In The Lion's Den

A private tour of the collection of Roaree enthusiast Michael Garrett '66CC, '69LAW, '70BUS

By Julia Rothman
Fall 2018 issue

Stepping inside the Park Slope, Brooklyn, townhouse that Michael Garrett '66CC, '69LAW, '70BUS, shares with his wife, Sandy, you are welcomed by the four thousand lions they’ve collected from their travels around the globe.

Lions are grouped by theme.

Lions with orbs sit on a small table in the living room. Lion candlesticks stand behind them.
"The paw on the orb symbolizes domination of the world."

Lions are also grouped by color.

"From China"

"From St. Petersburg, Russia"

"From Luxor, Egypt"

"From Delphi"
Garrett’s obsession started with a lion costume. When he arrived on campus his freshman year, he went to a sports orientation. At the time, women weren’t allowed on the field, and all the cheerleaders were men. “I remember seeing these wild guys with large cardboard megaphones doing gymnastics and having a great time. I wanted to join in.” As a sophomore, he became captain of the cheerleading team, which meant he got to wear the lion suit.

The costume was heavy cloth and covered in fur, seven feet tall with internal supports on the shoulders. There was a mesh section in the mouth to see out of. The Broadway costume shop that made it sewed a wine sack into the right arm so when Garrett waved to the crowd, he could take a sip.

“I met President Kennedy in that lion suit!”

Lions embellish dozens of ties.

“I wore suits for forty years in my legal career. So I tried to wear a lion tie every day. Some are silly, but others are exquisite. There’s Hermes and Ferragamo and Liberty of London...”

Sandy stitched this one for us with our initials!”

There are two reactions people have to a collection this size. They’re either fascinated by it or they think I’m nuts.”

Lions are embroidered on footstools.