Redsuits are one of the longest standing traditions within the Faculty of Engineering. From welcome week antics to raising money for local charities, they are recognized nationwide for their impassioned enthusiasm and outgoing nature. Here is the long-forgotten story of how redsuits began.

A long time ago, before Eric Ritter began his eternal journey through McMaster Engineering, the relatively small cohort of engineers was infamous for being outrageous disturbers of the peace. However, in the summer of 1985, a group of young men with a vision radically changed the face of McMaster Engineering forever. The first Orientation Chairman of the MES, Mark “Hutch” Huttram, pursued his dream of campus being irrefutably dominated by his band of boisterous engineers by purchasing twenty pairs of vibrant red coveralls. The purpose of the red “covies” was simple: to be a visual symbol for McMaster Engineering supremacy. Hutch interviewed a number of engineering students for a spot on his orientation team, choosing only unquestionable leaders within the engineering community to receive their “redsuit”. Simultaneously, the MES President, Michael Kukhta, was working tirelessly to implement a downtown pub-crawl as an official frosh week event. After consultation with McMaster Security and the Hamilton-Wentworth Police, they decided that with an appropriate parade permit, the pub-crawl could take place under one condition. There needed to be a visible group of individuals trained to be able to anticipate and dissipate problems. As if destined by fate, Michael and Hutch were able to combine their extraordinary initiatives and from that day on, the undying tradition of “Frosh Controllers” was born.

The following year the band of twenty leaders more than doubled in size. Hutch was appointed the MES Orientation Chairman for a second term, and had the opportunity to unite fifty outstanding Frosh Controllers in the name of engineering notoriety. The Redsuits’ escapades appeared to have a stranglehold over the Hamilton Spectator’s headlines for years, most notably with the “Lake McMaster” picture currently hanging in the McMaster Engineering Society office. A sword was bought to knight, or “graduate”, the frosh after Bus Pull, an enduring tradition where both Frosh Controllers and frosh literally pull a bus through downtown Hamilton to raise money for cystic fibrosis.

The goal of Hutch’s redsuits was to demonstrate a complete dominance over all other faculties on campus. He was ecstatic when hearing his vision had grown into a culture dedicated to being the loudest, and more importantly, being the proudest students on campus. Today we have hundreds of students try out annually for the opportunity to welcome incoming first years as a “Frosh Controller”, and we work diligently to continue many of the traditions started by the orientation teams before us.

By nature, redsuit culture is extremely vulnerable to transitional changes when experienced redsuits graduate every year. It is our responsibility as a society to keep in contact with our roots and heritage to never lose sight of the original mission. We must strive to always be the best, proudest, and most noticeable faction on campus; pushing boundaries for as long as we can.