Mascots just as good at keeping their identities secret as firing up a crowd

BY MIKE HOUSEHOLDER ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST LANSING, Mich. Ross Ramsey enjoys spending time with fellow alums at Michigan State football tailgates.

These aren't just any old former Spartans, though.

They were Sparty himself — something few knew when Ramsey and his pals donned the muscular mascot suit two decades ago.

"Once you are done being Sparty, you can tell others that you were Sparty," said Ramsey, a physician and hospital administrator in Pigeon, Michigan. "And clearly you have a close bond with those others who were in the same role as you, because they couldn't share that experience with anyone else at the time, either."

Ramsey and his buddies are members of an elite fellowship of ex-mascots. Men and women who once carried on as Big Al, Alabama's lovable elephant; the Disney-inspired Oregon Duck; Wisconsin's Bucky Badger and many more. We're talking humans in suits, not live animal mascots, which also are fixtures on college football Saturdays.

The job for costumed mascots is to fire up the crowd, bring a smile to a fan's face and symbolically represent the universi-

"When you think of Michigan State, you think of Sparty. And everybody



Wilfredo Lee | Associated Press

Miami mascot, Sebastian the Ibis, leads the team onto the field before the start of an NCAA college football game against Ohio on Sept. 1, 2023, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

is," said Phil Lator, another former Sparty who joins Ramsey at the tailgates and also successfully concealed his alter ego during his tenure in East Lansing.

Anonymity is the name of the game for many college mascots.

'Some programs value multiple performers report to the stadium but monies," he said. only learn in the moment who will actually be suiting up," said Jeff Birdsell, a communication professor at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. Birdsell has

ters, having served as mascot. Point Loma's mascot as an undergrad, as well as inhabiting suits for minor league baseball, NBA G League and indoor soccer teams.

'Some schools have traditions where they work hard to keep the performers anonymous so that secrecy so highly that there can be a big reveal as part of graduation cere-

Enter Nicole Hurley, who came clean about her Cocky past at South Carolina's spring commencement, rolling into the arena wearing her cap, gown and oversized yel-

knows what the mascot experience in these mat- low bird feet of the bird

"When I walked across the stage, I felt so much joy. The whole arena started to clap and cheer, and it made me emotional," said Hurley, a pediatric hematology oncology nurse in Charleston, South Carolina.

Only Hurley's room-



GILLIAM, ET AL. CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-CI-AMOUNT OF JUDGMENT: \$101,365.55 ADDRESS: 430 DIXIE CT,

OWENSBORO, KY By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Daviess Circuit court the undersigned will on Monday, December 15. 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the Courthouse 2nd Floor Fiscal

Court Room in Owensboro Ky., expose to PUBLIC SALE the above real estate. For a complete legal description of the property see the Court record in the Circuit Clerk's Of-TERMS: CASH OR 10% DOWN & BALANCE 30 DAYS. If on credit purchaser

must post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price plus 6% interest per annum from the date of said bond. The buyer shall be responsible for the MASTER COMMISSIONER DAVIESS CIRCUIT COURT



Spotter Tractor. Copies of the Request For Proposals are available from the Owensboro Riverport Authority, by con-

tacting Michelle Payne, Pur chasing Agent, at mpayne@owensbororiverport com. All proposals shall be submitted in accordance with requirements set forth in the RFP and shall be received at 1771 River Road, Owensboro KY before 2:30 p.m., (CST) December 10, 2025. All late proposals will be returned un opened. Emailed proposals are not accepted. Owensboro Riverport Authority reserves the right to postpone, accept or reject any and all propos als and to waive any informal ity in the bid process as Owensboro Riverport Author ity deems in its own best in

Reach out — advertise Messenger-Inquirer

mates and parents knew

about her second life,

which included attending

weddings, birthday par-

ties, baby showers and other private events; fir-

ing up the crowd at Wil-

liams-Brice Stadium and

rushing the floor after a

2023 men's basketball vic-

less moments that I had

to change into my suit in

my car, pretty much lie to

every person about how

I worked a job in athlet-

ics and created excus-

es when I was not free

on the weekends due to

working private events,"

Hurley said. "When peo-

ple I know would come up to take a photo with me

when I was Cocky and

they had no idea I was the

one under the suit was

Carlos Polanco-Zaccar-

di, whose years inside

Miami's Sebastian the

Ibis costume were known

SEE MASCOTS/PAGE B7

LEGAL NOTICE FOR

BID # 2025-11 WARE-

HOUSE SPOTTER

TRACTOR
REQUEST FOR BIDS
OWENSBORO RIVERPORT

AUTHORITY

Notice is hereby given that the Owensboro Riverport Author-

ity is requesting proposals to

purchase 1 new Warehouse

the craziest feeling."

