

25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

12th Man

2021 | VOLUME 26, NO. 3

FUNDING SCHOLARSHIPS, PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES
IN SUPPORT OF CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS



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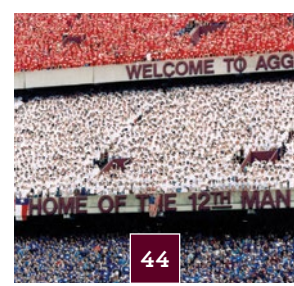
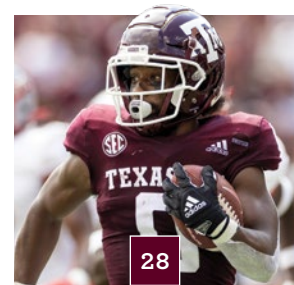
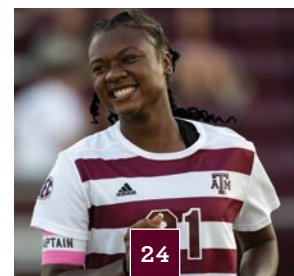
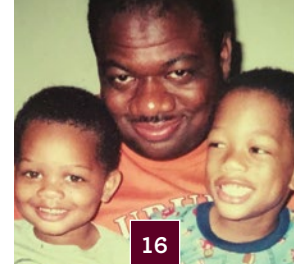
*Average Annual Cost
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STUDENT-ATHLETES**

As a 12th Man Foundation donor, you are the backbone of Texas A&M Athletics, and your financial support is essential to providing nearly 600 Aggie student-athletes with the resources to be successful.

**WE CAN'T DO WHAT
WE DO WITHOUT YOU**



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COVER PHOTO BY AIDEN SHERTZER '24/TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS THE 12TH MAN CELEBRATES ON KYLE FIELD FOLLOWING TEXAS A&M'S 41-38 WIN OVER NO. 1 ALABAMA ON OCT. 9, 2021

12th Man

2021 | VOLUME 26, NO. 3

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Funding scholarships, programs and facilities in support of championship athletics



TO OUR DONORS,

For 25 years, *12th Man Magazine* has informed and inspired its readers and celebrated the successes of Aggie Athletics while documenting the tremendous commitment from the loyal supporters who have made it all possible.

Looking back to 1996, I am not sure that my former coworker and friend, Homer Jacobs, knew the depth of the impact that his brainchild would have on the 12th Man

Foundation and Texas A&M Athletics. Homer, it is immeasurable.

Homer's admiration for Texas A&M was abundant, and it was evident to anyone who knew him or read his work in the magazine. His dedication to the 12th Man Foundation will not be forgotten as *12th Man Magazine* serves as a living memorial to his service for his beloved Aggies.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the innovative decision by the leadership of the 12th Man Foundation in place in 1996 to pursue a storytelling tool that remains a unique benefit for the donors of this organization.

Looking forward, it is my hope that each edition continues to educate our donors on the ever-evolving business of college athletics and the transformative influence their generosity has on Texas A&M student-athletes while encouraging other Aggies to become involved.

Finally, I would like to compliment our counterparts at the Texas A&M Foundation and The Association of Former Students on the exemplary execution of the Lead By Example campaign and the Distinguished Alumni Gala, respectively.

Texas A&M University's \$4 billion Lead by Example campaign would not have been possible without the Texas A&M Foundation's leadership and is a testament to the extraordinary generosity of Aggies. The Association recently hosted the Distinguished Alumni Gala honoring the 2020 and 2021 recipients of the Distinguished Alumnus Award, and I was struck by the incredible former students of this institution. The breadth of impact made by the recipients is truly amazing, and the pride we felt at that event only strengthened our love and commitment to Texas A&M.

Gig 'em!



Travis Dabney '96
President & CEO



REMEMBERING REBA RAGSDALE

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Reba Ragsdale on her passing on Oct. 13, 2021. Pictured above with her husband, Bob, Reba retired from the 12th Man Foundation in December 2005 after serving as director of donor relations, special events and travel for 16 years. A leader in the Bryan-College Station community, Reba dedicated countless hours of volunteer service with multiple organizations throughout her extraordinary life.

STAFF UPDATES

THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS TO OUR DEDICATED STAFF:



John Hendricks
Account Executive of Ticket Sales & Development



Rebecca McCaulley
Senior Manager of Premium Seating



Alex Marinelli
Annual Fund Coordinator



J.T. Payne '21
Account Executive of Ticket Sales & Development

RECENT PROMOTIONS:

Lauren Hickey
Director of Development

Brendan Quinn '15
Manager of Campaign & Development Services

Adam Smith '15
Senior Account Executive of Group Ticket Sales

In other staff news, the 12th Man Foundation is excited to welcome current student Jack Parkins '24 to the staff this semester. Jack is majoring in interdisciplinary studies and is a member of the Aggie ACHIEVE program.



AGGIE ACCOLADES



AGGIES EARN 10TH STRAIGHT UNITED SOCCER COACHES TEAM ACADEMIC AWARD

A&M soccer student-athletes were honored for their scholastic endeavors as they garnered the United Soccer Coaches (USC) Team Academic Award for the 2020-21 academic year. Texas A&M head coach Coach G Guerrieri's squad earned the award for the 10th consecutive year and 12th overall, logging a 3.32 GPA for fall 2020 and spring 2021. "It says a lot about the quality of the people we have on this team," Guerrieri said. "The players continue to make us proud with their work in the classroom. This is an important honor because it is an academic award and it is a team award. We embrace both of those things in our program, so it is great for them to be recognized for it."

TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS LEGENDS HONORED AT 43RD BURGESS BANQUET

Congratulations to the Texas A&M Lettermen's Association Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2021. This year's class was inducted at the 43rd Burgess Banquet on Friday, Sept. 17, prior to the New Mexico football game. Joining the best of the best in the Texas A&M Athletics Hall of Fame are (above, left to right): current Texas A&M regent Cliff Thomas '73 (football, Lettermen's Lifetime Achievement Award winner), Antoine Wright '05 (men's basketball), Selena Collins Patterson '04 (softball), Sydney Colson '11 (women's basketball), Dante Hall '99 (football), Austin Krajicek '11 (men's tennis), Christine Marshall '09 (women's swimming & diving), Gabby Mayo '11 (women's track & field) and current 12th Man Foundation trustee Dave Coolidge '87 (football, Hall of Honor inductee). Inductees not pictured include Randy Bullock '11 (football) and Matt Rose '04 (men's swimming & diving).

MATT SACHS (BURGESS); TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS (ALL OTHERS)



“
I’m so blessed to be a scholarship student-athlete. The university and your generosity have helped me grow as a leader, teammate and husband.

Never did I dream I would earn a bachelor’s degree in entrepreneurial leadership management from a top 40 business school. The people here make this university such a special place, and being able to utilize first-class facilities filled with the best staff in the world is the reason for our continued strides forward.

Being a part of this family creates memories that will last a lifetime. Thank you for being a part of mine.

SETH SMALL ’21
FOOTBALL

A first-generation Aggie, Seth kicked the game-winning field goal to help A&M defeat top-ranked Alabama, 41-38, at Kyle Field on Oct. 9, 2021. Pictured celebrating the moment with his wife, Rachel, Seth also kicked the game-winner to upset No. 4 Florida by the same score almost exactly one year prior to the Alabama game.



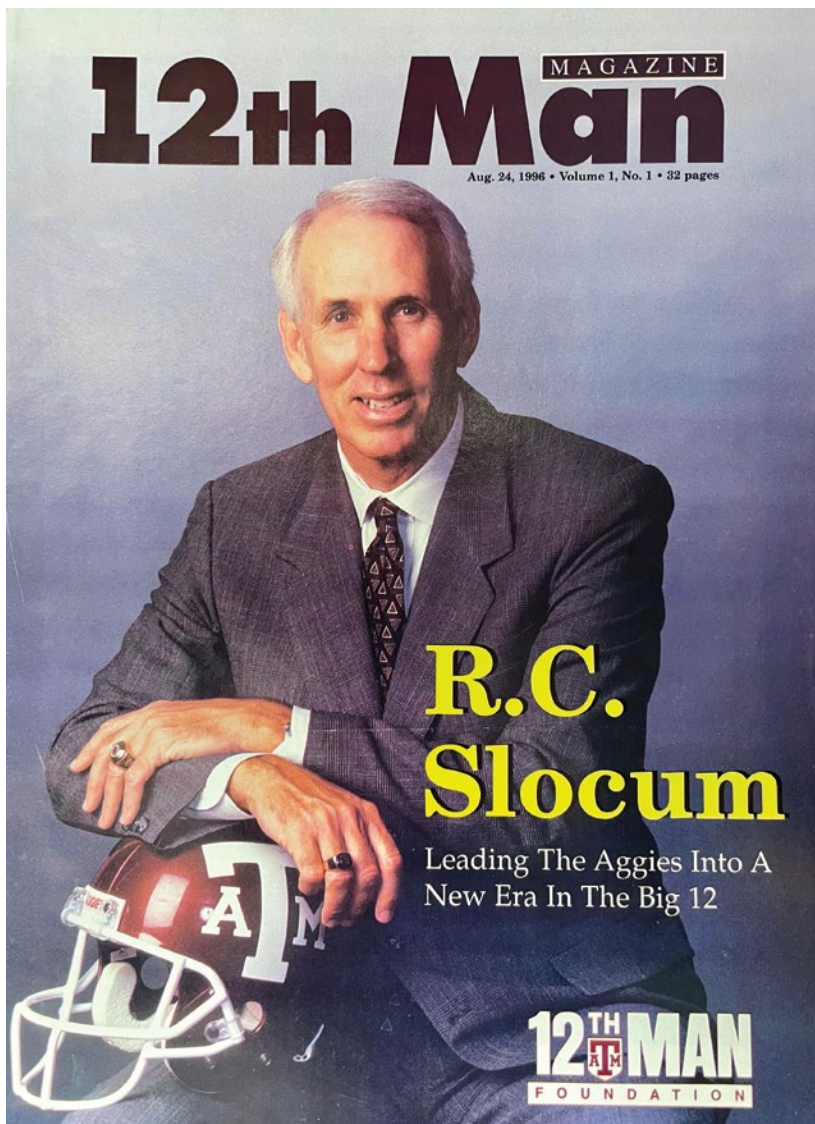


12TH MAN FOUNDATION

25 YEARS OF 12TH MAN MAGAZINE

Celebrating the silver anniversary of the 12th Man Foundation's award-winning donor publication

BY CHAREAN WILLIAMS '86



The first edition of *12th Man Magazine* was mailed to 12th Man Foundation donors in August 1996. The publication quickly gained notoriety, and the Nov. 11, 2000 issue was featured on ESPN's College GameDay prior to the A&M-Oklahoma football game.

