generation college student.

"I just say it means a lot because I don't come from a college family," James said. "No one has a college background, so being able to start this legacy for my kids to look at and be like, 'oh, you did this in college?' Now I want to do that. So it's just kind of starting a legacy for me."

James is involved in many organizations within his college career including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, SGA, Black Male Alliance and more. As Mr. NSU, he wants to use his platform to wear his title "as a pageant queen would." He wants to represent, support and promote organizations, give advice to people and motivate others to come to school.

James' experience as homecoming king was one to remember, but his homecoming queen made it perfect.

"With Kaley, it was perfect. If there's anybody who gets my humor – my personality – it's Kaley, we're the same," James said. "So whenever she became queen, it was just like, of course. Who else would it be? I know everybody on the list, but I feel like it couldn't have been a better choice. It couldn't have been a more perfect choice."

2024 Homecoming queen Kaley Koss, a junior double majoring in communication and psychology, felt the same way about James as the homecoming king.

"So homecoming queen in itself is just incredible, but knowing that I get to do everything with Chris James, I was like, 'this is going to be so much fun,'" Koss said. "That made the experience 10 times better. I got to do freshman connection with Chris, and he has become one of my best friends over the summer."

Koss is in Sigma Sigma Sigma Alpha Zeta sorority as the recruitment director, the Purple Jackets Club Honor Society, Baptist Collegiate Ministry and more. When she first found out she was homecoming queen, she was with her little in her sorority.

"I was so thankful," Koss recalled. "We were just both like little girls excited."

Although she was excited, Koss was somewhat shocked at the news. She honestly didn't expect it.

"I've had people tell me, you know, 'why are you surprised?' For me, I guess it's just my personality," Koss said. "It might seem like I have it all together, but I am insecure. I don't expect highly of myself sometimes and that's just something I lack."

Koss explained she had gladly accepted her role as homecoming queen, but she thought back to how she used to be. Without the confidence she has gained since freshman year of college, Koss doesn't feel as though she could have even had this experience if she wanted to.

At the beginning of her freshman year, Koss had no desire to be involved. She said she wanted to work, make money and go to class.

"Here I am literally doing everything now. I should have never said that. I lied to myself," Koss said. "So it's a significant difference from when I first started. I'm thankful I've met so many people along the way and that it has made the experience so much more fun."

Koss's role as homecoming queen encourages others that it is never too late to start getting involved.

"It's so much easier than most people would think it is. You're never out of the loop and everything. That's how I felt before I got involved. I was like, 'I don't know where to get started,' but the second you just try to figure out 'okay, how do I do this?' It's a lot easier, and it changes the whole experience of college," Koss said. "These are the last four years before you're in the big world."

The homecoming royalty titles are more than just a name; they offer a platform to share ideas, advice, personal experiences and more. Although their official moment to shine was during the homecoming game, Woodard, Davis, James and Koss's honors will go beyond this as they leave a forever legacy at NSU.



Photo by Lalaina Wood. Chris James (left) and Kaley Koss (right) approach the student section as they prepare to be crowned king and queen.

NSU kicks off Homecoming with 21st presidential investiture

BY LIA PORTILLO

Three months ago, James Genovese sat in a courtroom hearing cases as an Associate Justice for the Louisiana Supreme Court.

On Friday, Oct. 25, he was officially invested as the 21st president of Northwestern State University of Louisiana. "I was nervous at first not knowing exactly what I was getting into, but now that I'm into it, I'm all in," Genovese told *The Current Sauce* three days before his investiture. "I'm here to do the best I can to make Northwestern the best it can possibly be."

Since beginning in his role as president, Genovese has hyper focused on the university's recruiting and enrollment efforts. He shared that NSU hired a recruiting consultant who will evaluate the current procedures and propose new plans to increase enrollment.

Other plans include the Beacon Society, which is composed of community lead-

ers, alumni and staff that will meet with Genovese to give their input on how they can make NSU better.

The investiture kicked off the 2024 Homecoming weekend festivities and officially instated Genovese in his role.

"Welcome to the investiture ceremony celebrating the official commissioning of the 21st president of Northwestern State University James Genovese," Greg Handel, NSU's executive vice president and provost, said. Handel served as the master of ceremonies for the investiture.

On stage with Genovese were his family, former law colleagues, his presidential cabinet, members of the Board of Regents, NSU faculty, alumni and members of the University of Louisiana System.

"Students, today is a special day for all of you, it is a day for you to be surrounded by people who got their start here at Northwestern and have grown to be

leaders in their fields," Handel said. "Not too long ago, one person here today sat exactly where you are sitting and at the time likely didn't think that one day he'd be sitting on stage under the bright lights of Fredericks Auditorium getting ready to be invested as the 21st president of his alma mater."

Following Handel's introduction, student body president Terrell "TJ" Woodard addressed the crowd expressing his support for the president.

"As students, we're the heartbeat of this institution. Each one of us brings unique perspectives, visions and talent," Woodard said. "We welcome a leader who understands the power of our collective voice and the importance of fostering an inclusive environment."

Woodard described the investiture as the beginning of a call to action for students to raise their concerns and ideas with the new president. "President Genovese we look forward to your leadership, your guidance and your vision. It is my hope that, together, we can continue to foster an ever-growing environment that will be able to withstand the test of time," he said.

The state's commissioner of Higher Education Kim Hunter Reed also took her time welcoming the president on behalf of the Board of Regents.

"We gather to officially recognize President Genovese in his new role and to stand with him as an academic community committed to education and innovation," Reed said.

Reed expanded on Woodard's call to action saying "when our students speak, we all must listen." She added that the road to success can only be taken when a collaborative effort between students, staff and faculty is present.

Handel then turned the program over to Woodard, University of Louisiana System President Rick Gallot and ULS Board of Supervisors Robert "Skeeter" Salim as they helped Genovese put on his official presidential regalia.

Genovese walks to the podium, now dressed in all purple, and begins his official presidential address.

