

Queen for a day

February 11, 2015 11:00 AM Allison Hjortsberg, Queen Freret IV
ahjortsb@tulane.edu



My Mardi Gras float turns onto St. Charles Avenue and a wall of parade-goers nearly 10 people deep all start shouting at me to throw them something ? beads, tiaras, doubloons featuring pictures of me, custom-made masks. The moment is so incredible that I immediately count it among my top 10 life experiences.

In 2012 my husband, Bobby Hjortsberg, and six of his friends started the new [Krewe of Freret](#). On Saturday (Feb. 7), he and I reigned as King IV and Queen IV and rode floats in the most beautiful Carnival-season weather I can remember.

My day began at 6:30 a.m. with seven other people rushing to get ready for the day ahead ? a chaotic scene in my two-bedroom, two-bathroom house. After a four-hour beautification process that mostly included an army of people ensuring my extremely large and top-heavy crown would stay on my head, we were finally on our way.

We piled into a limousine, and were escorted by an NOPD motorcycle unit down the avenue to wave at the crowds and to meet the rest of the krewe. During the hours while we were waiting to roll, I was able to catch up with old friends, meet new faces, and even sneak in a champagne toast or two.

Then at 2:30 p.m., the real fun began. I was very fortunate to have four of my closest friends on my float, and we spent nearly three hours tossing custom-made throws to the thousands of parade-goers, finding friends and family in the crowds, dancing to the marching bands, and soaking in the moment. It was a day that I'll never forget.

Some people wait their whole lives for the opportunity I received last Saturday, and I feel so fortunate to have spent it with such a wonderful group of people. I'm already counting down the days until next year's parade. All Hail Krewe of Freret!

Allison Hjortsberg is a communications specialist in the Office of Development Communications.