

history of the homecoming mum

The Rich History of the Homecoming Mum: A Texas Tradition Unfolded

history of the homecoming mum is a fascinating journey into one of the most unique and spirited high school traditions in the United States, particularly rooted in Texas culture. These elaborate floral creations have evolved from simple corsages into extravagant symbols of school pride, friendship, and romance, worn proudly during homecoming festivities each fall. Tracing the origins and development of the homecoming mum offers a glimpse into how youthful enthusiasm, regional customs, and creativity blend to form a living piece of cultural heritage.

The Origins of the Homecoming Mum

The story of the homecoming mum begins in the early 20th century, closely tied to the tradition of homecoming celebrations at American high schools and colleges. Homecoming itself, a time for alumni to return and celebrate their school spirit, dates back to the 1910s. Alongside football games and parades, flowers became a popular way to mark the occasion.

From Simple Corsages to Floral Mums

Originally, mums were simple corsages given to homecoming dates or worn by students attending the game or dance. The chrysanthemum flower, or “mum,” was chosen for its hardy nature and availability during the fall season. Corsages were modest, often consisting of a single bloom pinned to a jacket or dress.

However, Texas high schools began to put their own twist on this floral accessory. By the mid-20th century, mums started to grow in size and complexity, reflecting the larger-than-life spirit of Texas culture. What was once a small corsage blossomed into a large, decorative floral arrangement with ribbons, trinkets, and even lights.

How the Homecoming Mum Tradition Took Root in Texas

Though the homecoming mum is celebrated in various forms across the United States, Texas is widely recognized as the heartland of this tradition. The state’s deep love for football, combined with its bold sense of style and community pride, helped transform the mum into a cultural phenomenon.

High School Spirit and Creativity

Texas high school students began competing to create the most elaborate mums, incorporating school colors, mascots, and personal symbols. This competition fueled a tradition of customization that continues today. Each mum tells a story – about the wearer’s school, their friends, or their date – through the choice of ribbons, charms, and decorations.

The Role of Mums in Social and Romantic Rituals

Homecoming mums have long been a way to express affection and camaraderie. Boys often give mums to their dates, while friends exchange smaller versions called “garters,” which are worn on the arm. This social ritual adds a layer of meaning to the floral tradition, making mums a token of friendship, love, or school pride.

The Evolution of Mum Designs Over the Decades

Over the years, the history of the homecoming mum reveals a fascinating evolution in design and scale. What began as a modest flower has become an impressive work of art, sometimes weighing several pounds and adorned with an array of accessories.

Materials and Decorations

Today’s mums can include:

- Artificial and real chrysanthemums
- Colorful ribbons with glitter and sequins
- LED lights and feathers
- Personalized charms featuring the wearer’s name, grade, or hobbies
- Miniature footballs, bells, stuffed animals, and even candy

This growth in complexity reflects both advances in crafting materials and the increasing importance placed on standing out during homecoming events.

Size and Scale

Measuring anywhere from 12 inches to over 24 inches in diameter, modern mums can be quite large and heavy. Some students carry their mums in specially made boxes or hang them around their necks using sturdy ribbons. The bigger and more elaborate the mum, the more it symbolizes the wearer's school spirit and social status.

Regional Variations and Similar Traditions

While Texas is the epicenter of the homecoming mum tradition, similar customs exist elsewhere, though often less pronounced.

Garters and Floral Accessories

In many schools outside Texas, students wear smaller floral corsages or boutonnieres during homecoming events. The concept of garters, which are decorative wristbands exchanged among friends, is closely linked to the mum tradition and has spread to other regions, albeit on a smaller scale.

Why Texas Stands Out

The sheer size, creativity, and passion behind Texas mums set them apart. This is due in part to Texas' larger-than-life cultural identity and the significant role that high school football plays in communities across the state. The mum has become a way for students to showcase their identity, creativity, and school loyalty, making it an integral part of the homecoming experience.