"The investiture of a president is not just a celebration of one individual. It is a symbolic moment for our entire university community," Genovese said. "It marks the start of a new chapter, not only in my personal journey but in the story of Northwestern. The story that began nearly 140 years ago and continues to evolve and innovate and inspire."

For him, this day meant coming home to lead a university that allowed him to have a successful career. "I'm proud to say that Northwestern exceeded all of my expectations, and today I return not just as an alumnus but as the president of this incredible university," Genovese said.

During his address, Genovese shared the buildings currently in construction like Alost Hall and the Sherry and David Morgan Health Performance Center, a new artificial intelligence course coming to NSU and reiterated his efforts to bring more students to campus.

"This university has a rich history and a bright future and I'm honored to lead us into the next chapter. Together we will continue to build on this legacy of those who came before us, preparing future generations to lead, innovate and inspire," Genovese said as he thanked the crowd and as always, ended with a Fork 'Em.



Photo by Lia Portillo.

James Genovese was invested as the 21st president of Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

Six alumni recognized during the 2024 Long Purple Line Induction ceremony

BY VICTORIA RODRIGUE

Six distinguished Northwestern State University of Louisiana alumni were inducted into the university's alumni hall of distinction, the Long Purple Line. Other guests were recognized for their service to the university during a luncheon and induction ceremony.

On Friday, Oct. 25, the 2024 Long Purple Line inductees were the late Jack Brittain Jr., Henry Burns, Steve Horton, Doug Ireland, Dr. Chris Maggio and Robert "Skeeter" Salim.

The program was held in conjunction with NSU Homecoming festivities and the celebration of the 140th anniversary of the university's founding in 1884.

The Long Purple Line is the highest honor bestowed upon alumni and represents the history, traditions and achievements of NSU. Members of the Long Purple Line have made significant contributions to NSU and have left a

lasting impact on the university and the community.

Drake Owens, executive vice president and chief of staff at NSU, emphasized the significance of the Long Purple Line and what it means to alumni. He introduced President James Genovese who gave the awards to the inductees.

"It's important for people's service and their contributions to mankind," Owens said. "This award is for alumni who have distinguished themselves and given back to their alma mater."

Ireland graduated from NSU in 1986, and he returned in 1989 and began a three decade-long career as the Sports Information Director at NSU until 2019. He was also recognized for his contributions as an advisor to NSU's Pi Kappa Phi fraternity.

He played a key role in establishing the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame (LSHOF)



Photos by Victoria Rodrigue.
Skeeter Salim, class of 1972, as named one of the 100 Top Trial Lawyers and America's Top 100 High Stakes Litigators.

and Northwest Louisiana History Museum in Natchitoches.

Throughout his career, Ireland received numerous awards, including a record-breaking performance in the Louisiana Sports Writers Association's writing contest in 1987.

In 2021, he was inducted into the LSHOF for his contributions to sports journalism. Ireland has served as the sports director for Online Journals LLC, overseeing 14 parish journals in Louisiana since 2021.

Ireland shared why this award is an honor and why it was a very special achievement. "Seeing friends, the people I love, celebrating the university I love, meeting new people, getting inspired and making this place even better than it is now," Ireland said. "I want to help give students the same treasured experience that has carried us along our life's path."

Brittain graduated from NSU in 1979, and was a four-year football letterman and member of Kappa Sigma fraternity. He later earned a law degree from Louisiana State University (LSU) and worked as an aide to U.S. Sen. John Bennett Johnston and Sen. John Breaux.

After his government service, he worked as a financial planner in Shreveport before returning to his hometown of Natchitoches to join the Brittain Family Law Firm. He then ran his own legal practice until his passing in July 2023.

Brittain was a sideline reporter for the Demon Sports Network at NSU for 18 football seasons and was inducted into the N-Club Hall of Fame in 2013. He also played a key role in establishing the LSHOF and the Northwest Louisiana History Museum, receiving the Mac Russo Award in 2017.

Burns graduated from NSU in 1973 with an upper elementary education degree,



Photos by Victoria Rodrigue.
This year's 2024 Long Purple Line inductees. The late Jack Brittain Jr.'s family received his award on his behalf.

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Photos by Victoria Rodrigue



21st NSU President James Genovese gives Long Purple Line award to 19th NSU President Chris Maggio.



Henry Burns, class of 1973, is a U.S. Army veteran, a board member of the Louisiana War Veterans Museum and a member of the NSU Foundation Board of Directors.



Steve Horton, class of 1998, addressed the crowd after receiving his award.

where he was named Mr. NSU. He is a U.S. Army veteran, a board member of the Louisiana War Veterans Museum and a member of the NSU Foundation Board of Directors.

He is a former two-term member of the Louisiana House of Representatives for District 9 in Bossier Parish, where he also served 15 years on the Bossier Parish School Board. Burns founded The Wooden Spoon bakery, earning multiple awards for the outstanding success of the business.

Burns contributed to the completion of the Interstate 49 corridor as the last chair of the Northwest Louisiana Delegation. In 2016, he became a Business Development Consultant for BOM Bank, actively engaging in local civic organizations and community activities in Bossier and Caddo Parishes.

Horton graduated from NSU in 1988, where he was also named Mr. NSU. He also attended LSU, where he earned a master's in journalism in 1990 and a doctorate in vocational education/ communication in 1998.

In 1989, he returned to NSU and held various positions including director of Alumni Affairs, head of the Journalism Department, dean of the Graduate School and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Horton earned several awards for his leadership and contributions to NSU. He is active in community service and currently serves on the Board of Directors for City Bank and Trust Company of Natchitoches.

Salim graduated from NSU in 1972, where he was a Dean's List student and was a four-year tennis letterman. He later earned his law degree from Loyola Law School in 1976 and joined the Louisiana State Bar.

He is affiliated with several legal organizations in Natchitoches and has been consistently recognized for his excellence. He was named one of the 100 Top Trial Lawyers and America's Top 100 High Stakes Litigators.

Salim has been a supporter of Demon baseball for two decades, leading to significant upgrades at the Brown-Stroud Field. His contributions were acknowledged when he was inducted into the N-Club Hall of Fame with a Distinguished Service Award in 2019.