THE LEGENDARY R.C. SLOCUM GRACED THE FIRST COVER of *12th Man Magazine* on Aug. 24, 1996. The former Texas A&M football coach is dressed in a suit and wearing a smile, with his arms casually resting on an Aggie helmet. Volume 1, No. 1 began with the headline: "R.C. Slocum: Leading The Aggies Into A New Era In The Big 12."

Twenty-five years later, much has changed.

Jimbo Fisher is coaching the Aggie football team in the school's 10th season in the Southeastern Conference.

The magazine, though, continues to tell the stories of A&M's 20 varsity sports and its student-athletes, coaches and donors. This is Volume 26, No. 3, the 405th published issue of *12th Man Magazine* and the first printed edition since spring 2020. The magazine has been available only online since the

COVID-19 pandemic began.

"Everything has changed so much since the days before the internet and instant news," said Rusty Burson, who began freelancing for the magazine in 1996 before being hired full time two years later. "Still, I've always felt the magazine has so much more of a shelf-life than newspapers or anything on the internet. The magazine has changed a lot, but I'm proud of the fact that it's still a publication that people enjoy."

The magazine is a memorial to Homer Jacobs, who died seven years ago from an intestinal aneurysm. Jacobs, Class of 1987, was the first editor of *12th Man Magazine*. He worked as the sports editor at the *Sherman Democrat*, *Galveston Daily News* and *Aggies Illustrated* before launching the official publication of the 12th Man Foundation in 1996.

Jacobs proved to be a perfect fit for the 12th Man Foundation.

"Homer loved Texas A&M, and you can say that about a lot of people," said Brad Marquardt, A&M's assistant athletics director for athletics communications who recommended Jacobs. "But he was a great storyteller, and I think he had an innate ability to tell stories about Texas A&M in a way that made sense to his audience. That's the way I felt about him. He always told a good story."

In 1996, Jacobs presented an idea for a magazine covering Aggie Athletics. He sought to go beyond the score, stats and a few quotes, digging deeper into games and student-athletes. Jacobs had inside access, and the 12th Man Foundation had resources



“

THEY COULDN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT, AND THE MAGAZINE GREW AND GREW. IT WAS A SHOWCASE FOR THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION, AND A SHOWCASE FOR AGGIE ATHLETICS LIKE NO OTHER.

— JERRY COX '72

to allow donors behind the curtain of Aggie Athletics with a professional publication that would sometimes serve as a keepsake.

“This was all Homer’s idea,” said Jerry Cox, who served as president of the 12th Man Foundation’s Executive Committee in 1996. “He said, ‘We ought to get personal, with athletes’ background, what they’re studying and why they came to A&M.’ The leadership at the 12th Man Foundation was very, very supportive, and that’s when we decided to make a full-fledged magazine. All the people who received it were enthusiastic supporters of Aggie Athletics, but they’d never seen anything like this. No one had. There wasn’t another one around at that point. This was just his brainstorm.

“Homer was humble; he was smart; he had vision; and he was a maroon-blood if I’ve ever

seen one. He was totally there. Once it got going, it gained momentum because everyone loved it. They couldn’t get enough of it, and the magazine grew and grew. It was a showcase for the 12th Man Foundation, and a showcase for Aggie Athletics like no other.”

In his first editor’s note in the debut edition, Jacobs wrote an introduction to *12th Man Magazine*: “Inside this slick magazine, you will find more features, more insightful commentary and more dramatic color photographs than available in any publication covering Texas A&M Athletics. . . . *12th Man Magazine* will be your most complete source, straight from the heart of Aggieland.”

It was the first magazine produced exclusively by an athletics fundraising organization.

The first two years of the magazine featured a color cover with primarily black-and-white photography inside. Jacobs convinced Miles Marks, the executive director of the 12th Man Foundation from 1998-2012, that to do it right, *12th Man Magazine* needed to be full color. Despite the significant cost increase, the decision to go full color is something Marks calls “transformational.”

“It became a fundraising tool,” Marks said. “We put more and more stories of donors in there and what they had done to inspire other people. Rusty had a great series of, ‘Where are they now,’ on former athletes, and that got former athletes reengaged.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The 12th Man. The Big 12.

It only seemed natural that the 12th Man Foundation and *12th Man Magazine* join this numbers game.

So, we are introducing *12th Man Magazine*, a colorful, 32-page magazine available only to 12th Man Foundation members.

Inside this slick magazine, you will find more features, more insightful commentary and more dramatic color photographs than available in any publication covering Texas A&M athletics.

We hope you look to *12th Man Magazine* for all the news and events surrounding Aggie athletics, as well as the 12th Man Foundation. And for the scoop on Aggie football and all of the 19 sports at Texas A&M, *12th Man Magazine* will be your most complete source, straight from the heart of Aggieland.

As for myself, I’m an Aggie (Class of ‘87) who has put his journalism degree to good work — covering A&M athletics for the last five years.

Some of you may remember my columns in the Sports Hotline several years ago. Well, I’m back and looking forward to following the Aggies into what I believe will be the most exciting time in the history of the school.

The 12th Man Foundation will be kicking off its “12th Mania!” spirit campaign this fall, as well, as A&M and the Bryan-College Station community prepare for the new era in the Big 12.

“12th Mania!” is just one more way for Aggies to

Please send us your comments, letters or questions to:
12th Man Magazine, Letters To The Editor
P.O. Drawer L-1, College Station, Texas, 77844-9101
or e-mail the editor at: homer@twelfthman.tamu.edu

show their spirit and their devotion to Texas A&M and its athletic programs.

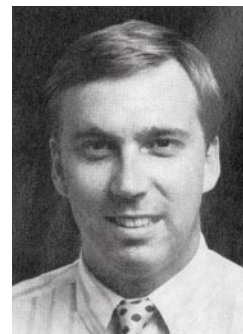
The 12th Man Foundation is experiencing unprecedented growth as we hope to reach a goal of 20,000 members by year’s end. Supporting education through athletics has never been more important for Texas A&M, especially as this new era dawns in the Big 12.

The competition will heat up, but so will Aggies’ burning desire to help their school and their athletic department.

You can help the 12th Man Foundation, but we want to help you, too, with this members-only benefit — *12th Man Magazine*.

We hope the magazine will resemble Texas A&M as a whole — first-class in every way.

Thanks for having me back. Gig’em.



Homer Jacobs’ “Letter from the Editor” in the debut issue introduced the magazine to 12th Man Foundation donors. The publication’s launch on Aug. 24, 1996, coincided with A&M’s first year as members of the Big 12 Conference.



“Other universities couldn’t believe that we were able to do that, and several schools copied us. Oklahoma State I know put out its own magazine, and for a while, at least, LSU did it as a fundraising tool. There’s a great history of the magazine, and it has served as a great tool for us.”

For almost 20 years, approximately 19 issues of the magazine were produced annually with an issue published after every Aggie football game. Jacobs and Burson worked through the night after every gameday, finishing their stories before the magazine printed on Sundays and mailed on Mondays.

As it returns to print with this milestone edition, *12th Man Magazine* is scheduled to be published and mailed to donors three times annually. It remains a benefit to any 12th Man Foundation member with a donation of at least \$150.

“Without a doubt, it was one of the most important undertakings during my tenure there,” said Frank Shannon, the executive director of the 12th Man Foundation from 1990-97. “We previously had the *Sports Hotline*, a weekly newsprint tabloid, that had served its purpose in the ’80s. We had presented the idea of a magazine a few years earlier, but the timing just wasn’t right. Finally, when we did go to a full-color, slick, weekly magazine during football season, it just gave us a ton of awareness and helped us engage more people than ever before for Aggie Athletics.

“But without Homer, I don’t know how we would have done it. Homer just put his heart and soul into it, and it came through in his stories. It was like

family the way Homer captured what was going on and what was important.”

Jacobs died unexpectedly Aug. 26, 2014. He was only 49.

Every issue of *12th Man Magazine*, though, is a reminder of Jacobs. It is his brainchild.

“For so many years, Homer was a single guy,” said True Brown, who worked for the 12th Man Foundation from 2004-12 and 2015-18 serving in a variety of roles with *12th Man Magazine* along the way. “His love affair was with Texas A&M and the Aggies. It really was. He could break down the backup left tackle or the power forward on the women’s basketball team or the No. 6 singles tennis player. He lived it and breathed it for so long. When you ask what made him so good and so perfect for the job, it was his love.”

The magazine has evolved throughout the past 25 years while commemorating many of A&M Athletics’ most memorable moments.

“OTHER UNIVERSITIES COULDN’T BELIEVE THAT WE WERE ABLE TO DO THAT, AND SEVERAL SCHOOLS COPIED US. THERE’S A GREAT HISTORY OF THE MAGAZINE, AND IT HAS SERVED AS A GREAT TOOL FOR US.

— MILES MARKS '79

A TRIBUTE TO HOMER JACOBS '87

Remembering a great friend, boss and Aggie who founded 12th Man Magazine 25 years ago

BY RUSTY BURSON

FOR 24 YEARS I HAD THE SINCERE PRIVILEGE to work for Homer Jacobs, first at the *Galveston Daily News*, later with *Aggies Illustrated* and for 18 years with *12th Man Magazine*.

Homer never had a child of his own, but *12th Man Magazine* was practically his baby. He was the first editor of the publication, and he would be so pleased to know that, despite his death seven years ago and a global pandemic in 2020, that the magazine is still alive and in print today. And I am honored to pay tribute to Homer and the magazine as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the publication.

Homer was the greatest boss of my lifetime, and he was such an easy person to love and admire. I discovered that the first time we met during my job interview in Galveston in the summer of 1990.

After graduating from Sam Houston State, I showed up in Galveston. Instead of interviewing at the newspaper, Homer took me to a bar called the Old Galveston Club. He bought me a beer and asked one question: "Do you like college football?"

I told him I was raised on Southwest Conference football. He hired me on the spot, and so began an amazing friendship and partnership that blessed me beyond my wildest expectations.

Homer is the primary reason I love Texas A&M, the main reason I met my wife at the Dixie Chicken in 1992, and the indirect reason that one of my three children has already graduated from A&M, while the next will graduate in May 2022 and the youngest will be enrolling in the fall of 2023.