Tips for Creating Your Own Homecoming Mum

If you're inspired by the history of the homecoming mum and want to craft one yourself, here are some helpful tips to get started:

- **Start with a sturdy base:** Use a large circular backer made of foam or cardboard to support all the decorations.
- **Choose your colors wisely:** Incorporate your school colors prominently to express pride.
- **Mix real and artificial flowers:** Real mums provide authenticity, while

artificial flowers add durability and color variety.

- **Add personal touches:** Use charms, trinkets, and ribbons that represent your interests or relationship.
- **Consider balance and weight:** Keep the mum manageable to wear comfortably during the event.
- **Use hot glue or floral wire:** Secure decorations firmly to avoid pieces falling off throughout the day.

The Cultural Impact of the Homecoming Mum Tradition

The history of the homecoming mum is more than just about flowers – it's a vibrant expression of community, identity, and youthful celebration. These mums have become a way for students to connect with their peers, celebrate milestones, and carry on a beloved tradition that ties generations together.

In many Texas towns, mums are crafted by local florists who specialize in these arrangements, turning the season into a booming business and a source of local pride. The tradition also encourages creativity, craftsmanship, and social bonding, making it an enduring part of high school culture.

Whether you're a student preparing for your first homecoming or someone curious about regional American traditions, understanding the history of the homecoming mum offers a window into the heart of Texas high school spirit – where flowers, friendship, and football come together in a colorful, joyful celebration.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the origin of the homecoming mum tradition?

The homecoming mum tradition originated in Texas in the early 20th century as a way for students to show school spirit and celebrate homecoming events.

Why are mums associated with homecoming celebrations?

Mums became associated with homecoming because they are traditional symbols of honor and celebration, making them a fitting emblem for school pride during homecoming festivities.

How did the design of homecoming mums evolve over time?

Homecoming mums evolved from simple single chrysanthemums with ribbons into elaborate creations featuring multiple flowers, trinkets, bells, and personalized decorations.

When did the practice of exchanging mums between dates begin?

The exchange of mums between homecoming dates began around the mid-20th century as a romantic gesture and a way to showcase school spirit together.

What cultural significance do homecoming mums hold in Texas?

In Texas, homecoming mums are a significant cultural tradition reflecting community pride, school identity, and social connections during the homecoming season.

How large can homecoming mums get in modern times?

Modern homecoming mums can be very large and elaborate, sometimes measuring over two feet in diameter and decorated with numerous accessories and lights.

Are homecoming mums unique to Texas?

While homecoming mums are most popular and elaborately practiced in Texas, similar flower traditions exist in other states but are generally less prominent.

What materials are commonly used in making homecoming mums today?

Today, homecoming mums are made using artificial chrysanthemums, ribbons, beads, bells, stuffed animals, LED lights, and personalized charms to create unique and festive designs.

Additional Resources

****The History of the Homecoming Mum: From Tradition to Modern Extravaganza****

history of the homecoming mum is a fascinating journey through American cultural traditions, particularly rooted in the Southern United States. This unique accessory, now a vibrant symbol of school spirit and teenage celebration, has evolved significantly over the past century. The homecoming

mum, a decorative corsage typically worn during high school homecoming events, reflects deep-seated customs, regional pride, and an ever-changing fashion landscape. Understanding its origins and development sheds light on broader social dynamics and the ways in which youthful expression adapts over time.

Origins of the Homecoming Mum Tradition

The history of the homecoming mum traces back to the early 20th century, with its beginnings linked to the American homecoming celebrations that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s. Homecoming itself was initially a college football tradition, designed to welcome alumni back to campus and foster school spirit. Corsages and boutonnieres, common formal accessories for dances and ceremonies, naturally became a part of these events.

The chrysanthemum flower, or “mum,” was chosen for its late bloom in the fall, coinciding with homecoming season, and for its symbolic meanings of loyalty and longevity. Early mums were simple floral arrangements, generally modest and elegant, worn primarily by female students attending dances or accompanying football games.