Maggio graduated summa cum laude from NSU in 1985, where he was named Mr. NSU. He served as NSU's 19th president, concluding his 33-year career at NSU. He led the university through the challenging COVID-19 pandemic, transitioning to online classes in 2020.

Under his leadership, NSU achieved a record enrollment of 11,447 students in Fall 2020. NSU's economic impact and private funding reached an all-time high, leading to 25 new professorships and contributions to the NSU Foundation.

Maggio expanded academic programs, introducing a master's in computer information systems, a nurse anesthesia concentration, and a nursing clinical program on the Natchitoches campus.

Before his presidency, he held various roles, including vice president for the Student Experience, Dean of Students, and assistant provost.

Maggio shared a message with students at NSU: "You can achieve anything you want. Northwestern is going to give you the background, the foundation, the work ethic and leadership skills," Maggio said. "Just take that, believe in yourself with a positive attitude, and you can do anything you want to."

Each inductee had a portrait unveiled that will hang in the Friedman Student Union on the second floor, accompanying the other NSU alumni of the Long Purple Line.



Photos by Victoria Rodrigue. Doug Ireland is a well-renowned sports journalist and sports director for Online Journals LLC since 2021.

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NSU Food Pantry collects more than 10,000 donated items from homecoming food drive

BY NINA OVALLE

As the excitement of homecoming week swept through campus, students carried their school spirit into a meaningful cause by donating perishable and non-perishable items to the food pantry.

The Northwestern State University of Louisiana's Food Pantry received 13,606 items and raised \$398 in cash donations during the 2024 Homecoming Food Drive.

The NSU Food Pantry offers students of NSU or the Bossier Parish Community College the opportunity to pick up necessary items such as groceries and toiletries at no cost.

On Thursday, Oct. 24, the President's Leadership Program and NSU Residence Life hosted a food drive for Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) and academic departments to donate items to the NSU food pantry from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The food pantry accepted donations that fell under several categories during the event: snacks, drinks, rice, pasta, pantry staples, breakfast items, meal essentials, canned meats, ready-to-eat meals, canned beans, vegetables or fruit, full-size toiletry items and household items.

All donation items were then tallied based on which RSO made the donation and factored into the homecoming competition.

Mary-Katherine Maggio, director of First Year Experience and student engagement, explained the significance of hosting a food drive competition alongside other homecoming festivities.

"Whenever you are asking organizations to participate in a competition, you have to cater to every type of organization," Maggio said. "We have the dance competition with lip sync, we have the artistic organizations come out in the banner competition, but what about those service organizations or honor societies? This is where they thrive."

Donations were tallied on a point-based system, where Maggio, Residential Life and student volunteers utilize pre-made score sheets to keep track of all donations.

RSOs were given the score sheet in advance to estimate how many items they planned to donate in order to reach their prospective point goals.

"We use a pre-made score sheet, so all of the organizations are provided this score sheet ahead of time and can make sure that they have the amount of points that they want to have," Maggio said.



Photo by Nina Ovalle. The Homecoming Food Drive is an annual service event that was started by University Housing.

Though organizations are able to score themselves on the score sheets, all items are re-tally at the food drive event. Maggio explained that holding the event at the food pantry, rather than using a self-score method, allows students to learn more about it.

"It really raises awareness, some students don't even know where the food pantry is so we host the event at the food pantry, then they see us take their donations and put them directly on the shelves of the food pantry," Maggio said. Along with spreading awareness, this event also plays an important part in displaying NSU's initiative for service.

"I think that friendly competition is always great, but sometimes in a week like this, we need to remind our students what we're here for, and that's to serve," Maggio said.

Kacy Young, senior history and hospitality management and tourism major, feels that serving the NSU community is an important part of homecoming.

"One thing that Northwestern really prides itself on is serving, serving others, so, I think it's fantastic that they make it a part of the week," Young said. "The pantry serves our student body, so it's a really great service initiative for homecoming week because it serves our students."

Young serves as the student coordinator for the NSU food pantry, and she is

in charge of identifying what items are most used by students to include on the score sheet list during the food drive.

"It's kind of my task, in recent years as a student coordinator, to find what is needed the most at the pantry during that time, because those things flow and change based on the needs of our students, then we put those as higher points," Young said.

In her experience volunteering for the Homecoming Food Drive, Young realized that items that were worth more points came in much higher donation numbers. However, this created an uneven balance of items available in the pantry, so her focus this year was to prioritize food items. She also made a point to include items that are not typically available at the food pantry such as can openers and utensils.

Young shared how she feels about stu-

dent participation in the event.

"It's so awesome to me that our students serve in this capacity," Young said. "I think a lot of people forget, because they do enjoy the competition aspect of it and it gets so fun, but at the end of the day they're stocking this pantry and students that need these items are able to come in and get them."

She acknowledges that there is a need in the campus community for the food pantry and that this event helps in fulfilling that need.

Before the NSU food pantry's opening in 2015, Residential Life hosted its own Homecoming Food Drive which accepted donations for the Natchitoches Cane River Food Pantry. However, Stephanie Dyjack, general manager for Campus Living Villages and NSU Residential Life, recognized the need within the campus community.

<https://northwesternstatealumni.com/the-pantry/>



Photos by Amy Lee. Student organizations were invited to donate non-perishable items to help stock NSU's student Food Pantry.

"In the past we donated to the local community the food we collected, but we really felt the students here at Northwestern needed our help with having the food available in the Pantry," Dyjack said.

Dyjack feels that holding the food drive during homecoming allows for service to shine through amidst the homecoming spirit.

"I think it's a time where the community really shows its support for the university and also leads to just having that Demon spirit in giving back to the university," Dyjack said. "I always think it's

just wonderful to see our student organizations get involved; also instilling the idea of service and giving to others."

During the food drive, Dyjack shared that the four leading organizations in the competition were the Presidential Ambassadors, President's Leadership Program, Pi Kappa Phi Beta Omicron chapter fraternity and the Pi Kappa Alpha Mu Kappa chapter fraternity.

