

Remembering a sweet victory

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After beating BYU in the Liberty Bowl in Memphis on Dec. 31, 1998, members of the undefeated Green Wave team celebrate. The 1998 team will be recognized in Yulman Stadium at the Sept. 8 game vs. Nicholls State. (Photo from Tulane University Archives)

When the Tulane football team went from a dismal 2-9 record in 1996 to an impressive 7-4 record under first-year coach Tommy Bowden the following year, offensive tackle Bernard Robertson III was certain the team would be headed to a bowl game.

He was wrong. He was also shocked and angry, as were his teammates.

“It hurt,” said Robertson, a New Orleans native who played high school ball at Edna Karr. “That carried over to the off-season and into training camp. Little did we know that hurt would be the fuel that produced the drive for the entire ’98 season.”

It was that legendary season that had the Green Wave winning every single game. They didn’t just beat their opponents, they clobbered them, scoring at least 40 points in nine of their 12 games. They won the Liberty Bowl and finished the season ranked seventh in the country.

On Sept. 8, 2018, Tulane Athletics will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 1998 team during the Green Wave’s matchup with Nicholls State at Yulman Stadium.

Robertson, who went on to play with the NFL’s Chicago Bears, Buffalo Bills and Oakland Raiders, will be among the players and coaches in attendance.

Now an investment consultant, Robertson says he looks forward to gathering with his 1998 teammates and thanking Tulane Athletics for recognizing the team and its contribution to Tulane football history.

He looks forward to the reminiscences about the passion of the team galvanized by missing out on a bowl game the year before.

“It was the transformation of Tulane football from a team that was scheduled for other programs’ homecomings to a National Championship contender.

“We let all of that hurt out on our opponents, and it felt good,” he said. “The magic was there.”

Editor’s note: This article appeared first in the [June 2018 issue of Tulane magazine](#).

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— Bernard Robertson III