The Southern Influence and Early Popularity

While homecoming events were widespread across the United States, the homecoming mum as a distinct cultural artifact took root most firmly in Texas and the Southern states. Here, the tradition grew beyond a small floral accessory to become a prominent part of high school social life.

By the mid-20th century, mums had evolved from simple corsages to elaborate creations featuring ribbons, trinkets, and personalized charms. This transformation coincided with the rise of homecoming royalty competitions and pep rallies, where display of school spirit became increasingly competitive and expressive.

Evolution and Cultural Significance

As the decades passed, the history of the homecoming mum became intertwined with notions of identity, community, and celebration. The mum evolved from a modest floral adornment into an extravagant statement piece, often rivaling prom attire in complexity and size.

From Floral Corsage to Decorative Extravaganza

Starting in the 1950s and 1960s, the homecoming mum began to incorporate a variety of materials beyond flowers. Ribbons bearing school colors, glitter, bells, stuffed animals, and even LED lights became common additions. This shift reflected broader trends in American youth culture—particularly the emphasis on personalization, creativity, and social display.

Today, mums can range from small, wearable corsages to massive, multi-layered accessories that drape over the wearer's shoulder and down their arm. These modern mums often include:

- Multiple flowers and ribbons in school colors
- Personalized name tags and charms
- Miniature footballs, teddy bears, or themed trinkets
- Bells, lights, and other noise-making elements

This evolution highlights how the homecoming mum has become a form of self-expression and social currency among high school students, particularly in Texas where the tradition is most pronounced.

Regional Variations and Contemporary Practices

While Texas remains the epicenter of the homecoming mum phenomenon, similar traditions have spread to other parts of the Southern U.S., though often with less extravagance. In some regions, the mum is still worn as a small corsage or boutonniere, maintaining the original intent of commemorating homecoming events with elegance.

The commercialization of homecoming mums has also grown substantially. Local florists and specialty shops have capitalized on demand by offering customized designs, often at considerable cost. This commercialization has sparked debate about the pros and cons of the tradition—while it fosters school spirit and creativity, it can also create financial pressure on families to keep up with increasingly elaborate mum trends.

Social and Economic Impact of the Homecoming Mum

The history of the homecoming mum is not only about fashion or tradition but

also touches on social dynamics and economic factors within high school communities.

Symbolism and Social Status

In many schools, the size and complexity of a homecoming mum have become a symbol of social standing or popularity. The more elaborate the mum, the greater the perceived status of the wearer. This phenomenon parallels other teenage social markers, such as prom dresses or smartphones.

This aspect of the tradition has both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, it encourages creativity and school spirit; on the other, it risks fostering competition and financial strain.

Economic Considerations

The production of homecoming mums supports a niche market of florists, craft suppliers, and accessory vendors, especially in Texas. Some reports indicate that families can spend anywhere from \$50 to several hundred dollars on a single mum, depending on the materials and craftsmanship involved.

This economic impact underscores the mum's role beyond mere decoration—it has become an industry that sustains local businesses and shapes community economies during the fall season.

Comparisons with Other Homecoming Traditions

The homecoming mum stands out among other American homecoming customs for its visual prominence and cultural specificity. Unlike more uniform practices such as wearing school colors or attending dances, the mum offers a highly personalized and tangible form of participation.

In contrast, other regions may favor simpler traditions like homecoming sashes, boutonnieres, or themed apparel without the elaborate handmade or purchased items seen in Texas. This distinction highlights regional cultural differences and the way traditions evolve in localized contexts.

The Role of Gender and Modern Adaptations

Historically, mums were predominantly worn by female students, with males wearing smaller boutonnieres. However, modern iterations have blurred these lines, with some males opting for mums and others wearing increasingly decorated boutonnieres.

Additionally, some schools and communities have adapted the tradition to be more inclusive, allowing for personalized expressions regardless of gender norms.