"So far we've got 4 organizations coming in with some really high numbers, a lot of food that we're packing in, so that really keeps the pantry going and of course, there's gonna be more," Dyjack said.

A total of 14 different RSOs participated in the food drive this year.

Andrew Slater, junior hospitality management and tourism major and member of Pi Kappa Alpha, explained how his organization participated in the event.

"We all got together 'food drive is coming up, we're going to do the most, we're going to try our best to do the most' and so we had one of our fraternity brothers go buy that stuff so we can get points and we all tagged in on money," Slater said.

He hopes Pi Kappa's efforts in the homecoming competition will impact service events.

"I think it helps the community overall, it makes the campus better, feel better, and just helps out the community that uses the food pantry and needs it," Slater said.

Any student or RSOs were able to participate in the food drive.

Brooke Straight, junior communication major, is the student volunteer work coordinator for the food pantry. She feels that for students or RSOs that are not involved in homecoming events such as the lip-sync battle or float-making, the food drive offers students an accessible opportunity to get involved.

"I feel like with all the different events of homecoming, the food pantry included, the donation, it gives people opportunities to be involved," Straight said. "Especially the food pantry, donations is something that everyone can participate in, and then it also helps contribute to the community."

Beyond her responsibilities as the student volunteer coordinator, Straight is involved in several other RSOs that par-

ticipated in the food drive: including the Alpha Zeta chapter of Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority and the Purple Jackets Club Honor Society. She explained that her organizations, and all NSU RSOs, are inspired to participate in the Homecoming Food Drive.

"Sometimes people might not be motivated to donate just because, if they're not going to get any points even though that might be unfortunate, but with competition behind it, it gives people motivation and inspires them to try their best to represent their organization," Straight said.

Katelen Bennett, freshman communication major, volunteered as a member of PLP to help sort, count and stock donations from the food drive. Bennett expressed a similar opinion to Straight in that homecoming plays a large part in volunteer participation at the food pantry.

"I think there is a significance to doing this during homecoming because a lot more people are involved or really want to help more than any other time," Bennett said.

Community involvement thrived during the Homecoming Food Drive.

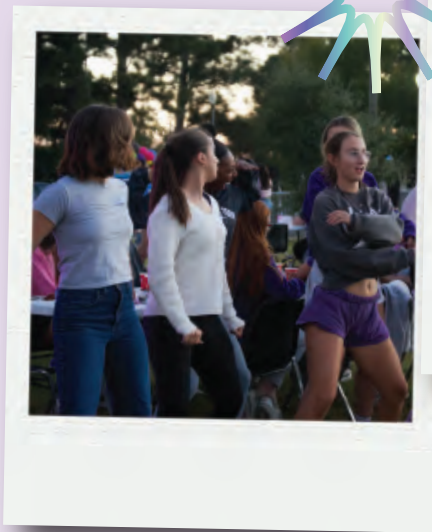
"This event helps support and appreciate the different services we provide here on campus. It also brings everyone together for a great cause," Bennett said.

This event not only filled the food pantry with needed items but inspired the campus community in a spirit of giving during the homecoming season.



Photo by Amy Lee. This year, the Food Pantry received 13,606 items and \$398 during the Homecoming Food Drive.

2024 HOMECOMING



Photos by Katie Grace Rion



KICKOFF



FUN RUN



Photos by Lalaina Wood



Photos by Jada Gree



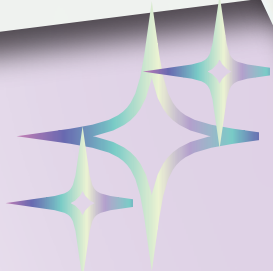
PARADE



FOOTBALL GAME



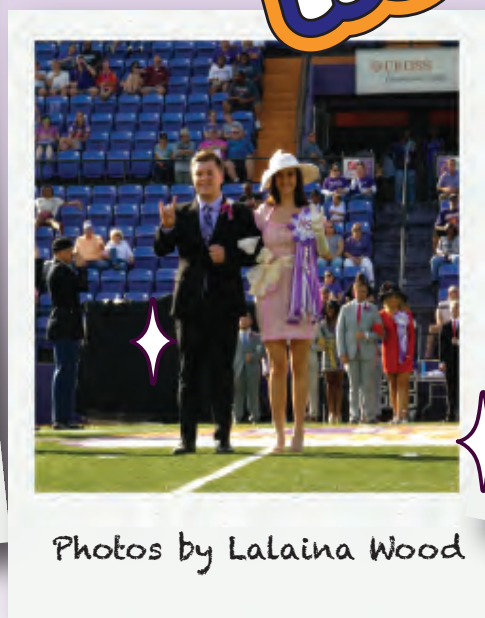
Photos by Lalaina Wood



Photos by Katie Grace Rion

LIP SYNC

HONOR COURT



Photos by Lalaina Wood

Homecoming theme remembers trends from the 2000s

BY ISABEL JUAREZ RUBIO

From flip phones, lip gloss, low-rise jeans and big glasses, the 2000s were a time when trends thrived. Whether it was when Lady Gaga took the music industry by storm after releasing “Poker Face” or when the iPod was released, it was a defining time for people around the world.

Northwestern State University of Louisiana has traveled back to the 2000s with the University Programming Council’s (UPC) selection of the 2024 Homecoming theme of Y2K.

“A theme brings people together, it fosters a sense of community and it gets people excited,” Trevor O’Bannon, assistant director of student engagement, said. “It’s like, ‘okay – here’s the theme; let’s start brainstorming.’”

Every spring semester, a UPC committee brainstorms ideas on what the next possible theme can be, and they start to ask about what themes students would like to see.

The committee then narrows down the options to about five or six possible themes and they make a poll so students can decide.

Involving students in decisions like this is fundamental for a successful homecoming week, as the events are meant for students to engage and participate in.

Terrell “TJ” Woodard Jr., a senior biology major, shared his thoughts on the homecoming theme this year.

“This theme has been very fun and effective; Y2K is something that is very trendy these days with fashion and stuff,” Woodard said. “I’ve enjoyed putting on the outfits with my friends.”

