

National Semiconductor Gator



The University of Florida is not the only organization that has employed the ubiquitous alligator as a mascot, much to our chagrin. We have photographed this version of a preppy-styled gator, sporting a sweatshirt with a 1980s version of the National Semiconductor (**NSC**) logo. This miniature silicon reptile (150 micrometers high) was discovered hovering on a pad within a test pattern die on a wafer of NSC gate array integrated circuits. The gator was brought to our attention by Achim Gratz who discovered it as a resident scholar at NSC several years ago. A wafer containing the gator was loaned to us by Phil Cacharelis, technology development manager for the Power BiCMOS and Light Valve Technology Development group at NSC who, along with Achim, has provided all of the information we have about this artwork. The mask designer who digitized the gator was Margaret Espinoza.

The integrated circuit is a test chip designed in the mid-1980s by the Fairchild Research Center (FRC), which was at that time a division of National Semiconductor in Santa Clara, California. This CMOS technology group was engaged in development of gate array devices, from which the gator mascot arose (Gate Array => Gator). We are told the gator was also used in banners and other materials promoting this research effort. We think this gator is far more beautiful than the one used by Florida, the school that has single-handedly kept FSU out of the college football national championship picture on so many occasions.

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Last modification: **Wednesday, Mar 03, 2004 at 04:30 PM**