

## Tulane alumni own top dog

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On Sunday morning (Jan. 27), King Jacques Miller Wallis woke early for a light yoga session and long walk, had his cape pressed and crown polished, and snacked on some homemade peanut butter biscuits, before his owners snapped on his leash to escort him to the French Quarter, where this five-year-old Vizsla reigned as King Barkus XXI.



Tulane alumni Bruce and Virginia Wallis say that Jacques gracefully handled the switch from common dog to sovereign ruler as king of the Krewe of Barkus. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Each Carnival season, the Mystic Krewe of Barkus brings hundreds of dogs to parade the Quarter streets in tail-wagging solidarity to partake in pooch pageantry that benefits local animal charities.

Barkus' 2013 theme was "Tails & Tiaras: Here Comes Honey Bow Wow." Despite the nod to reality TV shows and their turbulent tales, Jacques' parents, Tulane alumni Bruce (MBA, 1999) and Virginia Wallis (Newcomb, 1989) say that Jacques gracefully handled the switch from common dog to sovereign ruler.

Jacques exhibits no pretense toward his sister, a donkey named Tula (after Tulane)

whom he visits in Mississippi on weekends. And even with a fancy ball at the Windsor Court Hotel, press interviews and his regal face on a commemorative cup at the Dat Dog fundraiser, he still acknowledges Cleo, his 19-year-old feline companion, as the rightful ruler of the household.

It's not just Jacques' humility that makes him a good king, it's also his love for New Orleans. Jacques was born in a cold Northern climate where, according to Virginia Wallis, "there was no jazz, no crab and no oysters." Once he moved here, the abundance of music and seafood lent to his deep appreciation for the city and helped mold his noble character.

"He's egalitarian, he's kind and he's friendly," Virginia proudly says. "He's more of a man of the people than a king."

King Jacques proved worthy of this high praise. After our interview, he graciously licked my hand, before bounding off to play with dozens of his new four-legged friends.