Listening and involving students’ voices



Photo by Madelyn Murphy. Mr. NSU and Miss NSU dress in Y2K outfits to complement their lip sync routine.

is important for events like this to function. Allison Florez Bermudez, a senior majoring in communication, emphasized the importance of bringing back old trends.

“Homecoming is about bringing old students back, and the theme this semester goes perfect with that because many of those students probably had a homecoming in the 2000s. It’s like traveling back in time,” Bermudez said.

Sharye Belcher, a sophomore majoring in nursing, explained there was a wide variety of what Y2K meant to everyone on campus.

“From metallics to butterflies, there’s so much you can do with the theme,” Belcher said. “There’s literally so many ways you can represent the 2000s, and I feel like organizations did such a good job doing that when it came to the parade or the banners. Even with the t-shirt designs, everyone had a different take on what it meant.”

Belcher discussed how the Potpourri was inspired by the homecoming theme to incorporate some of the trends in a future yearbook.

“I mentioned that Haley Wiggins (Editor-in-Chief of the Potpourri) and I were thinking about how cool it would be to have a Y2K theme book and the different design elements that we could implement and the throwbacks we could reference,” Belcher said. “The book could be for 2025, like 25 years could be the perfect distance to do a throwback for the year 2000s, so that’s how the theme for our book evolved.”

Even if it’s just for homecoming week, a good and effective theme that speaks to everybody such as Y2K brought excitement to NSU and the surrounding community.



Photo by Katie Grace Rion. Student organizations prepared a lip sync routine and participated in the annual event embodying the Y2K theme.



Photo by Katie Grace Rion. Greek life organizations also participated in the 2024 Lip Sync Homecoming competition.

Student-athletes at NSU share their love for homecoming traditions

BY KALLIE BOURGEOIS

During the week of celebration and festivities, homecoming spirit is displayed by student-athletes across all athletic courts and fields.

Northwestern State University of Louisiana's student-athletes shared their love for the traditions and competitions surrounding the week just before the big football game.

Aly Delafield, a sophomore psychology major, pitcher and first baseman for the Lady Demons softball team, shared what homecoming means to the team.

"I think it's all about coming together as a school to celebrate the traditions and the culture of the school," Delafield said. "We get to do fun things with our teammates and everything at one of the biggest tailgates, and it's just a fun time to come together as a university."

Whether it's going to someone's house to grill before the game or sitting together in the football stands, the softball team always gets together to celebrate beforehand.

"We'll usually have our own set-up behind the field, but we'll end up walking to all the other ones just to do the activities at the tents and all that fun stuff – maybe get a free button or something," Delafield said. "Then we'll all walk into the game together and sit by each other in the student section, and that's pretty much what we do."

She emphasized what she was most excited to see during the homecoming festivities.

"My friend is in the court, so that's pretty cool. I like to see all the suits and stuff, and it's very cute and girly," Delafield said. "The tailgate will be really fun, and I feel like there will be a lot of people and more parents at that game of the year. I'm just excited for the atmosphere in general of the homecoming game."



Photo by Kallie Bourgeois. Samuel Stephenson, senior business administration major and middle infielder, uses homecoming as a way to unwind with his baseball teammates.

Delafield explained the importance of NSU student-athletes attending the game to show support for the football team.

"Do it for the team on your chest, it's not about you at all. It feels amazing to be supported even when you're going through a hard time right now," Delafield said. "You still have to believe in them because they're not going to grow if we're just here discouraging them, that's not going to help at all."

Samuel Stephenson, senior business administration major and middle infielder for the Demons baseball team, sees homecoming season as a way to escape the stress from classes.

"I think it's a way to get away from class, and it's a way to forget about it for a couple of hours," Stephenson said. "It's a great way to just spend some time with the people around you on campus and just enjoy a good Saturday."

Similarly to other teams at NSU, the baseball team spent time with each other off the field during homecoming week.

"Some of us try to get together at the tailgate at the football practice field; usually, a couple of us will try to catch the game," Stephenson said. "After that, a couple of us will meet up at a different place or somebody else's house, and we just hang out and have a little bit of fun."

Stephenson encouraged other student-athletes to go to the game to get involved.

"It's part of the college experience," Stephenson said. "Go do something that takes your mind off of things for a little bit and makes life a little bit easier."

Everyone who attended the homecoming tailgate game should have a good time but also be safe, Stephenson added.

Differing from the other teams, the Lady Demons volleyball team is in the middle of their season right now. With this, it was hard for the team to participate in events this year due to their busy schedule.

"I'm sure there are a lot of great things going on for homecoming. This is my first year at NSU, so I'm really not sure what goes on during the week," Deja Benjamin, junior sports recreation management major and middle blocker for the volleyball team, said.

Energy at a game is very important to student-athletes. Benjamin added that student-athletes love to feel supported and see the stands full at games and matches.

"Normally, if we don't have anyone there, then we don't have as much motivation," Benjamin said. "We have to create our own motivation, but when you have a crowd, we feed off of their energy. Even if they're just there, we know we have people to play for, but we have to return the favor by having energy so they'll want to come back to a game."

Whether student-athletes celebrate as a team on game day or support the football team while on the road for their own sport, homecoming allows NSU athletics to come together as a community, have fun and relax in a stress-free environment.

Photo by Kallie Bourgeois. Aly Delafield, sophomore psychology major and softball pitcher and first baseman, expressed the softball team's excitement for the Homecoming game.



Photo by Kallie Bourgeois. Deja Benjamin, junior sports recreation management major and middle blocker, shared the Lady Demon volleyball team's plans for Homecoming.



2024 N-Club Hall of Famer and filmmaker inspires minority student-athletes and art students

BY CHRISTIAN ROBINSON

Northwestern State University of Louisiana's N-Club Hall of Fame is a way of honoring the athletes who wore the Demons logo on their chests years before. For some alumni honorees, it is not only for what they did on the field or court but also for what they accomplished outside the competition.