One of the things that made Homer such a great journalist was that he was a great listener. When you spoke with Homer – even at a



reception in a hotel ballroom – he made you feel like you were the only person in his presence.

He valued the opinions of others; he cared what you thought; and he treated everyone with respect. Beyond that, he wanted everyone to get along. He was as non-confrontational as Mother Theresa because he genuinely wanted everyone around him to be happy.

Homer was the ultimate people pleaser, and he would step out of his comfort zone if it meant he could make others around him more comfortable. He would also go to great lengths to make sure his friends were having a good time in his presence.

Many years ago, he made the mistake of telling me he had always dreamed of being a Yell Leader. I am pretty sure I brought that up at every 12th Man Foundation Christmas party we attended together. And no matter how much he protested, he would inevitably consent to leading yells, making his awkward gyrations and making us all laugh until we practically cried.

Pictured above at the 1998 Kickoff Classic, Rusty and Homer covered every big A&M sports moment in *12th Man Magazine* for 18 years including the Aggies' 1998 Big 12 Championship and the school's historic move to the Southeastern Conference.

Throughout our careers together, Homer challenged me and others who worked for him to be the best we could be with every story. In 24 years together, he probably used the line, “write a good one,” at least 2,400 times. It was his not-so-subtle reminder that every story mattered to someone, and we owed it to the readers to pour our hearts into every magazine. Homer expected storytelling excellence and accuracy from everyone who worked for him and he absolutely demanded the same from himself.

That philosophy was more than just a work motto. Homer wanted to write every story to the best of his ability just like he lived every day to the fullest. He possessed an incredible zest for life, and he wanted to celebrate it every day. Homer didn't often go to McDonald's for lunch or Subway for dinner. He wanted to meet a friend for a sit-down lunch at Outback Steakhouse. Sure, he had expensive taste, but it was really more about savoring, celebrating and commemorating every meal and every day.

For most of our years together, Homer could afford practically any luxury because he was a bachelor with few expenses. During those years, writing and promoting A&M Athletics was Homer's identity. It's what he lived for and it was his primary purpose.

He loved reading in-depth features in *Sports Illustrated* and writing them in *12th Man Magazine*. He absolutely lived out his dream by covering A&M and working inside Kyle Field.

Homer didn't just bleed maroon; he oozed Aggie pride. He dreamed of seeing the new Kyle Field and writing about the Aggies winning a national championship in football. He wanted the world to know why he loved A&M so much, and he cherished his role as a promoter of Aggie Athletics. He would have loved to have seen what Jimbo Fisher has done with his beloved Aggie football program, which seems to be inching closer to winning the national title.

Most of us thought Homer was so set in his creature-of-habit ways that he would never find a soulmate to share his life. I was one of those people, but I was giddy to be proven wrong.

When Homer met Laurie, his life changed. His face glowed with a radiance I had never seen in him before; he bounced into the office; and to the shock of so many of us, Homer even began eating leftovers for lunch in the break room.

As their relationship progressed, it was obvious

he had found someone who meant more to him than even Texas A&M. At age 49, he finally felt complete. They were married on April 24, 2014, and on that day, he used another one of his favorite lines that I had heard so many times before: “Burson, it don't get no better than this.”

It was the one line in which he permitted grammatical incorrectness. He'd used that line with me so many times, but he said marrying Laurie and developing a strong bond with her four boys really was the single best thing that had ever happened to him.

Four months after his wedding day, Homer Jacobs died suddenly.

My life has never been quite the same without Homer in it. He was a great boss and one of the best and most loyal friends I could imagine. I loved Homer like a brother, and I will miss him for the rest of my life. I miss his laugh, smile and goofy chuckle; I miss his stories and companionship; I miss his texts; and I definitely miss celebrating with him after Aggie victories that elicited so much joy.

In this life, Homer absolutely loved to celebrate victories. And it only seems appropriate in this 25th anniversary issue to celebrate him once again. Wherever you are, please pour yourself your favorite beverage and raise a glass to Homer!

This issue is for you, buddy. Gone way too soon, but never forgotten. ♠

A great friend to many including former 12th Man Foundation coworkers Rusty, Reagan Chessher and Lizett Hawkins, Homer was a bachelor until age 49 when he married Laurie - the love of his life - on April 24, 2014.



PAULA & JOHN HOLLOWELL '79

Staunch supporters are helping create opportunities for current and future Aggie student-athletes

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

AN EXTRAORDINARY 38-YEAR CAREER WITH SHELL took John Hollowell all over the world. But no matter how far he traveled, his heart remained in Aggieland.

From a small town near Lexington, Ky., Hollowell grew up a big Kentucky basketball fan until his family relocated to Houston when he was a freshman in high school. That's when Hollowell began watching A&M football games on TV and developed an affinity for the Aggies.

Four years later, Hollowell enrolled at A&M to pursue a degree in chemical engineering. It was a match made in heaven.

"Being from a small town in Kentucky going to a big city like Houston and then finding a place like A&M was the right kind of atmosphere for me," Hollowell said. "It was just a natural fit and the best decision I ever made, without a doubt."

REMARKABLE JOURNEY

After earning his bachelor's degree from A&M in 1979, Hollowell accepted an offer to work for Shell in New Orleans, La. It was a great opportunity for a young Aggie engineer, and it turned out to be the beginning of a career that spanned nearly four decades.

When he retired in March 2018, Hollowell had climbed up the ranks to serve as executive vice president for all of Shell's deep-water operations in the Gulf of Mexico and then finally as president and CEO of Shell Midstream Partners GP, LLC.

"As I reflect on my time at Shell, there were three things A&M taught me that carried me all the way through my career," said Hollowell, noting that earning his degree was the hardest thing he has ever done. "It taught me how to work hard, how to connect with people and how to solve problems. I

look back and A&M prepared me for all of that – it's just ingrained in me."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Today, Hollowell and his wife, Paula, call Houston home. They are proud parents to their Aggie daughter, Whitney (Class of 2015 and '18), who is engaged to marry another Aggie, Austen Adamcik '12, next spring.

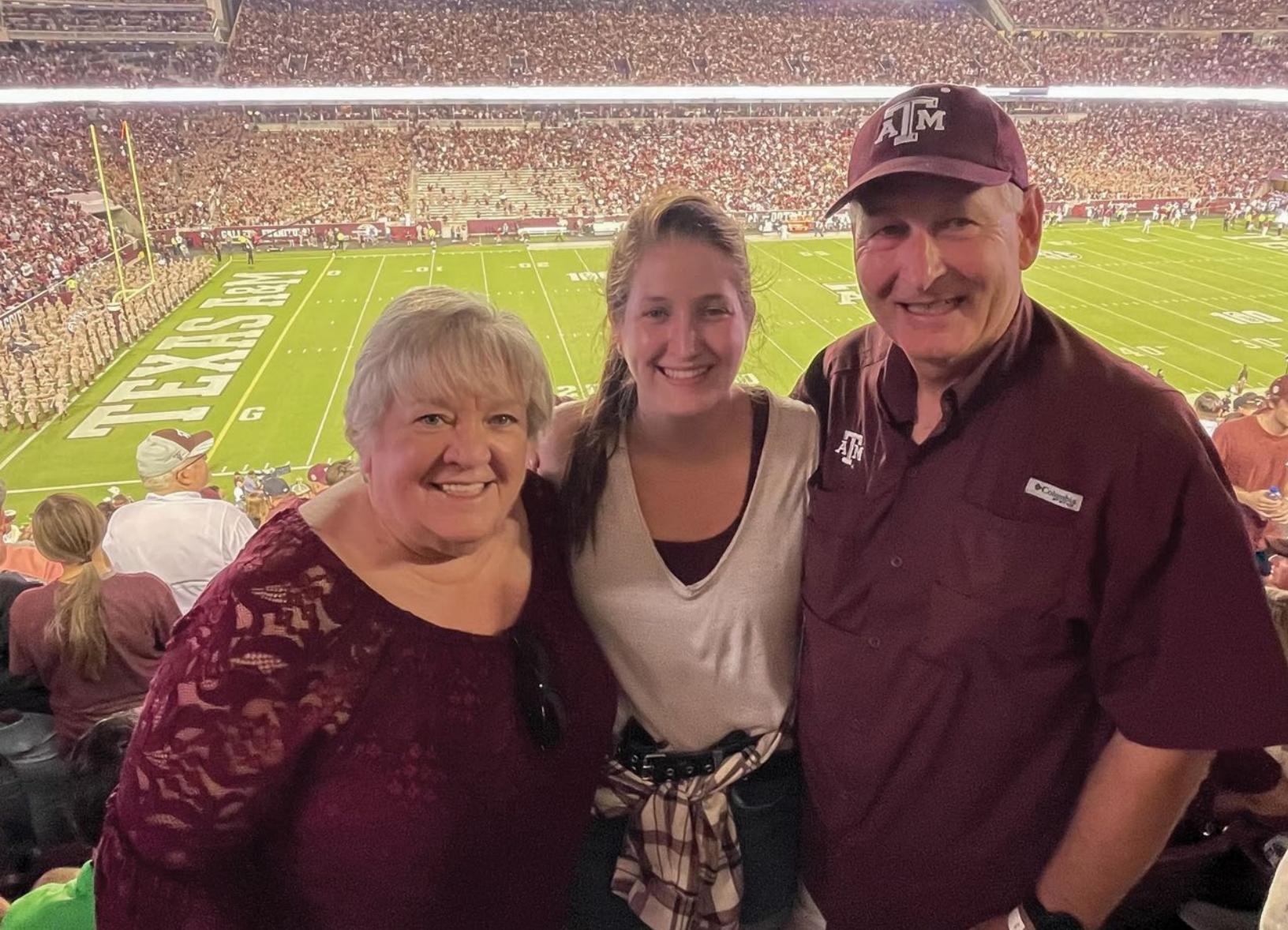
With his unwavering commitment as a maroon-blooded A&M sports fan, Hollowell proudly gives back financially to the university he credits for his success in life. And he rarely misses an opportunity to support the Aggies in person.

John and Paula, who at the time was in a wheelchair because of a broken foot, once drove from Bakersfield, Calif., to Las Vegas to catch a red-eye flight to Texas on Thanksgiving Day to watch the Aggies beat the Longhorns for a chance to go to the Cotton Bowl. John still recalls raising glasses of champagne in Lot C with his parents and others

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WITHOUT A&M, I WOULDN'T BE SITTING IN THE POSITION I'M IN TODAY. FOR ANY STUDENT, A&M PREPARES YOU FOR THAT CHANGE IN LIFE. IF I CAN HELP OTHERS BE AN AGGIE AND SHARE IN WHAT THAT MEANS, THEN IT'S ALL WORTH IT.

