WHENEVER I SEE Ed Motley I think back to New Orleans and Bourbon Street and a lively New Year’s Eve.

Motley, the long-time Virginia Tech trainer, and I were in New Orleans with Chuck Nee’s Gobbler for the Sugar Bowl, and that first New Year’s Eve.

That’s the time Noe’s underdog Techmen came within a hair’s breadth of upsetting one of the best teams produced by Baron Adolph Rupp in that era.

Motley, with a tall glass of ginger ale in his hand, and I joined the crowd and set out to tour Bourbon Street at this gala festival time. We passed a bunch of revelers and Ed reached over, lifted a tall orange and purple paper hat from one of the men and put it on his own head. The man just laughed and waved: “Be my guest,” he said.

In our leisurely fashion we made the trip up Bourbon Street. I don’t know who had the most fun, but neither of us have forgotten that New Year’s Eve.

Up Virginia Tech way, Ed Motley has become a legend. He was honored recently when Don DeVoe’s Gobbler hooked up with the Richmond Spiders of Louie Mills.

Mills must have enjoyed the occasion as much as anybody. He is an old Gobbler himself, and was captain of that team Chuck Noe took to that Sugar Bowl tournament.

EVERYBODY who has played at Tech knows, respects and likes Ed Motley.

On his office wall is an autographed picture of Carroll Dale, Tech’s All-America end from Wise, who made it big in the NFL with the Rams, Packers and Vikings.

There’s a letter from Johnny Wooden of UCLA. They met in a basketball clinic several years ago, and are still corresponding.

Tech’s basketball program the night of the Richmond game carried this tribute to Ed Motley:

“Athletes walk in and out all day long and few ever forget to give a happy greeting to the man who has occupied that office and training room for so long.”

“ED MOTLEY may have more friends than any one else at Virginia Tech.”

There is hardly an athlete who has ever worn a Virginia Tech uniform that doesn’t remember Motley and have several stories to tell about him. And Motley can do the same about most of the boys he has worked with over the years.

“After a career as a good football player for cross - state rival William & Mary, he became an outstanding high school football coach at Petersburg and Newport News high schools.

Since 1955, however, he has spent his time taking care of Virginia Tech athletes in every possible way, from nursing injuries, to solving personal problems and prodding some through class.

“An example of the esteem in which he is held was dramatically evident last year when many of his friends worked together and bought him a new car to replace the old one that had been with him for so many years. It was presented to him, along with a standing ovation, at halftime of a Tech basketball game.

“Ed Motley is what you would call an institution at Virginia Tech.”

CALL ED MOTLEY a legend, an institution or just a legend. We could call him a trainer in the bushes.

Any way you take him I’m just glad he’s still with us.”