Fort Worth, Texas native, Michael Byars-Dawson was a former point guard for NSU men's basketball team from 1999 to 2001, and he returned to Natchitoches to be celebrated in the Hall of Fame with other former Demon athletes.

Being inducted into the N-Club is an honor that Byars-Dawson acknowledges. He explained that it is an honor for the work and effort he left on the court to be displayed in the induction.

"You feel good to know all the hard work and long hours you put into the game paid off," Byars-Dawson said. "It is humbling to know that it is being appreciated and recognized in such a grand scale as it is, but also being inducted in the N-Club Hall of Fame is so rewarding."

Before playing for the Demons, he competed for two years for the University of Miami men's basketball team. Byars-Dawson played in 33 games as a Hurricane before transferring in 1999 to NSU.

He recalls his time after becoming a Demon and the atmosphere that surrounded the team.

"You know when I transferred, I didn't have a transfer portal so when I got to NSU in 1999 I had to be redshirted and sat a year during my time here," Byars-Dawson said. "I had a great time playing for NSU. Playing with such a great team and staff of coaches was so much fun and made the work and practice worth it during game day."

The accountability factor during his time playing for NSU stood out to him the most.

"Accountability was something I saw when I played at NSU," Byars-Dawson said. "The willingness to take account of mistakes and own up to faults with the expectation to get better from not only players but coaches was very important in what made our team good."

As a Demon point guard for three years, he impacted the team immensely.

Byars-Dawson tied the single-game steal record with eight steals in the 2000-2001 season against Southwest Texas State University.

He also made the critical assist to win the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament in the 2000-2001 season against Winthrop University. That same season, Byars-Dawson scored double digit points in 26 of the 32 games and made the All-Southland Conference third team.

Aside from his time on the court, he founded a film production firm called Major Minority Media in 2018. Byars-Dawson explained how he always had a passion for producing movies and even produced a short film in the NSU art department in 2001.

"I always had an itch to do it, I remember having a teacher named Mr. Davis and it was one of my favorite classes," Byars-Dawson said. "So I always took it seriously and I also had the passion to do it."



Photo by Chris Reich.

This year's N-Club Hall of Fame class were Gene Tennison, Edgar Cooper, Brad Hanson, Nathan Black, Samantha Ford Hatten, Janice Miller Moore, Hillarie Marshall Coleman, Diamon Cosby Frierson, Carlos Treadway, Michael Byars-Dawson, Matt Donner, Olga Bazhaova Moore, Shannon Straty Heid, Troy Conkle and the late Kurt Rodriguez.

When he started his company, Byars-Dawson admits he didn't have a specific focus in mind. He shared how he wanted to keep the net wide for potential growth for his brand.

"I'm sure when our operations grow it will change, but I never really called it filmmaking, it's more storytelling," Byars-Dawson said. "You know I like telling stories whether fiction or real stories."

Major Minority Media released its first film in 2019 and sold 10,000 copies of the short film and gained notoriety in the black community and international attention. Byars-Dawson described the process starting from the ground up and how it made the climb to success so satisfying.

"Our first film did really well. We went national because of Black Enterprise, Source Magazine, Washington Informer and Urban Magazine, which was in Canada that made use internationally, which

was good," Byars-Dawson said. "I didn't even have a camera when I started. I contacted my Uncle, who was also a film NSU alumni, and asked to borrow his camera and that's where it began."

In 2020, the film business was put on halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic and where Byars-Dawson and Major Minority Media moved to merchandising and clothing production to further expand the brand.

Returning home to be honored with other athletes made it even more special for Byars-Dawson. He shared a message to African American youth during the tailgate, where he sold t-shirts and a portion of the proceeds will go to an endowed scholarship for the Black Male Alliance student organization.

Byars-Dawson created an impact for minorities around the world both on the court during his time at NSU and in the film studio of Major Minority Media through dedication and passion.



Photo by Chris Reich. Fort Worth, Texas native, Michael Byars-Dawson was a former point guard for NSU men's basketball team from 1999 to 2001, and he returned to Natchitoches to be celebrated in the Hall of Fame with other former Demon athletes.

High school vs. college homecoming: What's the difference?

BY BELLA MICHLER

Celebrated in both high school and college, homecoming is an age-old tradition full of school spirit and pride. The differences in honoring this tradition, though, vary from place to place.

Depending on where students come from, college can break the mold that high school made for Homecoming or give those who have never got the chance to partake in the festivities a new, exciting experience.

At Northwestern State University of Louisiana, the week before is centered around events and activities leading up to the big homecoming football game. Instead of a different theme each day, an overall theme rules over the week; this year's theme was Y2K, also known as the 2000s. Students are still welcome to dress accordingly and switch up their look, but the focus falls on the events, allowing students to enjoy the week between their busy schedules.

One of the main differences between high school and college homecoming is the week before. High schools often refer to this as 'spirit week,' a week full of fun when students get to dress up with dif-

ferent themes each day; it all leads to the Friday football game and formal dance on Saturday.

Emma Collins, a freshman majoring in theatre, reminisced about how spirit week went at her high school.

"It was indescribable, to say the least. The seniors created the themes separately for each day," Collins said. "Coming to NSU where it's more planned out and the week has one solid theme is more beneficial time and stress-wise. However, sometimes the thrill is more fun than just one theme."

Though college and high school can differ when it comes to homecoming, one of many things they have in common is the sense of community they seem to instill in everyone; even students who have never experienced homecoming.

Lucie Fortin, an international student from France majoring in English, gave her perspective on the adjustment and the cultural differences.

"I would say it's interesting how invested people are here. Back in France, there's

little to no events happening on campus most of the time, so it's very lovely to have homecoming here," Fortin said.

College homecoming relies on the football game that brings back alumni to celebrate and catch up. While there is no dance for students to attend afterward, it is a time meant to expose current students to former students and build school pride through pep rallies and tailgating events.

Torin Merchant, a freshman music education major, said one of her favorite parts of high school would be the energy the homecoming game brought.

