LACUMBA!! Southern University and A&M College had the distinction of owning the ONLY live mascot at an Historical Black College and University [HBCU] in the Nation. Henry J. Bellaire, president of the 1961 senior class and Helen Williams presented the live Jaguar to the University as a gift. The JAGUAR, who belonged to the Southern University family, was gold with black spots, and is known as LACUMBA. Lacumba was born on May 26, 1971 and was purchased from the Baton Rouge Zoo for $450.00 on July 12, 1971. She took the reigns as the "head cat on the yard" that same year. Her mother was born in Pensacola, Florida and her father was born in Utah. On August 16, 1991, Lacumba retired to the Acadiana Zoo in Broussard, LA.

The first jaguar was succeeded by Lacumba II, who was born on May 12, 1991. She was the offspring of a black female jaguar and a black male jaguar in the hopes of having a black Lacumba, however, the end product was a brown cat. She could often be seen eating her specially prepared diet, roaming her cage and resting in her water pool which is located behind the A.W. Mumford Football stadium on Harding Blvd next to the Tennis Courts. The 15-year-old 200-pound Lacumba II died of kidney failure on December 26, 2004 as a result of old age. Lacumba whose name means “Heart of Africa”.

Source: Archives and Manuscripts Department, John B. Cade Library, Southern University and A&M College.