'There were count-

tory at Kentucky.



Fairview Dr. and 4328 Gate vay Dr., hereby gives notice that on Saturday, December 6, 2025 at 1:00pm will sell the contents of the following units at a private sale for cash only

1037 – Whitney Keiser 2094 - Deverionna Adams 2110 - Sharon Butler 3051 - Elizabeth Phelps B24 – Amanda Higgs

Not open to the Public No Phone Calls Please



REFUSE TRUCK ONLINE AUCTION

The purpose of this advertise ment for auction is to offer for sale one surplus 2018 Mack Side Arm Refuse Truck

Specifications may be ob tained from the GovDeals web site at the following link <u> https://www.govdeals.com/owe</u> nsboroky. To register as a bidder on GovDeals, please fol ow the instructions at the fol owing link: https://www.govdeals.com/register/. For information on how to place a oid, please follow the instruc ions at the following link https://www.govdeals.com/fag and click "Bidding" in the drop lown box.

All auction bids must be elec ronically submitted on the GovDeals website before :00PM CDT December 9

Equipment shall be purchased As Is," and winning party shal nake pavment and pick-up equipment within 10 business days of notice of award. The City of Owensboro reserves he right to reject any and al pids and to waive any irregu arities in said bids. This ad ertisement was paid for by the city of Owensboro using tax paver dollars in the amount of

Purchasing Manager

Kalvn Fox

MASTER COMMISSIONER SALE

FREEDOM MORTGAGE CORP. V. ESTATE OF IRA DAUGHERTY, ET AL. CIVIL ACTION NO. 25-CI-00290, MAP #5-8-8-6 AMOUNT OF JUDGMENT: \$64,356.11
ADDRESS: 1815 W. PAR-RISH AVE., OWENSBORO,
KY

By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Daviess Circuit court the undersigned will, on Monday, December 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the Courthouse 2nd Floor Fiscal Court Room in Owensboro, Ky., expose to PUBLIC SALE the above real estate. For a complete legal description of the property see the Court record in the Circuit Clerk's Of-

TERMS: CASH OR 10% DOWN & BALANCE 30 DAYS. If on credit purchaser must post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, plus 6% interest per annum from the date of said bond. The buyer shall be responsible for the current vear's property taxes MASTER COMMISSIONER DAVIESS CIRCUIT COURT



SALE NATIONSTAR MORTGAGE LLC V. CHARLES CAMP-BELL, JR.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-CI-01066, MAP #3-11-22-8 AMOUNT OF JUDGMENT: ADDRESS: 814 MARY LOU CT., OWENSBORO, KY

virtue of Judgment and Or der of Sale of the Daviess Cir cuit Court the undersigned will, on Monday, December 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the Courthouse 2nd Floor Fiscal Court Room in Owensboro, Ky., expose to PUBLIC SALE the above real estate. For a complete legal description of the property see the Court record in the Circuit Clerk's Of-

TERMS: CASH OR 10% DOWN & BALANCE 30 DAYS. If on credit purchaser must post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, plus 6% interest per annum from the date of said bond. The buyer shall be responsible for the current year's property taxes.

MASTER COMMISSIONER DAVIESS CIRCUIT COURT



LIEN PUBLIC SALE 2019 GMC Terrain Denali 2.0L 4Cyl Gas LTG Turbocharged

(VIN: 3GKÄLSEX9KL354753) left unclaimed and unpaid for repair/storage charges, will be sold pursuant to mechanic's lien law. Sale will occur on Tuesday December 30th at 8am at Fast Lane Auto Repair, located at 2121 Triplett Street Owensboro, Ky 42303. All parties with interest or claim should contact Keith Knott or Edward Caswell 270-231-8161 prior to sale. Vehicle sold as-is, where-is.