"We had pep rallies for every home

game, but our homecoming game pep rally was way different than the rest," Merchant said. "Then, of course, that night would be the game. Our stadium was split into a home side and an away side, so everyone in town would be on the bigger side of the stadium being loud and celebrating our team."

Making the switch from a high school to a college homecoming can be striking for a student. Some students are used to huge celebrations and spirit weeks, while others have no experience at all when it comes to Homecoming. At the end of the day, homecoming is fun for all no matter how people used to celebrate.

Photo by Tyra Jones.
During the 2024 Homecoming tailgate, alumni, students, faculty and organizations celebrated the reunion.



Photo by Lalaina Wood.
On Oct. 26, the Demons played against Lamar University Cardinals for this year's Homecoming game.

What do NSU students think about homecoming?

BY DAKOTA THOMAS

Photo by Lia Portillo



Janaya Woodard
Junior
Health and Exercise Science

Question:

Why do you think homecoming is a big event on campus?

Answer:

"I think it's a big event because it's like what everyone looks forward to. Homecoming, we all know that's every fall, every football season. So I think it's just really big and amped up because it just brings everyone back."

Photo by Dakota Thomas



Sarah Thibodaux
Sophomore
General Studies

Question:

Do you think homecoming is overrated?

Answer:

"Yes it is, because all the awards go to one sorority and Fraternity, not really any organizations other than sororities and fraternity."

Photo by Dakota Thomas



Kyle Brown
Freshman
Nursing

Question:

Do you think Homecoming is overrated?

Answer:

"Well, I don't know much about homecoming, but from what I heard, I would say it's a little overrated."

Photo by Lia Portillo



Hannah Davis
Senior
Psychology

Question:

Do you or any organization you are involved in participate in homecoming? How do you feel about participating or not participating?

Answer:

"Well, I've participated in the homecoming honor court this year and it's been super fun. During my sophomore year and my freshman year, I participated with my sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. It was super fun, we made banners, we made the little trick or treat bags and things of that sort. So I really think it's a great time to bond with your friends to build that relationship, and even see other organizations, their banners, all the hard work they're doing and their lip sync performances. I think that's super cool."

Photo by Lia Portillo



Cecilia Warren
Freshman
Fine and Graphic Arts

Question:

With this being your first year, how much do you know about Homecoming?

Answer:

"I mean, not that much. I do know like the week, the stuff that we had on for homecoming, like I went to lip sync. I know they had a fun thing last night."

Photo by Nina Ovalle



Eileen Ashley
Junior
Music Education Major

Question:

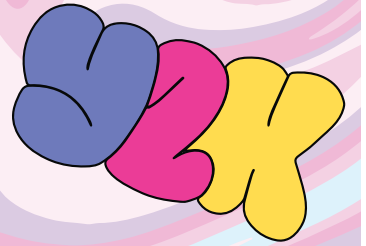
Do you think homecoming is overrated?

Answer:

"I can see how it could seem overrated to a lot of students who aren't in organizations, because homecoming is organizational participation based, so I could see how it could seem overrated. In my opinion though, I don't think that it is because it does bring a lot of activity to campus and it has those organizations come together as one."



2000s Word Search



Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below.

C	E	L	L	P	H	O	N	E	B	L	O	C	K	B	U	S	T	E	R
H	R	Q	K	A	R	T	E	C	H	N	O	L	O	G	Y	Y	N	R	A
O	F	E	X	P	U	O	X	R	U	E	K	N	A	R	F	A	S	I	L
T	B	U	M	Y	S	P	A	C	E	Z	S	V	S	G	Y	E	R	D	V
T	V	R	U	R	Y	G	B	L	U	E	T	O	O	T	H	Y	U	H	L
O	P	S	I	E	Y	H	O	W	A	L	S	K	X	C	C	I	M	A	C
P	V	A	E	T	C	N	Q	L	X	S	E	T	M	N	L	T	T	G	B
I	U	D	R	N	N	Y	C	M	B	A	F	B	P	O	E	R	G	C	I
C	B	I	G	I	P	E	O	I	Z	N	K	G	U	I	R	Z	D	O	R
K	R	M	A	T	S	M	Y	B	F	Z	Q	R	A	T	I	L	V	M	L
R	R	X	W	B	M	H	F	S	E	B	B	C	G	A	U	D	K	E	I
I	U	C	D	J	W	I	I	V	P	M	F	R	U	T	G	O	Y	V	N
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L	F	O	E	X	E	K	H	C	V	O	S	R	G	A	E	H	A	D	N
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O	E	E	L	E	N	M	R	C	F	G	Y	O	P	P	Z	J	L	S	A
O	G	I	H	U	C	E	S	S	E	I	L	E	E	H	Z	V	A	A	R
G	F	Z	Z	S	F	A	T	N	C	D	D	F	D	T	I	C	P	L	K
G	W	S	I	U	Z	S	F	A	V	Z	D	X	S	T	L	I	E	F	G

Word Bank

1. Blockbuster
2. Blogs
3. Bluetooth
4. Britney Spears
5. Cell Phone
6. Facebook
7. Flash Drive
8. GameBoy
9. Google
10. Heelies
11. Hot Topic
12. Internet
13. Linkin Park
14. Lisa Frank
15. Lizzie McGuire
16. MySpace
17. Paris Hilton
18. PlayStation
19. Technology
20. Youtube



DJ Schedule Fall 2024



	9 a.m.- 10 a.m.	10 a.m.- 11 a.m.	11 a.m.- 12 p.m.	12 p.m.- 1 p.m.	1 p.m.- 2 p.m.	2 p.m.- 3 p.m.	3 p.m.- 4 p.m.	4 p.m.- 5 p.m.	5 p.m.- 6 p.m.	6 p.m.- 7 p.m.	7 p.m.- 8 p.m.	8 p.m.- 9 p.m.
Mon.					D.A.A.M.N News Show	Argus Hour	Brit Pilled	Hard Kore	Mental Mondays			
Tues.			Strike Up the Band			Southern Street	Grunge After Lunch		Keeping the Scene	Nitty Gritty Natty	Elite Takes w/Jay	
Wed.						Earworm	The Graveyard 3:30-4:30		Talking to the Void			
Thurs.	Sideline Talk 9-11		Cam's Corner			Greek on a Leash	Southern Street	Indie Spotlight	Power & love Power Hour	Ayee Ifs Bryce: On Air		The Alternative
Fri.				Decade Delights	Miscellaneous Mix	The Gentlman's Pub	Grunge After Lunch	Jessy's Junction 4-6		Welcome to D.C.C.		