— JOHN HOLLOWELL '79



to send off the Longhorn team buses back to Austin in defeat.

“Without A&M, I wouldn’t be sitting in the position I’m in today,” he said. “For any student, A&M prepares you for that chance in life. If I can help others be an Aggie and share in what that means, then it’s all worth it.”

Active Champions Council members and passionate A&M football and basketball fans, John and Paula have continued to elevate their giving to the 12th Man Foundation in support of scholarships and facility projects.

“I think A&M is at an inflection point in athletics where we can be a competitive force in a premier league,” John said. “I’m impressed with what the athletics department has done in terms of a commitment to excellence, coaching and facilities, and the products they put on the field show that. If you want to be associated with excellence, then invest in Aggie Athletics because it is clearly on track to be just that.”

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Loyal football season ticket holders for 41 years, the Hollowells stepped up in a significant way in 2020 when Texas A&M Athletics and the 12th Man Foundation were facing substantial financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on college athletics.

Given the option to take a full refund of their 2020 season ticket investment, John and Paula generously donated it back to the 12th Man Foundation helping sustain the athletics department at a crucial time in A&M’s history.

“If our contribution helped Aggie Athletics have some semblance of normalcy during a difficult time, then it was all worth it to us,” said John, noting that the priority point bonus offered by the 12th Man Foundation incentivized them and others to give back at a higher level. “Need was met with opportunity, and the need was great last year. I think it was a real win-win for us and the 12th Man Foundation.”

Paula and John are proud parents of their Aggie daughter, Whitney (Class of 2015 and '18). The Hollowells’ are die-hard A&M fans and have been Aggie football season ticket holders for 41 years.



POWER OF A SCHOLARSHIP

TERRY PRICE '92 & DEVIN PRICE '24

The opportunity to play football and get an education from A&M has made a generational impact on the Price family

BY WILL JOHNSON '01

WHEN TERRY PRICE SIGNED A LETTER OF INTENT to play football at Texas A&M in February of 1986, the Plano, Texas, native knew immediately what it meant.

“Anytime you get a scholarship coming out of high school you’re one in a million,” Price said. “There’s not a lot passed out each year.”

At the time he signed with A&M, the Aggies were coming off a 1985 Southwest Conference championship and a Cotton Bowl victory over Auburn. The vaunted Wrecking Crew defense was forming, and it was the perfect time to become an Aggie. But for Price, the opportunity to play football at A&M was

only part of the reason he signed.

“At that time,” he says, “A&M was without a doubt – and even to this day – is the best university in the country.”

From 1986-89, Price helped A&M claim a couple more SWC titles and hoist two Cotton Bowl trophies. All the while, upholding that Wrecking Crew moniker and the defensive tradition that had been established within the program. But he’s well aware the scholarship afforded him more opportunities than just the ones on the football field.

“My scholarship meant everything to me,” Price said. “It changed my life. It gave me an opportunity

to earn a great degree. That degree has helped me get jobs throughout my lifetime and supported me and my family.”

Those jobs have been in the game of football. He’s spent three decades coaching in the college game, the last ten years at his alma mater. That family includes two sons who are now Aggie students – Alex ’23 and Devin ’24.

Alex is a junior studying sport management. Devin is a sophomore university studies major and also a wide receiver for the A&M football program.

Growing up around Aggie football, Devin has seen his share of action at Kyle Field. He’s even checked out the tapes from his dad’s era.

“I definitely have watched,” said Devin of those late ’80s teams. “Physical, old school teams. We’re trying to bring that back today.”

The younger Price feels similar to his father about the opportunity to attend A&M on scholarship.

“It’s truly a blessing to receive a scholarship and play at this university, with this platform,” says Devin, “and make a name for yourself.”

Dad feels the same when it comes to making a name for oneself. Terry doesn’t like to talk too often about Devin. After all, he wants him to be Devin,

“

IT’S TRULY A BLESSING TO RECEIVE A SCHOLARSHIP AND PLAY AT THIS UNIVERSITY, WITH THIS PLATFORM, AND MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF.

—DEVIN PRICE ’24

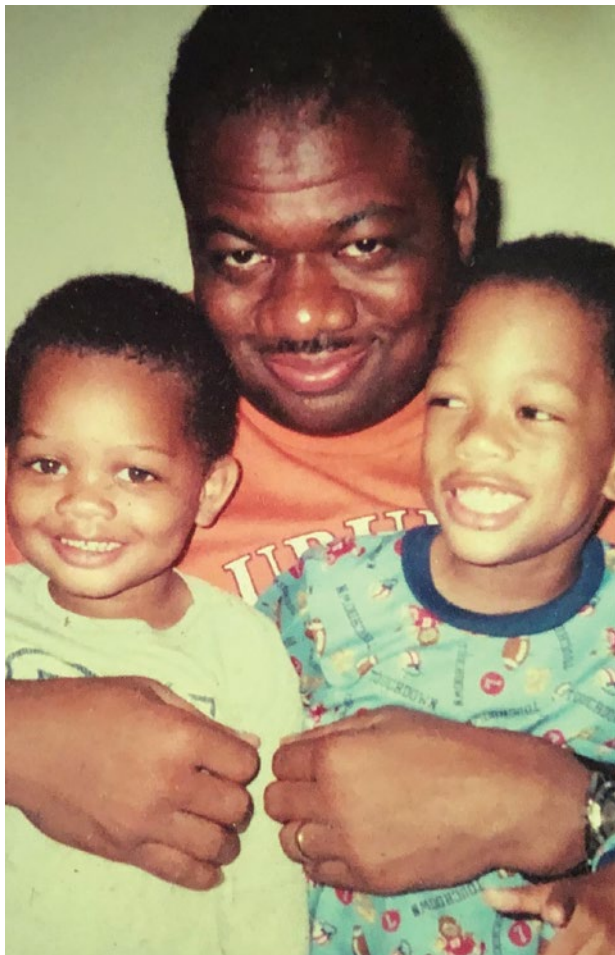
not Terry’s son. The coach wants his son’s journey to be his own.

Devin will have no problem creating his path. All it takes is a quick conversation with him to see how articulate and bright he is. But with the Prices on the same team, Devin, in some ways will always hear it from Terry. It might be from a distance since Terry coaches defense and Devin plays offense, but the coach is known for being vocal with his position unit.

“You can definitely hear him from the other side of the field,” Devin said with a smile. “I don’t want to be a d-lineman.”

Devin, just like dad, came to A&M at the right time. Jimbo Fisher is building a championship

Terry played football for A&M from 1986-89, and earned his bachelor’s degree in sociology in 1992. He and his wife, Kenya, are the proud parents of two Aggie sons, Alex ’23 and Devin ’24.





Now in his seventh year as the Aggies' defensive ends coach and tenth season overall, Terry is an outstanding ambassador for A&M and is well known around Aggieland and beyond for his BBQ skills.

program. The kind of program Terry helped build as a player in the mid- to late-1980s.

After playing, Terry's coaching career has been almost entirely in the SEC. He enjoyed lengthy tenures at Ole Miss and Auburn, but he knows there's nothing like Aggieland. When he was offered the opportunity to come home, he didn't walk – he ran.

In December of 2011, Terry was hired to coach the defensive line at Texas Tech. He never made it to his first game with the Red Raiders. Why? Because

soon after he arrived in Lubbock, Kevin Sumlin called him and offered the same position at A&M. Sumlin told Terry to think about it for a night, and call him the next day.

"I told my wife I'm going to go think about it," Terry recalled from that night. "While I go think, you start packing."

What was there to think about? He was going back to A&M. Terry Price was going home, and his family would now call Aggieland the same. Devin came to know the school and program his father loved and now they're in it together.

Devin is trying to help the Aggies take that final step. The one step that was just out of reach for his father and Terry's late '80s teammates.

"Once we reach the level we're supposed to," says Devin, "we're going to win national championships here."

It's easy to see that Terry would love to get this team to the sport's pinnacle. Not just for himself or his son, but for the 12th Man. The coach is not shy about his love for the Aggies and what his school and program has done for him.

"I owe everything to the degree I received from Texas A&M." ■

“
MY SCHOLARSHIP MEANT EVERYTHING TO ME. IT CHANGED MY LIFE. IT GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A GREAT DEGREE. THAT DEGREE HAS HELPED ME GET JOBS THROUGHOUT MY LIFETIME AND SUPPORTED ME AND MY FAMILY.

— TERRY PRICE '92



12TH MAN FOUNDATION

GAMEDAY STARTS WITH A TICKET

Months of planning, preparation and work lead to seven special Saturdays at Kyle Field each fall

BY SAMANTHA ATCHLEY '17

EACH YEAR AS SUMMER DRAWS TO A CLOSE, excitement begins to build for the Aggie football season. Former students and fans from all over finalize plans to visit Aggieland, make memories in Kyle Field and take part in all the traditions they hold so dear.

While the gameday experience seems to be just beginning, in reality, the preparation behind these moments takes place months in advance, as each Aggie's gameday experience begins with a ticket.

The 12th Man Foundation is committed to providing a great fan experience to every ticket holder, and that, according to Lacey Williams, is reflected in the work that goes into developing a seamless

ticketing process at Texas A&M.

"While the ticket itself is just a temporary possession, we understand that the gameday memories are lifelong," said Williams, who serves donors and ticket buyers as vice president of ticketing. "We strive to provide our fans with great ticket options, ticket management and ticketing experiences when entering Kyle Field on gameday."

By the time a football season begins, the 12th Man Foundation ticketing staff is already preparing for the next season. The process of building custom season ticket renewal applications for each account, making ticket inventory available for new



buyers and completing hours of meticulous functionality testing all begins before the current season concludes.

Ashlee Shidler says there is no real start and stop between seasons in the ticketing department.

“We start early to make room for a thorough testing process,” says Shidler, director of ticketing operations, “and we strive to provide the best ticket purchase and renewal process possible for our fans.”

While facing the demands of preparing for future

seasons, much attention is still required for executing the current season as well. From the experience tied to the ticket, to the ticket’s functionality and management options, the staff is dedicated to upholding the standard set by the organization.

“We prioritize education and training for both our staff and our season ticket holders when it comes to ticket utilization,” Williams said. “And because we welcome both paper and digital tickets, we implement extensive training and testing to prepare for scanning either type on gameday.”

