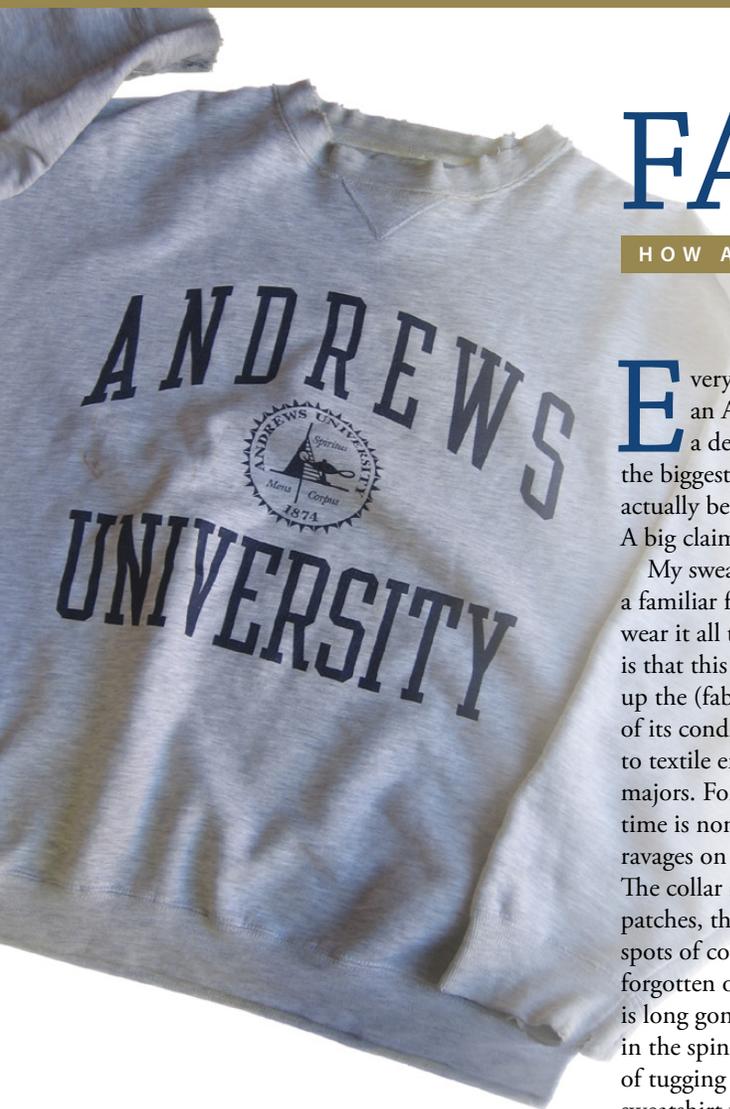


FADED GLORY

HOW AN ANDREWS SWEATSHIRT APPRECIATES OVER TIME

By Jack Stenger



Every Andrews student should buy an Andrews sweatshirt. Why? After a decade of wearing my own, here's the biggest reason: These sweatshirts actually become more valuable over time. A big claim, I know. But let me explain.

My sweatshirt is there in my closet. It's a familiar friend, to be sure, and I still wear it all the time. The sad part, though, is that this familiar friend is about to give up the (fabric) ghost. Maybe an inventory of its condition would be insightful to textile engineers or fashion-design majors. For me, it's a reminder that time is nondiscriminatory, playing equal ravages on both the wearer and the worn. The collar is altogether frayed. In certain patches, the sweatshirt is marked by odd spots of color (of unknown or now-forgotten origins). Its once lustrous sheen is long gone, a casualty of countless turns in the spin cycle. And thanks to years of tugging and pulling, the misshaped sweatshirt would certainly fit an out-of-shape (and long retired) Chicago Bears linebacker. These days, it makes me look a little disheveled. But no matter. It's perfect "loung-about wear" around the home.

I bought the sweatshirt from the Campus Bookstore sometime in winter 1995. Like all buys dating from a now-hazy yesteryear, I don't remember much about this specific point of purchase. I do know my context, though. Where employment at Andrews was concerned, I was a new hire. And where Michigan winters were concerned, I was a rank amateur. Here in my home state of Georgia, winters are as temperate as the sweet tea we drink. But Michigan

winters, by their very definition, embody the word "bracing." Certainly those climatic realities prompted the buy. But there also was a new-found sense of Andrews pride. I was proud of my affiliation to the school. And the university community was every bit as welcoming to new employees as it was to new students.

The sweatshirt selection I had was likely the same as is found today. There were regular sweatshirts along with bulkier "hoodies." They came with fanciful embroidery on front or the more standard heat-transferred lettering. I opted for a straight-forward gray heather sweatshirt, one with the university name and logo emblazoned on the front. It was dignified. It was warm. I was proud to wear it, then. And I'm still proud to wear it today.

Oscar Wilde once said: "One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art." I'm not sure how much longer my worn Andrews sweatshirt will be around. But for me, it is becoming a little like that "work of art" that Wilde mentioned. I guess garments are just like some experiences: they have beginnings and ends. But some articles of clothing can mean more—even as they hold up less. My sweatshirt reminds me of idyllic days in Berrien Springs, Mich., and my life in a close-knit campus community, a place I knew (and loved). And while the colors might fade, those memories never do.

So, if you're new to Andrews, go over and buy yourself an Andrews sweatshirt. Why? Like I said, they certainly appreciate over time.



Jack Stenger was the associate PR director/public information officer at Andrews from 1994 to 1999. He currently lives in Atlanta, Ga.

We'd love to hear your reflections on the time you spent at Andrews University. If you're interested in contributing, please e-mail focus@andrews.edu.