

## Number of Baylor mascots draws scrutiny



PHOTO BY SHARON M. STEINMAN/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Baylor University student Adam Ylitalo watches as Lady, the university's mascot, plays with a stuffed horse at a game against Texas Tech.

by Troy Phillips  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Baylor's high rate of mascot turnover has kept its live mascot program under attack from animal-rights groups and conservationists.

Including current mascots Joy and Lady, senior bear trainer Adam Ylitalo said Baylor has had more than 50 mascots in 80 years.

Asked if an official university record of every Baylor mascot through the years could be produced, Eileen Hulme, the mascot program's adviser, deferred to Ylitalo. He said the Baylor Chamber of Commerce, a student organization in charge of the bears, has no such records.

"Here Come the Bears," a 1996 book by Eugene W. Baker, details 53 Baylor mascots from 1917 to 1996 but does not specify an exact number. Counting four mascots since Baker's book came out, Baylor appears to have had 57.

Carol Asvestas of the 112-acre Wild Animal Orphanage in San Antonio said her facility took in a Baylor mascot, Scotty, in 1990.

"We asked them when we took it that they not take any more bears in," Asvestas said. "We were under the impression they agreed to it. They have a reputation of handing them over once they get to a certain age. It's a recycling problem."

Hulme said Baylor wants its new planned habitat to house bears for the rest of their lives, with one caveat. Baylor will continue to find new homes for adult bears that become too temperamental or dangerous.

Such was the case with Bobby, adopted by the Austin Zoo in 1996. The zoo's director, Cindy Carroccio, has

been one of Baylor's harshest critics, after Bobby required \$8,000 worth of dental work. She says Bobby is gentle now and was just mishandled by his Baylor trainers, which the school denies.

One animal-rights group, Showing Animals Respect and Kindness, has accused Baylor of concealing the on-campus death of a 2-year-old bear, Ginny, in the late 1990s. SHARK's Web site suggests Baylor had the body secretly removed after midnight.

According to Baylor, Ginny was adopted very much alive by Bear World wildlife park in Idaho. This week, Bear World owner Mike Ferguson and U.S. Department of Agriculture inspector Earnest Johnson both verified Ginny's transport in the spring of 1999 from Baylor to Idaho, where she died of cancer not long afterward.

"She appeared to be in good health, but we noticed she was a little slow," Ferguson said. "She seemed to be an awfully young bear to die of cancer. I don't know what caused it."

SHARK has also accused Baylor of sending some bears to substandard sanctuaries or parks. Hulme said Baylor does its homework, but inspection records show that 6-year-old Bear World was not fully compliant with USDA standards until October 2001.

Bear World was cited at times for substandard shelter areas, inadequate feeding and veterinary care, exposed wiring near animals, contaminated water, incomplete records and a lack of containment between incompatible animals. Bear World has since become fully compliant.

"We don't return a bear into an untenable situation," Hulme said. "We've been portrayed as not being sensitive to these bears, and it's just not true."

## Despite staggering cost, experts say college worth the investment

by Joel Dresang  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

If money were everything, many parents would want their children to go to college and become doctors and lawyers. Earnings are the surest way to wealth, and higher education is the most direct course to big bucks.

According to the non profit College Board, a kid who grows up and gets a bachelor's (degree) earns \$1 million more over a lifetime than a childhood playmate who stops education after high school.

Affording college, though, that's the rub.

"Overpriced" is what Jenny Otto, of Burlington, Wis., calls college costs. Still, she has been socking away college money since her daughter Kaitlyn was born three years ago. She plans to do the same for her son, Chase, who's 5 weeks old and drifting off to sleep in his stroller outside the downtown Milwaukee law office where Otto works.

Otto saves and plans. Her husband, a carpenter, has been able to make a living without a college (degree) so far, but she's attending college part-time at Milwaukee Area Technical College to get an associate (degree) as a paralegal. She says she already does more and earns more than a paralegal, but she sees education as a necessary investment that someday will pay off.

"That's probably why they can charge so much for it," she said.

The numbers are numbing. Sending a newborn to a four-year private college 18 years from now would cost \$279,000 if the average cost of tuition, fees, room and board rose 5 percent a year. Four years at a public school would exceed \$110,000.

But financial planners say parents need to get past the daunting price tags and get off the dime to help their children prepare for higher education. They say children can't afford to not advance their learning.

"You can't support a family on a high school education," says Paula Hogan, a certified financial planner in Glendale, Wis. Ten years ago, Hogan rarely heard new parents ask about college savings. Now it's commonplace. That's recognition of the financial value of college and the need to plan ahead.

"There's no one right way," says June Schroeder, a certified financial planner in Elm Grove, Wis. "The fear comes when people wait too long."

College officials say too many people get paralyzed by sticker shock when, in fact, most fami-

lies don't pay the full price, thanks to government assistance and private support.

Two reports released recently by the College Board show that although the average cost jumped 10 percent this year for four-year public colleges and 6 percent for private, student aid rose 15 percent, including grants, loans, work-study arrangements and tax credits. The result would mean the net cost of college actually dropped. It was the first time in the education association's 103 years that it examined the average net expense of college.

Subtracting the average student's aid from the average college cost, the report found the net cost of a four-year public university to be about \$7,300 last year and about \$18,000 for a four-year private college both nearly 30 percent less than the total cost.

Indeed, even as the cost of higher education escalates, attendance keeps climbing. The Department of Education has projected that as many as 18.2 million Americans will be enrolled in college by 2012, up 43 percent since 1987. Among 20- to 24-year-olds, more than a third go to school now, up from about one-fifth 30 years ago.

Ideally, college planning should begin not by looking at price tags but considering what's best for the child.

"Harvard is not the answer for every student. That's where it starts. And recognizing that price does not equal quality," says Travis Reindl, policy analyst for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. "It comes back to an individual fit."

Only when students have narrowed their choices based on how a school fits the student's educational objectives, career aspirations, lifestyle preferences and so on only then should cost-shopping occur. And even then, look beyond the sticker price and ask the school about financial aid.

"Don't rule anything out until you really know what the deals are," Hogan advises.

James Boyle, president of the 2,000-member College Parents of America, says families of little means shouldn't feel priced out of higher education; nor should well-heeled families feel entitled to assistance.

"Families have to decide what is important to them," Boyle says. "In the best cases, families discuss it and figure out 'How are we going to do this?' and 'How important is this to our family?'"

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