Balancing innovation and tradition, the staff continues to offer familiar options while also introducing new ways to experience Aggie football at Kyle Field. For example, initiatives to provide buyer flexibility led to the launch of the Gig `em Pass in 2021 – a unique season ticket option built to accommodate any schedule.

Justin Morgan says the Gig `em Pass was a solution based on feedback received from fans who wanted to support Aggie football, but could not commit to all seven games in the fall.

“It was exciting to see the idea come to fruition and sell out so quickly after a year of planning

“
THERE’S A LOT OF THOUGHT, PROCESS AND EXECUTION BEHIND A FAN’S TICKET PURCHASE. BUT WHEN YOU SEE A FULL KYLE FIELD ON SATURDAY, IT’S WORTH THE YEAR OF WORK AND PLANNING TO GET TO THAT MOMENT.

— LACEY WILLIAMS

“

IT TAKES OVER 70 STUDENT WORKERS AND FULL-TIME STAFF TO DISTRIBUTE NEARLY 36,000 RESERVED-SEAT TICKETS EACH HOME GAME WEEK. IT IS A PROCESS UNIQUE TO TEXAS A&M ENSURING THAT SPORTS PASS HOLDERS AND THEIR GUEST GET TO STAND IN KYLE FIELD AS THE 12TH MAN.

— AMY JANAC

inventory, polishing the buyer process and curating business rules that would allow us to execute on the highest level for our fans,” said Morgan, senior director of ticket sales & development. “That committed effort speaks to the dedication of our ticketing staff.”

In order to execute a gameday at the scale of Kyle Field, dedication is certainly a virtue required of the 12th Man Foundation staff. With various ticket options at buyers’ disposal, the staff is responsible for converting each purchase into a reserved seat for every fan.

As Williams describes it, “filling the stadium is comparable to completing a unique puzzle.”

As various tickets are sold, each buyer is manually

positioned into their respective seats and sections, piecing each part of the 12th Man puzzle into place.

And to add another component to the equation, A&M provides reserved seating for each of the nearly 36,000 sports pass holders who fill the student section on gameday. Given A&M’s unique ticket-pull system to allow upperclassmen best luck of the draw, the student ticketing operation presents its own separate workload that results in an industry-leading payoff.

As senior manager of ticket operations & events, Amy Janac oversees the countless hours of training and organization that goes into making the student ticketing process possible.

“It takes over 70 student workers and full-time staff to distribute nearly 36,000 reserved-seat tickets each home game week,” Janac said. “It is a process unique to Texas A&M ensuring that sports pass holders and their guest get to stand in Kyle Field as the 12th Man.”

For seven Saturdays of the year, each of these elaborate ticketing processes work in concert to execute one of college football’s greatest atmospheres. To the power of more than 100,000, the 12th Man is truly a sight unlike anything else.

“There’s a lot of thought, process and execution behind a fan’s ticket purchase,” Williams added. “But when you see a full Kyle Field on Saturday, it’s worth the year of work and planning to get to that moment.”

The gameday experience at Kyle Field is second to none, and it all starts with a ticket and the nearly 36,000 student sports pass holders who stand ready as the 12th Man on seven Saturdays each fall.



DERRICK SMITH '93

Former football student-athlete leading by example through philanthropy with Aggie Athletics

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

FORMER STUDENT-ATHLETE TURNED ENTREPRENEUR

Derrick Smith is a proud Aggie who made the most of his opportunities at Texas A&M to achieve success in life.

The first in his family to attend college, Smith chose A&M over the University of Texas because of the school's superior electrical engineering program and Aggieland's proximity to his hometown of Houston where he had a young son living at the time.

Smith arrived in College Station in 1985 after graduating from James Madison High School. At A&M, he was a part of Jackie Sherrill's football program during its Southwest Conference dominance and was an active member of several student organizations including Alpha Phi Alpha and the National Society of Black Engineers.

"My experience at A&M was absolutely amazing," Smith said. "Coming from an all-Black high school and an environment where 90 percent of the people

around me were people who looked like me, I really wanted to learn how to be productive, comfortable and an asset in an environment that looked more like the country we lived in. I really took it upon myself to learn how to get along with other Aggies and learn how they thought and how they worked."

TRAGEDY TURNED TRIUMPH

Following his A&M graduation in 1993, Smith spent nearly the next decade building a successful career in hi-tech sales and marketing. However, shortly after the September 11 attacks, his employer struggled to stay afloat and Smith ultimately lost his job.

"After that horrible experience with 9/11 and then being let go, that was very traumatic for me because I was definitely a good, productive worker," Smith recalled. "I never wanted to live that experience again."

Thanks to the influence from some friends, Smith decided to start his own business with the desire to give opportunities to others who would not normally be given another chance. What started as a small janitorial service in 2002 has grown into JAHMOR Enterprise, a million-dollar-plus company that has offered commercial, construction and residential cleaning services in the Austin area and beyond for almost 20 years.

"I began to add various scopes and trades to my knowledge as well as to the people I brought in to work for me and it transformed from a cleaning company to a construction company," said Smith, who also serves as the director of career advancement for the I.C.C.S. Academy helping educate minorities for careers in construction. "The company grew from zero to being able to generate a million, million and a half in revenue per year."

“

WITHOUT THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION, I WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN AT A&M. I GIVE BACK SO THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF YOUNG ATHLETES, ESPECIALLY MINORITIES, CAN CONTINUE TO COME TO A&M, BE INSPIRED AND ACQUIRE AN EDUCATION LIKE I DID.

— DERRICK SMITH '93



Pictured at this year's Champions Council Weekend (left) and 12th Man Foundation Summer Meeting (below), Smith is a proud supporter of Texas A&M Athletics and Aggie student-athletes. In addition to being a football student-athlete while at A&M, Smith was an active member of several student organizations including Alpha Phi Alpha (bottom) and the National Society of Black Engineers.

PAYING IT FORWARD

A proud supporter of Texas A&M Athletics and an active Champions Council member, Smith is influencing current and future Aggie student-athletes through his involvement and presence with the 12th Man Foundation.

"Without the 12th Man Foundation, I would have never been at A&M," said Smith, who is the proud father of two sons. "I give back so that future generations of young athletes, especially minorities, can continue to come to A&M, be inspired and acquire an education like I did. I want to lead by example."

Smith's leadership and spirit of giving is unquestioned. And his experiences as an Aggie and as a 12th Man Foundation donor have been invaluable on his journey as an entrepreneur.

"When I speak to minority former students, I tell them what their presence means for other minority students who are at A&M or who are maybe thinking about going to A&M," Smith said. "When they see professional Black former students who have graduated from A&M and have very successful careers, they begin to believe, 'Hey, I can do that too.' I encourage those former students to get involved because they are helping them in so many ways that they never would have imagined.

"I encourage anyone to get involved. You may not think the amount or the level at which you can get involved is significant, but it is extremely significant." ■



KARLINA SAMPLE '22

The Aggie senior soccer student-athlete sets the standard for embracing all that Texas A&M has to offer

BY MATT SIMON '98



TEXAS A&M IS ALL ABOUT DEVELOPING LEADERS. One extraordinary example is Karlina Sample.

The senior student-athlete and A&M soccer star embodies the Aggie core value in competition and in life.

On the soccer field, Sample is an All-American leader of the Aggie defense.

A&M has won a lot of matches since she first donned maroon and white. The team has made two trips to the Sweet Sixteen and one to the Elite Eight. And the Aggies claimed yet another SEC

regular-season championship in the improbable and unpredictable 2020 campaign.

For all the successes Sample has seen between the white lines, it's the underlying character she carries with her that makes her who she is. And that starts with her leadership.

"She's beyond reproach," said G Guerrieri, A&M's head soccer coach. "If she makes a demand of her teammates, they're expected to step up, because they know she wears her heart on her sleeve and will do everything she possibly can to make things the very best they can be for us.

"I'm incredibly proud of her for so many reasons. The word is out on what a great person she is and what a great inspirational leader she is with her peers."

THIS IS THE SPOT FOR ME

Sample does not have the familiar "Maroon blood line" family story – she is a "100 percent first-generation Aggie," she points out with a laugh.

As a young member of the Solar Soccer Club, Sample's first taste of Aggieland was on visits down from Dallas to Ellis Field with her teammates even before she started high school. So when it came time to start the recruiting cycle, she was already steps ahead of the process. She had built relationships with the coaching staff. She had experienced the unmatched atmosphere. She had seen the world-class facilities that Aggie student-athletes call home.

"Something I was adamant about was that I didn't want to make too quick a decision," Sample said. "But as I visited other schools, I began to realize those schools just weren't the ones for me. I realized I was always comparing them to A&M, and once I saw I was holding Texas A&M to a higher



A senior All-American, Sample has helped Aggie soccer win on the field while also making a significant impact as a standout student-athlete off the field.

standard than other universities, I realized maybe this is the spot for me.”

Those who have known Sample as she’s grown up, and her times playing for the Solar Soccer Club, could see the leadership potential in her.

“People have always told me I’ve shown leadership qualities, and that they saw me being a leader in the future in some form,” Sample said. “Transitioning from high school to A&M, I wasn’t planning on holding as many leadership positions as I do now and having as big an impact on the university and specifically the athletics department as I do now.

“That being said, I think it shows how much I’ve grown over the years as an athlete, a person and a

leader. I think I’ve come a long way, and that’s also helped me become a better individual.”

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY

Ross Bjork remembers Sample being one of the very first student-athletes he met when first arriving in Aggieland in 2019.

“To see how far she’s grown in her leadership and in her profile, I just give her a ton of credit in terms of taking advantage of being an Aggie, taking advantage of being a captain and taking advantage of being a leader,” said Bjork, A&M’s director of athletics. “It shows she’s taking advantage of the full opportunity.”

Sample was a founding member and the driving force behind “The B.L.U.E.print” (Black Leaders who Undertake Excellence), a student-athlete led organization to provide leadership opportunities and a sense of community while empowering Black individuals to use their voice.

Inspiration for The B.L.U.E.print began in January 2020 after Sample attended a Black student-athlete summit. There, she gathered ideas to begin a club at A&M for Black female student-athletes. It was after the death of George Floyd when Sample changed direction and decided to target the club toward both Black male and female student-athletes.

The organization has continued to flourish in its second year.

“**I JUST GIVE HER A TON OF CREDIT IN TERMS OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF BEING AN AGGIE, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF BEING A CAPTAIN AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF BEING A LEADER. IT SHOWS SHE’S TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE FULL OPPORTUNITY.**

— ROSS BJORK

“

FROM THE FIRST DAY STEPPING ON CAMPUS AND NOT KNOWING THE IMPACT TEXAS A&M WOULD HAVE ON ME, TO NOW BEING ABLE TO SEE HOW MUCH IT'S REALLY CHANGED ME AS A PERSON, A WOMAN, AN ATHLETE, AN INDIVIDUAL...SEEING THE EFFECT IT'S HAD, I'M DEFINITELY VERY THANKFUL.

