

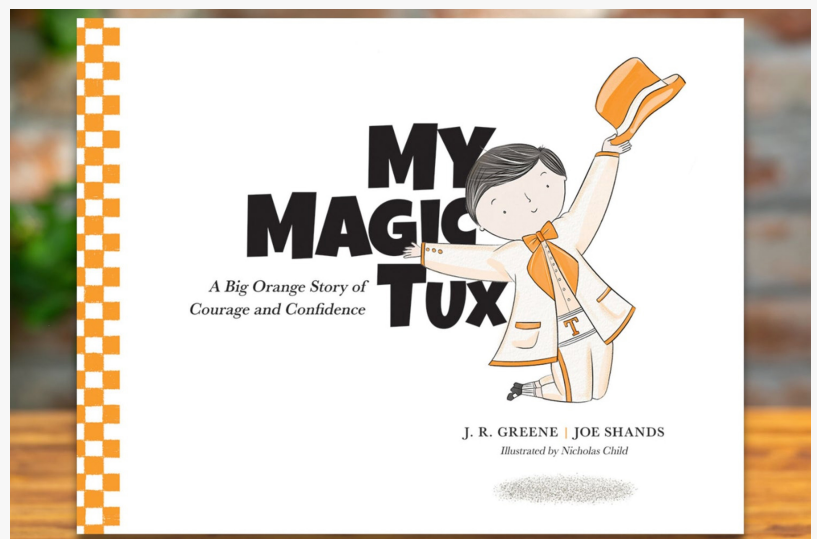
UT Press Publishes First Children's Picture Book: 'My Magic Tux' by J. R. Greene and Joe Shands

"My Magic Tux: A Big Orange Story of Courage and Confidence" is available wherever books are sold.

NASHVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, August 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The University of Tennessee (UT) Press is turning a new page, officially debuting its first-ever children's picture book: "My Magic Tux: A Big Orange Story of Courage and Confidence."

Based on a true story covered by ESPN, "My Magic Tux" is authored by J.R. Greene, also known in Rocky Top lore as the "Big Orange Tux Guy," who ran onto the field with the UT football team while donning an orange-and-white tuxedo at the 1998 national championship game.

Greene, dubbed the "ultimate party crasher" in ESPN's coverage, worked with coauthor and storyteller Joe Shands and award-winning illustrator Nicholas Childs to create the first children's picture book ever published by UT Press and the first title in the academic press's new children's publishing program. The book shares a story of courage, confidence and being yourself, perfect for preschool- and elementary school-aged children and readers of all ages. Greene describes the book as "a reminder of how one brave action can change everything."



"My Magic Tux" Cover (photo courtesy of UT Press)



JR Greene and Tuxie Read "My Magic Tux" to Children (photo courtesy of JR Greene)

"I was a 24-year-old student working on my master's degree at UT," Greene said. "My family had season tickets going back to the 1930s when my great-grandfather, John T. O'Connor – nicknamed "Punch" from his Irish boxing roots – was the mayor of Knoxville. Needless to say, I never planned on being on that field in Tempe, Arizona, for the Fiesta Bowl, but that is what happened. I became the Big Orange Tux Guy, and this book is a reminder how one brave moment can change everything."



J.R. Greene and Tuxie meet and sign books for fans (photo courtesy JR Greene)

"My hope is that young readers are equally inspired – to believe in themselves, embrace what makes them different and discover the magic they can create in their own lives."

"My Magic Tux" is the No. 1 pre-selling book in the history of UT Press. It's available in bookstores and online and in both hardcover and ebook formats. Book proceeds and 100% of Greene's royalties will support UT Libraries to help fund literacy, education and lifelong learning, as well as the planned future development of a new charitable entity and awards program focused on supporting courage and confidence in children. Historically, the University of Tennessee Press has specialized in publishing scholarly books, so this expansion into children's literature represents a new opportunity to reach all Tennesseans.

"UT's land-grant mission includes a commitment to lifelong learning, and books are the gateway for young children to become curious and lifelong readers," UT Press Director Katie Hannah said. "Publishing children's books like "My Magic Tux" provides UT Press an avenue to reach new audiences and introduce them to the full catalog of our work, which preserves and promotes the rich cultural and intellectual heritage of Tennessee and the region. We're excited about this foray into children's literature that, combined with our traditional program of scholarly and regional-interest publications, allows us to cultivate the Volunteer experience for readers of all ages."

Set against a checkerboard backdrop of Vol legend and beautifully illustrated, "My Magic Tux" is a collector's item as a unique "tête-bêche book" – French for "head-to-tail" – featuring a binding style that combines two books into one. Once readers finish the first half of the story, they flip the book over at "halftime" to read the second half.

"One of the most memorable experiences in my life was running onto the field with the Vols

football team for the national championship game,” Greene said. “Publishing a book about that story is now one of my greatest experiences because children can read it and realize they can do anything.”

At the book launch on UT campus on July 28, UT Academic and Press leadership, Greene, former players and their families, and additional UT staff and alumni celebrated the book – and met the new book mascot, Tuxie, based on the book’s main character. Tuxie visited with children and fans in attendance, who also enjoyed a read-aloud story time of “My Magic Tux” with author Greene at the nearby UT’s John C. Hodges Library.

Greene reflected on the impact he hopes the book will have saying, “The book, which is for children and families everywhere, is meant to inspire them, cheer on their dreams, celebrate the belief in themselves and discover the magic they can create in their own lives.”

In addition to the launch, J.R. has already been featured on Knoxville’s ABC, NBC, and FOX news affiliate stations, and printed in the local Knoxville News Sentinel. He has also been asked to return in the early fall to one of the shows to co-host a fun game show segment on College Football.

Information about the book is available at mymagictux.com. Fans and readers can follow Tuxie on social media via @mymagictux on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Pinterest.

“This book is a reminder of how one brave action can change everything,” says J.R. Greene. In addition to his writing, JR hosts the podcast SuperFan Diaries, which tells the stories of superfans across the globe, exploring the incredible benefits of the community of fandom.

[Click here to listen](#) to J.R. Tell his “Big Orange Tux Guy Story on “SuperFan Diaries!”

The show has featured iconic guests including hockey star Ryan O'Reilly, Cubs legend Ben Zobrist, Grammy Award-winning and Broadway singer Gary Morris, Grammy Award winning writer Brent Maher, the Philly Sports Guy, The Braves Freeze, and many more! Click here to listen to a special episode where JR Tells the story of how he became the “Big Orange Tux Guy.”

SuperFan Diaries is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeart Media, YouTube or wherever you get your podcasts.

About J.R. Greene

J.R. Greene is the founder of Psychiatric Medical Care and currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. Prior to his career in behavioral healthcare, Greene held leadership roles in marketing and sales at the Coca-Cola Company, Procter & Gamble, and Revlon. Greene is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, a board member of the Nashville Healthcare Council, and a member of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine Board of Visitors. Greene is also the host of the SuperFan Diaries podcast and author of the children’s book "My Magic Tux." One little fun extra fact, J.R. was a contestant on

the Price is Right with Bob Barker!

About University of Tennessee Press

The University of Tennessee Press is the Volunteer State's book publisher, committed to preserving and promoting the rich cultural and intellectual heritage of Tennessee and the region. Through its focused publishing program, UT Press strives to deepen appreciation for the communities, ecosystems, and histories that make the state unique. Its mission is to enlighten readers, foster cultural dialogue, and improve the quality of life for the people of Tennessee and around the world. UT Press is a division of the University of Tennessee Libraries.

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