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MICHAEL ROBINSON CHAVEZ / Los Angeles Times

**LOGO STICKS:** Ken Loh, right, was an intern at Stan Evenson's company when he came up with Patriots' symbol.

## BILL PLASCHKE

### For this dandy doodle, designer was more like a 30-minute man

The most unlikely team on today's NFL playoff fields will not be from San Diego.

The most bizarre team in today's NFL conference championship games has nothing to do with New York.

The most amazing team is not led by Brett Favre, and the most prolific team is not featuring Tom Brady.

The coolest of all teams lives not on your TV screen, but in an anonymous brick building next to a nail salon on a busy street in Culver City.

There are no signs out front. There is really only one notable sign inside, a tiny photo in the middle of a wall filled with tiny photos.

Fifteen years ago, on a drafting table in the middle of this building, a designer and his college intern casually doodled the logo on that photo.

[See Plaschke, Page D12]

### Designers became very Patriotic in a hurry

[Plaschke, from Page D1] table in the middle of this building, a designer and his college intern casually doodled the logo on that photo.

They were answering a request from a company down the street to draw something to be worn by a football team. It was hilarious, because neither man was really a football fan.

It was improbable, because the team played in the biggest sports league in the country, and this company's claim to fame was album covers.

But it was Los Angeles, so why not?

"We were like, 'OK, cool,'" said Ken Loh, the intern.

The initial doodling took about 30 minutes. The total payment was \$12,000.

Fifteen years later, it has become the drawing of a lifetime, a symbol that has made millions, a logo that could soon be imprinted in the history books.

That thing on the New England Patriots helmet? That belongs to the designer and the intern.

That thing in the middle of every piece of Patriots memorabilia, in the center of the football universe that revolves around what is potentially the best team in history?

That belongs to the designer and the intern. Who have been rewarded with no profits, no fame, and not even any free tickets to the games.

As far from the NFL and believability as humanly possible, Stan Evenson of the Evenson Design Group teamed with intern Loh to design the funky Patriot with a star on his hat and a flag shooting out of his head.

Said Evenson: "Looking back, I just have to laugh."

Said Loh: "Even today, people are like, 'Are you kidding me?'"

Today, Evenson's eight-person firm is in its third decade, authoring many other logos and prominent designs. Loh lives in Orange County and runs the website for the sportswear company Oakley Inc.

But in many ways, they will always be a team, and they will always have a team.

Said Evenson: "I'll be working out at the gym, the guy next to me will be talking about the Patriots, and I'll be like, 'Oh, by the way...'"

Said Loh: "I refer to the Patriots as 'we,' because, why not? That's my drawing they're wearing on their heads."

The other day, Evenson was walking through his modest office space, polling workers on whether the company should hold a Super Bowl party if the unbeaten Patriots are playing.

One worker looked up from sketches ordered by a movie client.

"You gonna have a keg?" she said.

This is not football country. The Evenson Design Group's biggest sports clients, besides the Patriots, have been a high school program and a WNBA team.

But around here, we're open to anything," Evenson said with a grin.

Fifteen years ago, Evenson was open to using a Long Beach State intern named Ken Loh.



THAT'S THEIR FIELD: Robert Kraft might own the Patriots, but Stan Evenson and Ken Loh came up with the logo in 1992.

Beach State intern named Ken Loh.

When he received a memo from NFL Properties, which then had an office in Culver City, he was also open to the strange request.

"The New England Patriots are seeking a new visual identity for their football team. . . . This is definitely a creative challenge, because they have not indicated a specific icon or symbol for us to explore."

So they could design a football logo with no parameters. The only thing certain was that they did not want it to be like the old Patriots logo, a smirking Minuteman in a three-point stance.

Said Evenson: "It was the ugliest logo around. I figured we could do something more streamlined."

Evenson was a career designer who had done no previous sports work.

Loh was a 23-year-old college student who had never attended an NFL game.

A company sales representative knew the folks at NFL Properties, who contacted her only because they were looking for something different.

There would be other design firms involved. It was a low-paying audition with little hope.

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Loh began idly doodling.

He quickly drew a stylized face underneath a Minuteman cap and threw in a trailing flag.

It was the same kind of doodle that his family and friends had seen on his scrap paper for years.

"My brother saw it and said, 'I've seen that face, that's the face you use for everybody you draw,'" Loh said.

Later, when traditional Patriots fans became angered at the logo, they referred to it as "the Flying Elvis" because they thought the man had Elvis Presley sideburns.

"That's not sideburns, that his cheek," Loh said with a chuckle.

Although the drawing took only 30 minutes to sketch, Evenson and Loh worked for a week to hone it, then hurriedly submitted it.

most design firms will do their work cheaply, because they want the publicity," Evenson said.

"Well, yes, you cannot put a price on the kind of good publicity that this logo has brought to us," he said.

Evenson uses the logo in many of his presentations. Loh used the logo to help him get his next job.

Although Evenson says he has never seen the Patriots play, Loh attends their games on the West Coast, and once even flew to Boston during the off-season to walk on his giant midfield drawing.

Nothing, however, could match the reward of the moment.

For that semester, the designer gave the intern an A+.

And for that logo, the designer gave the intern a \$500 bonus.

Which Ken Loh used for, what, tuition? Books? Food? Oh, he serious.

"I used the money to buy a bunch of Patriot gear," Loh said. "Lots of Patriot gear."

Bill Plaschke can be reached at bill.plaschke@latimes.com. To read previous columns from Plaschke, go to latimes.com/plaschke.