— KARLINA SAMPLE '22

Among Sample's many accomplishments off the field include creating The B.L.U.E.print in 2020. Sample is currently serving her second year as president of the student-athlete led organization, which also features fellow student-athletes (below, left to right) Sahara Jones '24, Patrick Johnson '23, Brandon Miller '24, Chase Lane '22 and Brian Williams '23 on its 2021-22 executive board.

"I'm very proud of The B.L.U.E.print," said Sample, who serves as the organization's president. "To build it from the ground up and to see how much impact we've had on athletes, staff, different organizations, different schools, even different companies...I'm very proud. Staying focused on our goals and the impact that we wanted to have – to achieve those goals speaks for itself. I hope it continues to grow."

VERY THANKFUL

Sample is a perfect example of the impact a scholarship can have on a young student-athlete.

"Think about what we do in college athletics," Bjork said. "You see the evolution of somebody

who walks in here and maybe they're a little shy. Maybe they're a little timid. Then, they blossom. They evolve. We give them those opportunities, and they take advantage of them. It's a pretty neat story to see Karlina come this far."

Sample is on track to walk the stage at Reed Arena in the spring and receive her degree in telecommunications media studies. But as her time in Aggieland winds down, she's not coasting to the finish line.

"I think I've maximized my time here, but I do think there's more to be done," Sample said. "The kind of person I am, I never want to settle. I always want to look at opportunities to grow and step outside of my box...that's just my goal for however much longer I'm here."

Those opportunities would not have been possible without her athletic scholarship – a scholarship that allowed her to attend A&M. To wear maroon and white. To develop those Aggie core values.

And to lead.

"From the first day stepping on campus and not knowing the impact Texas A&M would have on me, to now being able to see how much it's really changed me as a person, a woman, an athlete, an individual...seeing the effect it's had, I'm definitely very thankful," Sample said. "A scholarship is about more than just athletics. It helps people in different areas that you don't know will appear until they do. I really appreciate the opportunity." ■

TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS



THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION THANKS ALL OF THE JOHN DAVID CROW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

Joan & S. Wayne Adamik '58
 Sonja & Neal Adams '68
 Sandra & Daniel J. Adams '77
 Jacolyn Alexander
 Kamal Ariss '84
 Michael '88 & Carol '85 Barrett Ashfield
 Barbara & Dionel E. Aviles '53
 Evelyn & Lloyd Bailey '44
 Sandy & Ron Barclay '68
 David G. Barker '66
 Barbara C. Barnett
 Kate Parker & Robert I. Bernath
 Kim & Brian S. Bishop '91
 Ruth & Ron Blatchley
 Derrith & Robert D. Bondurant '80
 Dorothy & Ibrey T. Bonnette '40
 Joan & Jeff L. Bott '65
 Greg '85 & Janice Bowen
 Lynn & Richard Box '61
 Mary Elizabeth & Franklin M. Bradshaw '43
 Russell W. Brandes '79
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 Vera & Roy E. Bucek '42
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For questions about the John David Crow Legacy Society or to inquire about making a planned gift, please contact Brian Harrison at 800-392-3310 or 979-777-4996



POWER OF A SCHOLARSHIP

AINIAS SMITH '23

Versatile star Aggie student-athlete is thankful for the opportunity to represent Texas A&M

BY WILL JOHNSON '01

AINIAS SMITH WAS RANKED AS THE NO. 783 PROSPECT in the nation when he signed with Texas A&M out of Fort Bend Dulles High School in February 2019.

Now, the jack-of-all-trades junior is a team captain for the Aggies and one of the best all-purpose athletes in all of college football.

Running back. Receiver. Returner. Smith is as versatile as they come and truly does it all for the Aggies. What he has been able to do with his opportunity is nothing short of remarkable.

“The opportunities you get at this school,” says Smith, “a lot of different classes, meeting a bunch of different people – the opportunities are limitless.”

Smith is aware of the doors that A&M can open, in football and beyond.

“You can do, really, whatever you want,” he said. “For me, I wanted to build on the foundation that my parents established with their program.”

His parents’ foundation, Heavenbound Christian League, is close to Smith’s heart. They have run

the organization for over 20 years, which aims to build Christian student-athletes and better them along the way.

“They work the mind, body and soul,” Smith said.

In time, it will be his way to give back. The organization is there to assist the student-athlete on and off the field, helping with anything from Bible studies to tutoring.

Smith does have his own passions. He enjoys cars and wouldn’t mind steering his future toward the automobile industry. That will likely have to wait until after football. The game brings him a desire that few can match.

“I’ve been playing this all my life, since I was five or six years old,” he said. “I enjoy working out. I’ve learned to embrace the grind.”

It’s easy to see the plays he makes on a Saturday. But, the 12th Man might be more in awe of the work he puts in on a given weekday.

“I put it all on the line,” Smith said. “Not for myself

“

IT ALWAYS KEEPS ME HUMBLE THAT I RECEIVED A SCHOLARSHIP, AND IT REALLY JUST PUSHES ME AND DRIVES ME.

— AINIAS SMITH '23

– for my teammates. For my parents. Everything.”

Smith puts so much into it, he’s even gone so far to say, “The game has become me,” and, “I didn’t find the game, the game found me.”

It shows how much Smith loves football and how appreciative he is for what it’s given him.

His indebtedness to the school he plays for is apparent too. Smith knows the generosity of some Aggies have afforded him the opportunities.

This season, Texas A&M is celebrating 100 years of the 12th Man tradition. Several student-athletes were asked before the season what the 12th Man means to them.

“I think of the donors of the 12th Man Foundation first,” he said, “and all of their support.”

Smith goes to work every day with gratitude. What comes from his Monday through Friday efforts shows up as flash and flare on Saturdays. When it comes time, he can create fireworks.

Smith scored the first touchdown of the 2020 season, taking a pitch 25 yards against Vanderbilt. He scored the first two touchdowns on Halloween night versus Arkansas, a 35-yard reception and a 15-yard run. He pounded in a 4-yard touchdown to help put away the Auburn game. For good measure, Smith caught six passes for 125 yards in the Orange Bowl win over North Carolina.

Prior to the 2020 season, Smith chose a new number – zero. The first time he sported it was during a preseason photo and video shoot at 12th Man Productions. A teammate told Smith, “You look cold in that zero.” Smith agreed, and after giving his patented “shoot,” he stated he was “too cold.” He was “Subzero.”

The nickname stuck, and it’s fitting. When he sticks his foot in the ground to make a cut he can flat out freeze a defender.

Number zero is one of the program’s heroes – a do-it-all dynamo for the Aggies despite being labeled a three-star prospect out of high school. And he is a shining example of the life-altering impact an athletics scholarship can make on a student-athlete.

“It always keeps me humble that I received a scholarship,” says Smith, “and it really just pushes me and drives me.”

Called a Swiss Army knife by Jimbo Fisher, Smith has been a key part of some major moments in an Aggie uniform including this unforgettable game-tying touchdown reception in A&M’s historic upset victory over Alabama on Oct. 9.





“
My scholarship means a lot to me and my family. My parents don't have to worry about paying my tuition, and that's a huge blessing.

To be able to get an education at a school like Texas A&M does wonders for your life. Thank you to Catherine and Ken Sheffield for giving me a chance to change my life and change my family's life.

I appreciate all 12th Man Foundation donors for doing what they do from the kindness of their heart. It means a lot to me.

AKI OGUNBIYI '24
FOOTBALL

Aki, who hopes to find a career making an impact on others once his football playing days are over, is connected with donors Catherine & Ken Sheffield '82 through their support of the 1922 Fund. Call the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595 for more information on the 1922 Fund.



“

Life-impacting testimonies from our amazing student-athletes convinced us to give to the 1922 Fund.

We've heard their stories and know that scholarships from the 1922 Fund enable them to realize their dream of pursuing college athletics and an education at the highest level. Endowing scholarships for deserving student-athletes across all sports is a great way for us to give back to Texas A&M.

Aki Ogunbiyi is an amazing guy and so mature for his age. We look forward to getting to know him better over the next few years and watch him grow as a football player, student and leader.

CATHERINE & KEN SHEFFIELD '82
1922 FUND DONORS

Catherine and Ken are connected with football student-athlete Aki Ogunbiyi through their gift to the 1922 Fund. Call the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595 to discover how you can be a part of the 1922 Fund and make a life-changing impact for Aggie student-athletes.



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The 1922 Fund represents our desire to permanently endow scholarships for all Aggie student-athletes

Every year, Texas A&M Athletics pays the university the current cost of attendance for every student-athlete on scholarship, including tuition and student fees.

Donors can help minimize that burden on the athletics department by funding a scholarship for the sport of their choosing or creating an endowment that is unrestricted.

An investment in the 1922 Fund is a direct investment in the long-term viability and success of Texas A&M Athletics

For information about supporting student-athletes through the 1922 Fund, please contact the Major Gifts staff at 979-260-7595

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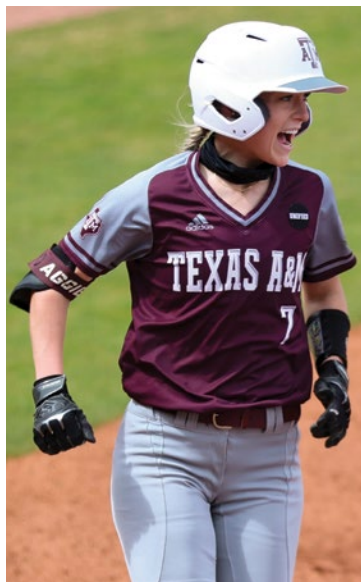
RISE OF THE "SUPER SENIOR"

Extra year of eligibility proving beneficial to multiple Aggie student-athletes and Texas A&M Athletics

BY ADAM QUISENBERRY



Women's basketball stars Kayla Wells and Destiny Pitts (above) have an opportunity to experience a second senior day during their extra year of eligibility as "Super Seniors" this season while Kelbi Fortenberry (above, right) capped her distinguished career with Aggie softball as a "Super Senior" this past spring.



WHEN THE INITIAL IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC swept across the country in the spring of 2020, it caught just about everyone by surprise.

