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Welcome back to College Bound, Notre Dame Admissions' podcast. We're really excited today to be transitioning a little bit from focusing on the application to focusing on student life at Notre Dame. We'll be telling you a little bit about what makes Notre Dame unique. Matt and I are big Notre Dame fans. I'm Maria Finan, a "Double Domer," so I received my bachelor's and master's degrees at Notre Dame in English. I happen to really love stories, especially those that focus on Notre Dame.

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My fun fact for you today is that one of my favorite classes I took at Notre Dame was "Notre Dame History" with Father Tom Blantz, who is one of our priests-in-residence, which means he actually lives in one of our residence halls on campus. He wrote a book called "The University of Notre Dame: A History," but Matt and I have selected a few fun pieces of Notre Dame legend to talk about today. Before we get started, I'll have Matt introduce himself, and give you a little bit more insight into what we'll be discussing.

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Yes, thank you, Maria. As mentioned before, I am also Notre Dame graduate. My name is Matt Greene, I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from Notre Dame, and I am also big into the Notre Dame traditions that many students and alumni hold dear to our hearts. And that is our topic for today's episode of College Bound-- all about Notre Dame traditions that involve current students. So, this isn't just something from the past; this is the current climate for traditions at Notre Dame.

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We are a tradition-rich university. We have been in existence at Notre Dame for over one hundred and seventy five years. So that is over one-hundred and seventy-five years of history and legends and lore and all of the traditions that come with the University of Notre Dame. One of those legends that we have is our nickname which is the "Fighting Irish." Now if you've heard of Notre Dame before, you know that Notre Dame or the University of Notre Dame du Lac has our official name is the "University of Our Lady of the Lake."

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The original language is French, and we had French priest come over from France to found our school. You're probably thinking, "How do we have a "Fighting Irish" nickname for our sports teams and for students who are at Notre Dame?" And the reason is because around a hundred or so years ago, a little bit after our football team started, there was a paper, the Detroit Free Press, that started this nickname. They were actually calling the Notre Dame football players a derogatory term.

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They recognized that there were a lot of students who were playing on Notre Dame's team that had come from the South Side of Chicago, as well as some Irish neighborhoods in other places and cities and towns close by the University of Notre Dame. So they were rough-and-tumble, Irish people had been known as a stereotype as ones to pick fights. So this paper claimed that the Irish team were just a bunch of fighting Irishmen, and we actually took the name and flipped the script and made it our mascot and our nickname for all of our sports teams, and really anybody who identifies as a student or an alum of the University of Notre Dame.

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And I think that's kind of a great story about kind of Notre Dame's immigrant past, and the way that Notre Dame really embraced something that was to be a racial and ethnic slur and took it as a point of pride and said "No- we're fighting for something something we're proud of," and now we talk a lot about "What would you fight for?" as it ties to our sports teams. Another fun story is the kind of legend of the

Gipper. So it said at Notre Dame that George Gipp ghost haunts Washington Hall, which is a theater on campus. George Gipp was a football player who played under Knute Rockne, and as the story goes, he was out late one night and actually missed curfew. Notre Dame does not have a curfew any longer, but the time Notre Dame did.

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And so he came out to campus found himself locked out and couldn't get into Washington Hall, so he decided to spend the night on the steps. It then said that he contracted pneumonia from that experience, and actually, unfortunately, died a little while later. Where the story and kind of the phrase "Win one for the Gipper" comes from is actually a little bit later. And so Notre Dame football team was playing against Army in 1928, and at halftime the team was losing, and Army, at the time, was a very strong football team. They were previously undefeated, and Rockne brings the team into the locker room at halftime, and he quotes what were supposedly George Gipp's dying words as Rockne told the story.

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George Gipp said "I've got to go, Rock. It's all right. I'm not afraid. Some time, Rock, when the team is up against it, when things are wrong and the breaks are beating the boys, ask them to go in there with all they've got and win just one for the Gipper. I don't know where I'll be by then, Rock. But I'll know about it, and I'll be happy." As the story goes, the Notre Dame football team came back from halftime all fired up, and came from behind to win the game. And that is where the "Win one for the Gipper" slogan came from, and we still say George Gipp's ghost haunts Washintgon Hall.

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Love that story, Maria, I almost teared up again listening to the speech that George Gipp gave to Knute Rockne, but a flipping a little bit toward some academic traditions from some ones you would hear from our athletic teams. We actually have a couple that are really funny to me, and they really encompass I think part of the collaboration and the great spirit of students at Notre Dame. We have many "quads" on campus where students live a lot of them are residential quad, so when their directional, North quad, South Quad, West quad was where my dorm was, but one of them that we so lovingly call is "God Quad." And that is the part of campus where we have the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, or cathedral on campus, as well as the Golden Dome, or our "Main Building, and then a few of the first dorms that we ever had on campus. So that is part of "God Quad." And one of the traditions that students hold to this day is that in your first year, you must not walk on the grass of God Quad.

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And the consequence would be that if you do, you will not pass your first theology class. As you might know, students at Notre Dame are required to take two semesters of theology class as part of our Catholic roots. And if you walk on the grass, you will not pass your first theology class again as little bit of law there and a tradition. So it also keeps our God Quad grass and the surrounding area very beautiful. Our grounds crew does a great job in keeping up all of campus, but especially God Quad. And also on God Quad, going a little bit later into your time at Notre Dame, we have many steps that go up to the main doors of the main building or the Golden Dome you'll see them, there's a big staircase that leads to the front door.

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And actually the tradition is that all students at Notre Dame will not walk up those steps until graduation day, or until you receive your diploma, because if you do walk up the steps, the notion is that you will not graduate on time. So nobody wants to mess with that one. So if you ever see students while you're on campus whenever you are able to get back to campus and see it, if you see current students walking to the side doors, and not walking up the main steps that's exactly why. Or maybe you've been on tours on campus before, and tour guides will walk down one level to go out the other steps, it's because they are

not allowed to walk on those steps. So I love that tradition. And that's again another great part of the camaraderie at Notre Dame. And Maria you also have a tradition that ties into graduation and graduation day, if you want to explain that one too.

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Yeah, I always loved the tradition of not being able to walk up and down the front steps of Main Building. I still enjoy it when we're able to walk into work, going up those front steps. It still really feels novel, but one of my last favorite traditions at Notre Dame actually relates to the dome itself. So it's called the "Golden Dome" for a reason; it actually is covered in real almost any 4 karat gold leaf. There are about eight total ounces of gold on the dome. So it's only about one cup of gold, and it's hammered out really really thinly, and every so often the Dome does have to be re-gilded or "re-golded," as the case may be.

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And when they do that, they don't waste that gold (although some of it you'll see in our players' helmets, which they've been able to seal in, so that's why those are so shiny), but each student's diploma actually has a little bit of gold from the dome on the diploma. So that's your piece of Notre Dame that you get to keep with you and keep forever. It's a beautiful landmark on campus, and it's one of the things that makes Notre Dame really recognizable, but to me, to keep that piece of the dome, wherever I go, has been a really special piece.

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There are a lot of other traditions at Notre Dame. Matt and I just picked a few I love. Other ones that pertain to the arch of Lyons Hall, there's one about walking the lakes, the residence halls have their own traditions, Game Day has a ton of traditions, but these are just you kind of fun pieces of Notre Dame legend and Notre Dame lore.

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We're really excited to spend the next couple of episodes talking more about "Why Notre Dame?" and the student experience, and to let you hear from some current students themselves. But in the meantime, if you'd like to connect with us, you can set us a message on Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat @NDAdmissions, or you can follow Notre Dame Admissions on Facebook.