Preservation and Future of the Homecoming Mum Tradition

As the homecoming mum continues to evolve, its history serves as a foundation for understanding how traditions adapt to new cultural landscapes. The balance between maintaining heritage and embracing innovation will likely shape the mum's future.

Increasing awareness of financial and social equity issues may lead to more inclusive and affordable mum options. Furthermore, digital media and social networking have amplified the visibility of mums, turning them into viral symbols of school pride and youth culture.

The history of the homecoming mum is thus a dynamic narrative, combining elements of tradition, creativity, community identity, and commercial enterprise. It exemplifies how a simple floral corsage has grown into a multifaceted cultural phenomenon with deep regional roots and continuing relevance in American high school life.

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history of the homecoming mum: Second Chance Season Emily March, 2024-11-05 From a New York Times bestselling author, a heartwarming story about secrets, sisters, and the enduring power of family ties. Zoey Hillcrest thought the hard part was over once she and her fiancé, Cooper, settled on a venue for their destination wedding. But as the date approaches, Zoey faces professional burnout, her estranged mother's terminal illness, and a worrisome distance from her fiancé. When presented with a excuse to return to Colorado, she flees to the peaceful lakeside hotel to figure out what she truly wants in life. After all the hard work Genevieve Prentice and her sister Helen McDaniel put into renovating their rustic waterfront lodge, the two finally have time to take a breath and celebrate the lives they've built in Lake in the Clouds, Colorado. Then a chance run-in with their latest bride turns their lives upside down. Helen has never laid eyes on Zoey before, but something about her feels familiar. And when the three women uncover a devastating family secret, they must make peace with the past in order to fully embrace what the future has to offer.

history of the homecoming mum: Robbie F. Woods, Entrepreneur Victoria King Heinsen, 2023-01-03 Robbie F. Woods, entrepreneur, is a wheeler and dealer in the world of real estate and business. A darned nice guy, he does his best to overcome obstacles Fate seems to haphazardly hurl his way. Sitting in jail too often and being accused of a murder come to mind. Golfing adventures, misadventures, and former high school escapades somehow occasionally block his path, although he manages to circumvent them in one way or another. A bachelor by preference, he winds up with a family of cats and groundhogs but still longs for the stability of marriage and children. With the considerable help of his sister, Jessica, an attorney, his brother-in-law, Ken, a dentist, and his father figure, Chris, Robbie manages more often than not to successfully tackle the ineffable striving that plagues some of his dreams. He does so with aplomb, a good heart, and a round or two of golf on a summer night. That and an occasional visit to a covered bridge in Wyandot County.

history of the homecoming mum: The Seasons of Alzheimer's Katy Ellefson, 2017-03-22 In the afternoon, we went to the Salvation Army warehouse to help wrap gifts for children in need. Mom and I enjoyed our afternoon. I put Mom's hand in place to hold the paper, and I would hurry to get the tape on before she lost grip. Mom repeatedly asked, Who are the presents for? I repeatedly said, They are for children and families in need. Mom was happy all over again. On the way home, I decided to stop at the health food store. I only needed a couple of items, and there was a parking space close to the store. Mom said she was too tired to go in and wanted to wait in the car. I agreed, and it would be quicker for me to go in alone. She was buckled in her seatbelt and hadn't yet remembered how to unbuckle it. I was confident Mom would be fine. I locked her in the car and told her I would be back in five minutes. I grabbed the items I needed, peeked out the window, saw Mom in the car, and proceeded to the checkout. There was one customer ahead of me. Checkout went fast, and I rushed out to the car. Mom was gone! I panicked like never before. I wanted to scream. My mind raced. What should I do? Should I call the police? I cried, Where did Mom go?

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history of the homecoming mum: Our Bodies Tell the Story Emily J. Klein, Monica Taylor, 2022-12-29 2024 SPE Outstanding Book Award Honorable Mention Our Bodies Tell the Story: Using Feminist Research and Friendship to Reimagine Education and Our Lives asks (and answers) a number of critical questions that are key to improving our educational system. How can we use our embodied stories to navigate and disrupt how schools and society reproduce the patriarchy and heteronormativity within our institutions of learning? How do we transgress oppressive boundaries (boundaries cultivated by the patriarchy that have been perpetuated at home, within school, outside of school, in university settings, and in communities) that permit our dehumanization and exclusion?