For Texas A&M Athletics, one moment that symbolized that sudden shock to the system came from Aggie track and field. Pat Henry's squad was on the track, warming up in Albuquerque at the NCAA DI Indoor Track & Field Championship when that competition, and ultimately the upcoming outdoor season, were unceremoniously called off.

Similar stories exist from peer Aggie student-athletes as baseball, golf, softball and tennis all saw their seasons end abruptly.

"The pandemic impacted our seniors the greatest," Senior Associate AD for Student-Athlete Services Joe Fields said. "Each student-athlete had individual plans for their lives and careers that had been carefully executed for years. Within seconds it all changed. We had student-athletes currently

enrolled in final hours to graduate, jobs already secured and professional opportunities waiting. Then, instantly, they had to pivot."

The swiftness and uncertainty of the situation resulted in many questions, including the somber, "Is this how my college career comes to an end?" which rose from student-athletes in their final year of competition.

That question, however, did not linger as on March 30, 2020, the NCAA Division I Council voted to allow 2020 spring sport student-athletes the option for an additional season of competition and an extension of eligibility.

It marked the birth of the so-called "Super Senior."

With a new lease on their college careers, a total of 18 Aggie spring sport student-athletes who would have seen their eligibility expire in 2020 received another opportunity to represent the Maroon and White.

As one question was answered, additional concerns remained. The decision regarding eligibility was made at NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis but the final, and unexpected, bill for this extension of support for student-athletes would be footed by individual schools.

For Texas A&M Athletics that meant almost \$300,000 of added tuition and fees alone, as well as various further costs associated with supporting these returning student-athletes at the highest level. This all came during a time when budgets were severely impacted by the far-reaching consequences of the health crisis.

While the costs associated with the initial wave of "Super Seniors" were being tabulated, college athletics was still trying to conduct business and host sporting events during an unprecedented period.

Another wrinkle was added to the story during the fall when the NCAA approved an extra year of eligibility for 2020-21 fall and winter student-athletes who would be playing their upcoming seasons against the backdrop of a global pandemic.

More “Super Seniors” would be on the horizon as Aggie student-athletes from football, soccer, volleyball, equestrian, swimming and diving and basketball would be impacted by this new legislation, opening the door for a new set of compliance, scholarship, roster size and budget questions.

One “Super Senior” returning for another ride on the court was men’s basketball’s Quenton Jackson, who saw each of his first two seasons in Aggieland impacted by the health crisis.

“Coming back for this year was something that I felt needed to happen,” Jackson said. “My first year ended early and last year didn’t go as planned with a lot of interruptions, so I felt like coming back for my third year as a ‘Super Senior’ is a blessing and needed to happen because I feel like I have unfinished business.”

Not all student-athletes shared the same path as Jackson. In the first round of “Super Seniors,” some student-athletes felt as though they had completed their journey at Texas A&M and were ready



to move to the next phase of their lives.

Others took advantage of the opportunity to not only return to competition, but to complete a degree plan or, in some cases, start a new one. In the coming months and years, those who were underclassmen in 2020-21, have time to make their decision on the extra year of eligibility.

“For the majority, this challenge turned out to be a blessing in disguise,” Fields said. “Many of our impacted student-athletes were able to start graduate programs and others were able to complete their current graduate program. These opportunities would not have been possible if not for the ‘Super Senior’ year.”

While the complete financial impact of “Super Seniors” will not be known for a few years, it is certain that Texas A&M Athletics will continue to rely on support from 12th Man Foundation donors and season ticket holders to provide an unmatched student-athlete experience. Even as they help A&M compete for championships a bit longer than usual. 🍷

Quenton Jackson (above, men’s basketball) along with Jayden Peevy and Aaron Hansford (left, football) are a few of the “Super Seniors” representing A&M this season with their extra year of eligibility.



“
**FOR THE MAJORITY, THIS CHALLENGE
TURNED OUT TO BE A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.
MANY OF OUR IMPACTED STUDENT-ATHLETES
WERE ABLE TO START GRADUATE PROGRAMS
AND OTHERS WERE ABLE TO COMPLETE
THEIR CURRENT GRADUATE PROGRAM.**

— JOE FIELDS



“
My education has opened up many doors for me. With my degree, I was able to apply for nursing school this summer.

I decided to play an extra season of volleyball this year because I knew that our current team had something special. Our team and each individual went through a lot physically, mentally and emotionally during the COVID year. This opportunity means a lot to me because I am able to finish my last semester at A&M enjoying the sport that I love.

Thank you to each and every donor who helps make our world go round. As student-athletes, we need support from academics to treatment to proper fueling. You're the one that makes it happen for us and it doesn't go unnoticed.

CAMILLE CONNER '21
VOLLEYBALL

Camille is an All-SEC setter for the Aggie volleyball team playing her "Super Senior" season this fall. The Katy, Texas, native has started nearly every match and played in nearly every set since her freshman campaign began in 2017. Expecting to receive her degree in health in December, Camille recently became A&M's all-time assist leader in the 25-point rally scoring era.



THANK YOU!

The 12th Man Foundation salutes all Eppright Distinguished Donors for their lasting commitment to Texas A&M Athletics

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 Cathy & Clifton L. Thomas, Jr. '72
 Clay Thomas
 Sidney & R.B. "Buck" Thomason '69
 Flora & Perry Thompson, Sr. '33
 Betty & Robert Thompson '57
 Donna Beth & Jim Thompson '68
 Evelyn & H. Dale Thompson '51
 John Thompson '88
 Kim Ellis Thompson '91
 Mayo J. Thompson '41
 Sheila & Frank L. Thompson '41
 Thelma & Keith J. Thompson DVM '63
 Jim '80 & Sharla Thompson '82
 Perry Thompson, Jr. '63
 Ellen & Penrod S. Thornton '63
 Julian W. "J.W." Thrasher Jr. '52
 Jeannie '77 & Al Thurmond '75
 Betty & Frank Thurmond '51
 Julie '86 & Kelly Tidwell '84
 Andrew '11 & Leslie '11 Tillotson
 Jayme M. '10 & Steven S. Toepfich '03
 Jeffrey A. Toole '80
 Susan '13 & Sam Torn '70
 R.C. Tortorice
 Laine '81 & Ted Totah '80
 Edythe & Thomas Toudouze '55
 Jacquelyn & Terence F. Townend '87
 Andy Townend '88
 Traditions Club
 Candie and Steven '96 Tramonte
 Sandi & Phil Trapani
 Todd R. Traylor '91
 Billy R. Trimmer '52
 Cheryl & John E. Trott '66
 Colleen & David Tucker '77

Angela and Michael Tuller '87
 Claydene & Gilbert Turner '45
 Jackie & Harold E. Turner '52
 James and Lauren Turner
 Tim '74 and Judy '78 Turner
 U.S. Lime Company
 Bruce Upshaw '70
 Jan & J.H. "Jim" Uptmore '53
 Kathleen & William Urban '66
 Rob & Amanda Urban
 Donald Vaccaro
 David Vacek '83
 Leslie & Kyle D. Valentine '00
 Carol & David Van Houten '71
 Jolene & John Vanderzyl '86
 Mark '83, Ashley '14, Tyler '16, & Mikaela Vara '19
 Nicole & David R. Vasquez '89
 Anonymous
 Rebecca & William F. Vaughn '91
 Suzanne and Tom Vaughn '89
 Virgil Vaughn '31
 Gregory & Sheldon I. Vernon
 Coleen & Troy Villarreal '89
 Meredith '03 & Matthew Villere '02
 Linda B. & Stephen H. Vincent '73
 Anonymous
 Sally & Dan Volney '75
 Kelly '87 & W. D. Von Gonten, Jr. '87
 Amanda & Eric von Rosenberg '77
 Jeff Voncannon '84
 Joan '84 & George Voneiff '83
 Shana & Max R. Vordenbaum '73
 Laura '94 & Joe W. "Mac" Waddle, Jr. '20
 Herbert Wade
 NolaAnn '79 & Jeff Waggoner
 Wagner Resources Limited
 Keele '94 and Keith Waguespack '95
 Paul Wahlberg '50
 Karla '87 & Parten Wakefield, Jr. '78
 Donna & J. Mike Walker '66
 Ray N. Walker, Jr. '79
 Anonymous
 Sara L. & E. L. "Spur" Walker, Jr. '53
 Ken Wall '54
 Cheryl & Jeffrey Wall
 Leslie & Charles B. Wall '82
 Diane & Greg Walla '79
 Lynda & Bill Wallace '63
 Becky Childress Wallace '78 & Joe Wallace '76
 Kelley & Ed Wallace '78
 L. Mike & Angela Wallace '84
 Kim & Calvin Wallen III '77
 Amy L. (Appelt) Wallingford '97
 & James A. Wallingford '97
 Merri & Fred G. Walsh '74
 Marjorie & Robert L. Walters '72
 Jane Leffel Wardlaw
 Peggy & W.G. "Bud" Watson '44
 Jane & B. K. Watson '65
 Brad '75 & Brenda Watson '76
 Lisa '92 & Stephen C. Watson '91
 David R. Watts
 Phoebe & Dale Watts '71
 Carrin & William Way '81
 David Weatherford '89
 Cecil Ferguson '64 & Don Weaver '76
 J. Justin Webb '97
 Janet & Michael Wegner '86
 Ruth & Carl Weidenbach '55
 Jane & Stuart Weil '81
 Charles '47, Jonny '82, Bo '77, Danny '81
 Weinbaum
 Tina & Brian L. Weiner '65
 Ray & Tiffany Weiss
 Emily & Joe H. Wellborn, Sr. '41
 Pam & Joe H. Wellborn '66
 Joe H. Wellborn '66
 Thomas C. Weller Jr.
 Wells Fargo
 Gail & Ray Wenz '72
 Martha & Don West '66
 Sharon & James West
 Sam & Anita West
 Kathy and Denzil West '81
 James R. Whatley '47
 David R. Wheeler '75
 Delbert A. & Linda Whitaker '65
 Don & Allison Whitaker '96
 Margarette & Charlie J. White '27
 Kathleen & Donald M. White '57