MASTER COMMISSIONER SALE

U.S. BANK N.A. V. RONALD W. SIMPSON. ADMIN.. CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-CI-00758, MAP #106-27-1 AMOUNT OF JUDGMENT: \$42,058.06 ADDRESS: 12405 FULLEN-WIDER RD., LEWISPORT, KY

By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Daviess Circuit court the undersigned will, on Monday, December 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the Courthouse 2nd Floor Fiscal Court Room in Owensboro Ky., expose to PUBLIC SALE the above real estate. For a complete legal description of the property see the Court re-

cord in the Circuit Clerk's Of-

TERMS: CASH OR 10% DOWN & BALANCE 30 DAYS. If on credit purchaser must post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, plus 6% interest per annum from the date of said bond. The buyer shall be responsible for the current year's property taxes. MASTER COMMISSIONER DAVIESS CIRCUIT COURT



Owensboro Riverport Author



REQUEST FOR BIDS OWENSBORO RIVERPORT **AUTHORITY** Notice is hereby given that the

ity is requesting proposals to purchase 1 new 5,000 lb. fork lift. Copies of the Request For Proposals are available from the Owensboro Riverport Authority, by contacting Michelle Payne, Purchasing Agent, at mpayne@owensbororiverport com. All proposals shall be submitted in accordance with requirements set forth in the RFP and shall be received at 1771 River Road, Owensboro KY before 2:00 p.m., (CST), December 10, 2025. All late proposals will be returned unopened. Emailed proposals are not accepted. Owensboro Riverport Authority reserves the right to postpone, accept or reject any and all proposals and to waive any informal ity in the bid process as Owensboro Riverport Authority deems in its own best in-



INVITATION TO BID

Bid No. 2526-33: Fire Rescue Tools (Fire Rescue) Bid No. 2526-34: Four (4) New 5th Wheel Road Tractors (Solid

Bid No. 2526-35: One (1) New AWD Backhoe Loader (Solid Waste)

Bid No. 2526-36: One (1) New Front End Loader (Solid Waste) Bid No. 2526-37: One (1) New Wheeled Excavator (Solid Waste) Bid No. 2526-38: One (1) Used Roll-Off Truck (Solid Waste) Bid No. 2526-39: Four (4) New Walking Floor Trailers (Solid

Waste) Bid No. 2526-40: One (1) Used 3/4 Ton Pickup Truck (Solid Waste)

Daviess County Fiscal Court is seeking a qualified vendor to provide the item(s)/service(s) listed above. Bid specifications are on file at the Daviess County Courthouse, 212 St. Ann Street: Room 202, Owensboro, KY 42303 in the Purchasing Department or online at www.daviessky.org. Bids must be mailed or delivered to Daviess County Fiscal Court on or before 2:00 PM, loc al time on Thursday, December 11, 2025. The bids shall be opened and publicly read at this time. Daviess County Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any irregularities in said bids.



2026 DRONE SHOW

The City of Owensboro ("City") is requesting proposals from qualified contractors to provide and execute a custom, high-quality drone light show for a special event taking place over the Ohio

Specifications for the above are on file and may be downloaded from the City's online Bonfire portal at https://owensboro.bonfirehub.com. Proposals must be submitted through the Bonfire portal on or before 5:00 p.m. prevailing local time on Friday, December 19, 2025.

The City of Owensboro reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any irregularities in said proposals. This advertisement was paid for by the City of Owensboro using taxpayer dollars in the amount of \$117.00. Kalyn Fox

Purchasing Manager



DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURE

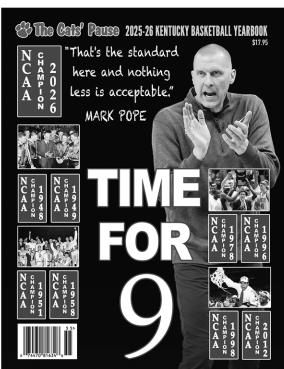
The City of Owensboro ("City") is seeking a reputable contractor to demolish one structure. The successful bidder shall provide all labor, materials, equipment, supervision, and incidentals required to demolish, remove, and dispose structure and debris from this property in accordance with applicable local, state, and

federal requirements. Specifications for the above are on file and may be downloaded from the City's online Bonfire portal at https://owensboro.bonfirehub.com. Bids must be submitted through the Bonfire portal on o before 2:00 P.M. prevailing local time on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at which time bids will be opened and publicly read aloud via Microsoft Teams meeting. The Team meeting link can be found on the Bonfire portal.

The City of Owensboro reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any irregularities in said bids. This advertisement was paid for by the Čity of Owensboro using taxpayer dollars in the amount of \$143.00

Purchasing Manager

2025-26 KENTUCKY BASKETBALL YEARBOOK



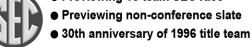
Excitement has never been higher for a new Kentucky basketball season and The Cats' Pause is here to get the party started with our 46th annual Kentucky Basketball Yearbook! Inside you will find:



Mark Pope's big gamble

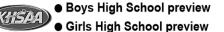
Pope's thoughts on issues of the day • Profiles of UK players and coaches

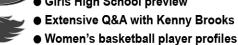
● Previewing 16-team SEC race



Recruiting next generation of Cats

State Schools season preview





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