As teachers, professors, and teacher educators, how do we navigate our students' trauma when we are navigating the re-ignition of our own? This book sets out to tell the story of how the authors have tried to answer these questions in their lives and work. It is the story of a friendship, a partnership, a narrative retelling of their "becoming" as girls, teenagers, women, teachers, wives, daughters, scholars, and mothers. From the earliest memories of their gendered and sexualized childhoods to the present navigation of sexism, heteronormativity, and trauma in the context of teaching and schools, these stories reside in their bodies. They recall, construct, and reexamine, emerging from their dialogues—from talking face-to-face, to email, to FB messenger, poetry, and text. *Our Bodies Tell the Story* centers around the co/autoethnography of personal narratives, stories, and a kind of survival testimonies, the ways in which the authors bore witness to each other's lives. The book extensively uses co/autoethnography as a self-study feminist research methodology that takes autoethnography, "a form of self-representation that complicates cultural norms by seeing autobiography as implicated in larger cultural processes" (Taylor & Coia, 2006, p. 278) and moves it beyond the singular to the plural. Using this methodology enables the authors to interweave their stories through dialogue, so that validity, insight, and analysis all emerge in the text. The book investigates the self within the social context of personal relationships, as well as the larger society. Creating a co/autoethnography is a rich, multi-layered endeavor because it is not conducted in a vacuum. As such, it is an important book for faculty and researchers involved in a number of disciplines, including auto/ethnographic research, gender studies, women's studies, feminist studies, qualitative research and many other areas of study. Perfect for courses such as: Gender and Education | Public Purposes of Schooling | Introduction to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies | Critical Feminisms in Teacher Education | Gender Issues in Teacher Education

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history of the homecoming mum: *The Secret History of the Five Eyes* Richard Kerbaj, 2022-09-01 'A seminal history' - The Wall Street Journal 'Gripping and shocking' - Tim Shipman, author of *All Out War* 'An extraordinary development' - The Times 'An impressively detailed account of a remarkable alliance' - Jeremy Bowen, The New Statesman 'A remarkable book . . . delves into the fascinating individuals involved.' Daily Beast THE TIMES BEST POLITICAL BOOKS OF 2022 Despite being one of the world's most powerful intelligence networks, the Five Eyes has been steeped in secrecy since its formation in 1956. The international intelligence collaboration between Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, has shaped global events since its inception - and continues to do so to this day. Over eight decades, the alliance's agencies, including the CIA, FBI, MI5, MI6, GCHQ, and ASIO, have swapped secrets and tradecraft, and pooled resources. From Nazi hunters and World War II codebreakers, to spymasters and political leaders embroiled in the recent security crisis around Russia and Ukraine, they have shared a common purpose and common enemy, in spite of a mutual mistrust. In this revised and updated edition, Richard Kerbaj expertly weaves together stories of this extraordinary alliance and the unlikely cast of characters who have played a crucial role in its history. Impeccably researched and including interviews with world leaders and intelligence officials, *The Secret History of the Five Eyes* is a major contribution to the