Staff Volunteer

Across

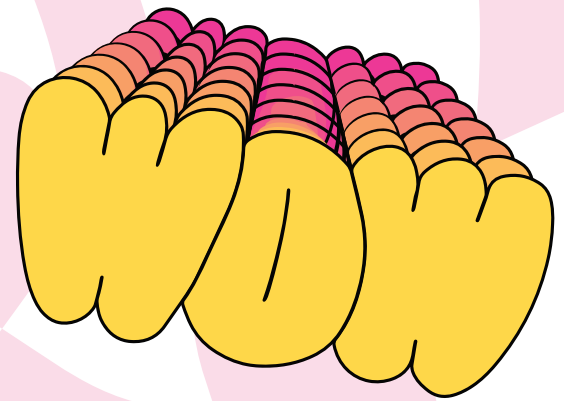
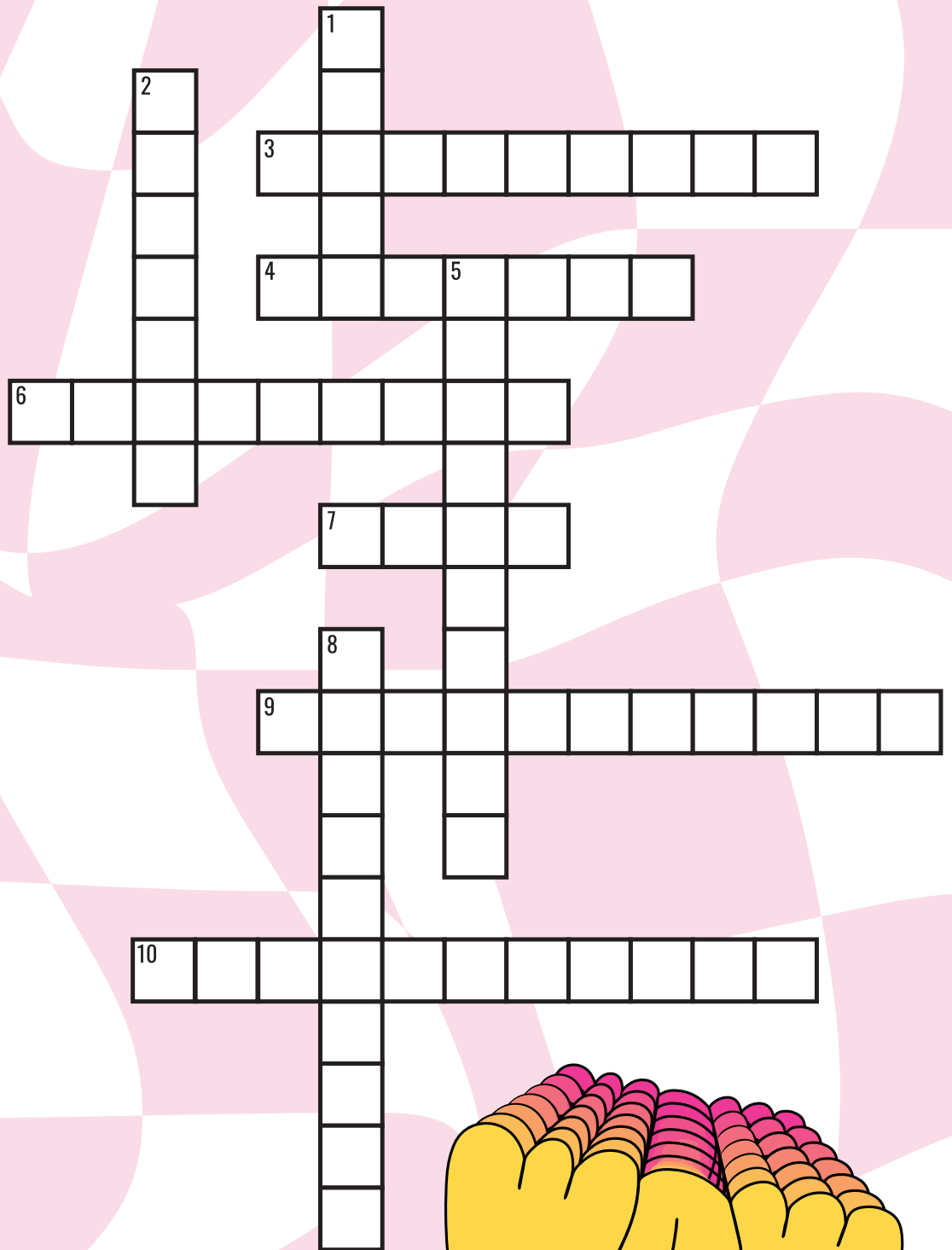
- 3. The star of the 2000 live-action remake “How the Grinch Stole Christmas”.
- 4. Popular social networking program from 2003.
- 6. What popular 2004 movie has the quote “She doesn’t even go here”?
- 7. 2001 device created by Apple to listen to music on the go.
- 9. What is another name for children born in the early 2000s?
- 10. Name of the person who served as the 43rd President of the United States of America from 2001 to 2009.

Down

- 1. What is the name of the tracksuit introduced and was specifically created for Madonna in 2001?
- 2. Colorfully-named disc launched in 2006 that stored and played back video, music, and other digital content.
- 5. Brand of stuffed animals with velcro straps that could be transformed into a decorative pillow, popularized in 2003.
- 8. 2008 Super Bowl XLII Champions.

2000s Pop Culture Crossword

Answer these pop culture questions about the 2000s decade.



Place a **Current Sauce** Ad Here!

RSOs submit your ad to
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