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New Orleanian Louellen Berger has many skeletons in the closet. Literally. The last count showed her inventory was more than 50 (a number that surprised both her and her husband, Darryl, a Tulane law alumnus and member of the Board of Tulane). Halloween revelers appreciate their bone-chilling but humorous collection.



Louellen Berger's newest Halloween “visitor,” Little Orphan Annie, could be singing “To-Marrow, To-Marrow, I Love Ya, To-Marrow.” The Bergers' annual display is a Halloween favorite. (Photo by Sally Asher)

What started out eight years ago with the placement of two skeletons in the tree in front of the Bergers' stately Saint Charles Avenue home at the corner of State Street has evolved into an elaborate display, featuring dozens of skeletons in a variety of poses and costumes that elicit more delight than fright.

Berger plans year round for her front yard to be transformed into a satirical skeleton graveyard, which hosts many well-known characters: a white-tuxedoed skeleton named “Saturday Night Femur,” Harry Potter riding his broom in “Deathly Hallows” and a new skeleton inspired by a suggestion from a fan letter addressed to “Mrs. Bones”: Little Orphan Annie. However, this little Broadway star adorned in her signature red curls optimistically sings, “To-Marrow, To-Marrow, I Love Ya, To-

Marrow.”

Locals are particularly entertained by Berger's nod to New Orleans culture: Die-Hard Saints Fans, Morgus the Magnificent, TromBONE Shorty, and a waving skeleton couple perched on a Mardi Gras ladder named “End of the Parade.”

Picking her favorite skeleton is as difficult as choosing her favorite grandchild. Instead, Berger enjoys the reactions from visitors of all ages who pause in front of her gate to chuckle and take pictures. “It's all about making people, particularly children, laugh and be happy, not scared, over Halloween.”

Berger expects to receive 1,200 trick-or-treaters this year, evident by the boxes of candy stacked high near her front door. With Berger's charm and creativity on display, the house is probably one of the few where young ghouls and goblins look forward more to the tricks than they do the treats.