literature of international intelligence. _____ 'Reveals in great detail how the U.S. intelligence community closed ranks during Trump's first term in office.' The Wall Street Journal 'The story of this non-binding marriage of convenience through its most compelling personalities.' The Globe and Mail 'This thought-provoking and informative book suggests that the era of globetrotting lone agents such as James Bond is long gone.' - Sydney Morning Herald 'The stories Kerbaj tells reveal ... a story of failure - of missing warnings that could have prevented atrocities, of misusing intelligence to start a war' - Observer 'Scintillating ... full of scoops ... by focusing on the human relationships which are the beating heart of the Five Eyes, Kerbaj has made a singular contribution to the intelligence discourse. It's a service to democracy.' - The Australian 'Kerbaj ... has chronicled the history of the Fives Eyes spy network. His list of interviewees speaks for itself - several former heads of MI5, MI6, GCHQ, the CIA, four former British and Australian prime ministers, and myriad other current and former spooks. But this account is unencumbered by any sense of an agreed or official narrative (the usual price for this level of journalistic access).' - Gabriel Pogrund, Whitehall Editor, The Sunday Times 'Sensational' - Nigel Nelson, Political Editor, The Mirror 'An impressively detailed account of a remarkable alliance' - Jeremy Bowen, The New Statesman 'Examines decades of intelligence sharing' - The Telegraph 'Reopen[s] the debate' - The Times 'Explosive' - The World News

history of the homecoming mum: *Blue Walls Falling Down* Joshua Hren, 2024-10-05 Stella Tęsknota was ready to marry Blake Yourrick, the troubled if earnest protagonist of *Infinite Regress*. In this stand-alone novel (and loose sequel), set after Blake abruptly—and inexplicably—breaks off their engagement, Stella throws herself into a tough South Chicago teaching assignment. There she meets Peter Clavier (P.C.), a psychologist-activist whose uncle—a pastor—has long prophesied for Peter a future of otherworldly greatness. As Stella draws out Peter's past, the novel follows P.C.'s trajectory from a Cabrini-Green childhood to surreal stardom in the orbit of underwritten radical politics. When his boss offers Peter a marquee microphone and he moves to D.C., Stella returns home to Milwaukee in search of steady ground. She finds her self-sacrificing father hosting basement meetings that mix nostalgia and conspiracy. In the confluence of comfort and catastrophe, Stella is invited to wager on faith. Written with a style and sensibility that have been compared to David Foster Wallace and Dostoevsky, James Joyce and Saul Bellow, *Blue Walls Falling Down* chronicles the eternal questions that agitate our subterranean frequencies and demand more than the human spirit can give or answer alone.

history of the homecoming mum: *No Time for Horses* Shannon Kennedy, 2013-10-21 Sixteen-year-old Vicky Miller feels overloaded since her parents filed for divorce. Her mother got the house and a new job. Her step-dad has the new car and a new girlfriend. Vicky has the five kids, her younger half-brothers and sisters who range from 18 months to 10 years old to look after and her own life now comes second to their needs and wants. It's been six months of house-cleaning, baby-sitting, cooking, non-stop laundry and Vicky is through waiting for her life to improve. She has plans for her sophomore year at Lincoln High and they don't include being an unpaid servant. If it takes a constant battle to attend her riding classes and complete her internship at Shamrock Stable, she's ready to fight for her goal to be the best natural horse trainer around. Her parents may not have time for her to be with horses, but she has dreams no one can steal. Why should she give them away? But will keeping them mean she loses her family?

history of the homecoming mum: *Encyclopedia of Television Film Directors* Jerry Roberts, 2009-06-05 From live productions of the 1950s like *Requiem for a Heavyweight* to big budget mini-series like *Band of Brothers*, long-form television programs have been helmed by some of the most creative and accomplished names in directing. *Encyclopedia of Television Film Directors* brings attention to the directors of these productions, citing every director of stand alone long-form television programs: made for TV movies, movie-length pilots, mini-series, and feature-length anthology programs, as well as drama, comedy, and musical specials of more than 60 minutes. Each of the nearly 2,000 entries provides a brief career sketch of the director, his or her notable works, awards, and a filmography. Many entries also provide brief discussions of key shows, movies, and

other productions. Appendixes include Emmy Awards, DGA Awards, and other accolades, as well as a list of anthology programs. A much-needed reference that celebrates these often-neglected artists, Encyclopedia of Television Film Directors is an indispensable resource for anyone interested in the history of the medium.

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the trail of one immigrant's untold story, is that of the author's strange 1960s childhood of social isolation in a Midlands city, obsessed with a world seen through TV - and with the Beatles.

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