

The stories passed from student to student for generations range from the ridiculous to the sublime. So which are true and which are merely urban legends? See if you can tell fact from fiction.

Legend: Olmsted Center was designed and built to look like a bulldog.

Verdict: False

Built in 1974 at a cost of more than \$4 million, Olmsted Center was never designed to look like a bulldog or any other animal. The fact that it does is sheer happenstance. Paul Johnson, director of the physical plant at the time Olmsted was conceived and constructed said the round windows, often thought to represent the eyes of the bulldog, are merely concessions to the fire code — an access route for firefighters to get into the building in an emergency. “There was never any conversation with the architect about designing it to look like a bulldog,” says Johnson.

Legend: The Harmon Fine Arts Center is oddly shaped because it was built around the property of “a little old lady” who refused to sell her home to the University.

Verdict: True

The U shape on the eastern side of the FAC exists because the building was erected in 1972 around the property of, yes, a little old lady who declined to sell her home. “She lived there and she just didn’t want to move,” recalls Johnson. “She had no interest in even discussing it. She passed away and we worked with one of her relatives, an heir and purchased it at that point.” That said, the addendum to this legend that the red sculpture on the west side of the building was placed where the home once sat is false.

Legend: If your roommate dies, commits suicide, is killed or otherwise perishes, you get free tuition and/or an automatic 4.0 GPA.

Verdict: False

This rumor, though widespread at Drake, is not specific to the University but is a common urban legend at campuses nationwide. Though we can't speak for the policies of these other universities, Drake's is clear and simple: "It's not true," says Tom Delahunt, vice president for admission and financial aid. "There is absolutely no such policy in place."

Legend: The rooms in Goodwin Kirk were illegally small, or the same size as jail cells, so Drake added bay windows to each room to make them legally habitable.

Verdict: False

Though admittedly small, the rooms in Goodwin Kirk were not illegal when the building was constructed in 1965 or any time thereafter. "That was just an architectural thing," says Johnson of the rooms' size. "The rooms were reasonably small, but Drake was growing by leaps and bounds in those days and we were trying to maximize the amount of people we could get in there." The bay windows, he said, were added to make the rooms look and feel bigger and to add architectural detail to the outside of the building, not because any laws were violated.

Legend: A campus reflecting pool was eliminated after students kept filling the pond with powdered Jell-O.

Verdict: True

Dolph Pulliam, director of Community Outreach and Development, recalls many hours spent around the reflecting pond during his time at Drake, as well as the activities that led to its demise. "The reflecting pond was located in the middle of the Quads. In the '70s students began nightly raids and started dumping lots of packs of powdered Jell-O into it. The next morning as the Jell-O hardened, Drake staff had to clean out the mess. After the students had done this several times, the University made the decision to fill the reflecting pool with dirt, thus ending a great tradition for students."

Legend: The "Paul is Dead" rumor began because of an article that ran in the *Times-Delphic*.

Verdict: False

Technically false anyway. An article by Tim Harper titled "Is Beatle Paul McCartney Dead?" printed in the September 17, 1969 issue of the *Times-Delphic* merely fanned the flames of a myth that had been passed around Europe and the West Coast for some time. The rumor originated with a car accident in 1967 involving McCartney's mini cooper. The car crash did occur, but McCartney was not in the car. Still, bystanders on the scene familiar with his custom-made vehicle assumed it was McCartney who had been injured. There are reports that local newspapers erroneously stated that McCartney had died in the crash, which ultimately led to the "Paul is Dead" rumor and cover-up conspiracy. Harper has acknowledged that he did not create the story but heard it from a roommate who in turn had learned it from some West Coast friends. The *Times-Delphic* article, however, is widely acknowledged as the first written account of the conspiracy, which ultimately led to radio reports in the Midwest that spread the rumor far and wide.