Dee & Robert White '81
 Michele & Barry White '80
 Daisy & John White '70
 Sandra & Wes L. White '84
 Sam & Merrily White
 Clint J. & Allison E. Whitlock '94
 Leslie Hodges '84 & Andrew Whitmire '74
 John J. Whittington
 Charles W. Wiesepape '62
 Anonymous
 James Wiley '71 & Glen Wiley '79
 David & Jean Wiley
 Virginia & James E. Wiley '46
 Dr. & Mrs. Walter D. (Wally) Wilkerson, Jr. '51
 Modesta & Clayton Williams, Jr. '54
 Patricia & Conley R. Williams '62
 Sue & David Williams '79
 Julie '95 & Keith Williams '78
 Jane & R. Ken Williams '45
 Linda & Gary W. "Buddy" Williams '65
 Judy '87 & Lucian Williams '88
 The Brian J. Williams Family
 Mollie & Richard A. Williford '55
 Pam '79 & Hearne Williford '77
 Allen, Williford & Seale, Inc.
 Carl D. '84 & Sophia C. '85 Williford II
 Tracey '79 & Connie W. Williford '79
 Thomas Williford '92
 Shirleen & Cecil Willis '65
 Sheena & Jack Wiloughby '72
 Billie Jo & James M. Bralley '51
 Jan & Bud Wilson '53
 Sharon '81 & Jim Wilson '81
 Kathy & Ron I. Wilson '72
 Leah & Bonsall S. Wilton '72
 Anonymous
 Carolyn M. & Robert E. Winckler '55
 Pat & Jerry Windham '63
 Robert S. Winter '45
 Sara & David Winters '64
 Patricia & Charles R. Wiseman '57
 C. Vince Wiseman '82
 Clorinda & Royce E. Wisenbaker '39
 Jana & Royce E. Wisenbaker, Jr. '82
 Angela '91 and John W. Wisenbaker, Jr. '90
 Richard R. Wistrand '73
 Melba & Cliff Wolf '62
 Harriet & David B. Wolf '52
 Netta & M.E. "Babe" Wolfe '43
 Mark W. Wolff '84
 Anonymous
 Wilma J. & Brad C. Wolters '81
 James G. Wood '82
 Shirley & William A. Wood '59
 William Wood '81
 Anonymous
 Linda & J.D. Woodward III '70
 Beverly & Lynn Woolley '60
 Chrissie '92 & Chad Wootton '96
 Eunice & Dr. J. Max Word '52
 Shannon '90 & Chris Work '90
 Brad Worsham '88
 Darolyn & G.W. "Bill" Worth '61
 Gary and Sharon Wortham '70
 Michele & John Wray
 Jill '83 & Edwin "Joe" Wright '82
 Jimmy & Millie Wright '58
 Frances Wright-Leiper
 Nat '80 & Tina Wrotenbery
 Bruce Yanta '90
 John M. Yantis '53
 Yantis Company
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Trey and Lexie Yates '17
 Dee '91 & Tom H. Yates '55
 S. Shariq Yusufzai '74
 Carol '76 & Kenneth Young
 Two Ags from Waco '77 & '79
 Glenda & Collin H. Young '98
 Amber '02 & Preston Young '02
 Preston and Amber '02
 Amy '86 & Thomas Youngblood '86
 Anonymous
 Laura & John B. Zachry '84
 Zachry Group
 Barbara & Donald Zale '55
 Michael Zingelmann '86
 & Rayne Zingelmann '90
 Victor E. Zouzalik '52





TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS

STANDING FOR AMERICA

How the Texas A&M community showed its true colors in honoring the nation 20 years ago

BY HOMER JACOBS '87

UPDATED BY HALEY STANGLE & BRIAN DAVIS '01

AT 12:29 A.M. ON SEPT. 12, 2001, a visitor to TexAgs.com tossed the match that would ignite the wildfire.

I am repeating what ag2003 stated in another post: "I think it would be a great act of US pride if we wore red, white and blue for the OSU game."

Great idea.

In my own opinion, to take it one step further and to really make a nice statement would be to coordinate:

3rd deck: Red

2nd deck: White

1st deck: Blue

Gig 'em and God Bless.

Agrswe '01

In the 10 days that would follow this early-morning post on a burgeoning Aggie website, the patriotism of a nation, the pride of a university and the power of the Internet would become historically intertwined.

It was a confluence that perhaps could only be found in College Station, and they were certainly some of Texas A&M's finest hours.

Twenty years ago, a massive and complex grassroots effort to blanket Kyle Field like an American flag came to fruition in what will forever be known as the Red, White and Blue (RWB) Out game.

While the nation mourned the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, there were countless tributes to the country and the victims and heroes of 9/11. And



This article by the late Homer Jacobs originally appeared in 12th Man Magazine on Sept. 15, 2011, for the 10th anniversary of the Red, White and Blue Out game. It has been updated for the 20th anniversary of the historic event.

having switched colors, if only for a few hours on a Saturday afternoon in the fall.

But the RWB Out game will be remembered for more than just its final patriotic display. It was a 10-day exercise in business logistics, community involvement and the Aggie spirit cranking into overdrive.

And those intimately involved in the organization of the event wonder to themselves like most fans who clamored for a \$5 T-shirt:

How in the world did they pull this off?

THE FAB FIVE

Eric Bethea was experiencing the same emotions of so many of his fellow students at A&M when he decided to post on TexAgs about following the lead of Maroon Out, a T-shirt tradition that began for students in 1998 for the blockbuster game with Nebraska at Kyle Field.

Aggies were familiar with wholesale T-shirt statements, so he thought why not wear red, white and blue T-shirts to Kyle Field for the OSU game instead of the standard maroon garb.

“At midnight or so, I just threw the idea out there,” Bethea said. “I didn’t really think much of it, but the next day, somehow I had 30 or 40 emails in my inbox. That thread had gone to about five pages. People were saying, ‘That’s an awesome idea, let’s do it.’”

Kourtney Rogers (now Kourtney Gruner) was a self-admitted recruiting junkie and a TexAgs regular, while three friends – Cole Robertson, Josh Rosinski and Nick Luton – were fascinated by the RWB Out idea and began contacting Bethea with their pledge for support.

After an exchange of emails, the five A&M students decided to meet for lunch the next day to

In remembrance of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Texas A&M recreated the iconic RWB Out event at the A&M-Kent State game on Sept. 4 to kick off the 2021 Aggie football season.

they were all poignant in their own way.

But no act of togetherness and camaraderie on such a grand and public scale could match what unfolded at Kyle Field on Sept. 22 for a college football game between Texas A&M and Oklahoma State.

The stadium was filled with red, white and blue T-shirts – some 70,000 – with the words “Standing For America” emblazoned on the front. Kyle Field’s three-deck layout allowed for a spectacular display of America’s patriotic colors.

Approximately \$180,000 was raised for the New York Fire and Police relief funds, and memories for thousands of Aggies were indelibly stamped with the sight of their usually marooned-out stadium



discuss their plan. Little did they know that they would be joined at the hip in helping coordinate an expression of patriotism that would forever be archived in the history of Texas A&M University.

“I think we all had our individual visions of what could happen,” Luton said. “I think the underwriting theme was we just wanted to do something to help out. Since none of us could do anything on the East Coast, we just wanted to try and figure out what we could do locally. If we could accomplish anything at all, it would be a success. But I don’t think any of us had any idea of what was going to unfold.”

After gauging the possibility of selling mass quantities of T-shirts on campus with A&M officials and student groups, the five lead organizers for the RWB Out approached C.C. Creations owner Ken Lawson about having his College Station-based company print the shirts. Lawson recalls the first order topping out at 3,000.

At the onset of this student-run T-shirt barrage, sales were slow. It was game week in Aggieland, and seniors were pulling tickets on the Zone Plaza. Yet, there was more of a sense of curiosity about the T-shirts than zealous purchasing.

But by that Monday night, with word of mouth in full force on the Internet and mainstream media outlets spreading the story, RWB Out transformed from a creative little venture into a full-blown mega-event.

“On Tuesday, we’ve got to sell 10,000 shirts or go talk to Ken Lawson and talk about how we lost money on this deal,” Rosinski recalled. “But then we were out of shirts in the morning that day. It was a jump in demand. It got progressively more hectic as the week went on.”

Did it ever. C.C. Creations’ employees were working around the clock with two, 12-hour shifts. Yet, the company was struggling to keep up with the unfathomable demand.

Now hundreds, if not thousands, of students and community volunteers were involved in the RWB Out operation. And the most important commodities – red, white and blue T-shirts – were nowhere to be found in the Bryan-College Station area.

Calls soon went out to printers across the state (even a T-shirt company in Shreveport joined in the fun) to ask for deliveries of the blank shirts to Aggieland, where the printing was now being done at multiple print shops. Students suddenly were manning the assembly lines in relief of exhausted full-time workers.

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WE WERE SPEECHLESS AND DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY OR WHAT TO EXPECT. WHEN WE WALKED IN THE STADIUM AND SAW IT, IT WAS PRETTY INCREDIBLE.

– COLE ROBERTSON '03

“It was absolute insanity,” Luton added. “We were just so fortunate that there was such an emotional attachment to the event that people were just coming from class to buy a shirt and asking if they could help.”

The most chaotic days of the RWB Out adventure came on the day before the OSU game and on the actual gameday. As of that Friday, nearly 40,000 shirts had been sold, and most people were understanding the drill: Wear a red shirt if you sit on the third deck, white if you’re on the second deck and blue if your seats are in the first deck. It was more complicated for the former student crowd in the north end zone: Upper bench seats were to be in the red zone, while upper armchairs, suites and club level seats were to be in the white area; lower armchair seat holders were to fill in with blue.

Luton pulled his truck, loaded with T-shirts for sale, up close to Rudder Fountain at 4:30 a.m. on gameday. To his surprise, there were already lines of people snaking through the grounds in anticipation of buying their appropriate shirt. In fact, all over campus there were tables set up for the last big push. In a shocking six hours leading up to kickoff,





another 30,000 red, white and blue T-shirts would be sold to A&M fans, as well as those from Stillwater, Okla.

The grassroots effort put in motion by an early-morning post on the Internet had turned Aggieland into a sea of red, white and blue.

The spirit that can never be told was about to show the nation its true colors like never before.

A SIGHT TO BEHOLD

The five main organizers of RWB Out knew they had sold close to 70,000 shirts, and their cell phones were lighting up with responses from fans who were in their seats at Kyle Field as the first quarter unfolded.

Josh Rosinski was in charge of the money, so he drove bags and backpacks filled with cash to his College Station apartment to count the take. He caught a glimpse of Kyle Field as he passed the stadium on Wellborn Road, and he knew that the Aggies had, indeed, pulled it off.

Cole Robertson, Kourtney Gruner, Nick Luton and Eric Bethea all walked into Kyle Field together, emerging out of the tunnel in the south end zone. What they saw was almost unimaginable.

Kyle Field was awash in a perfectly coordinated design of red, white and blue.

"I think all of us were in complete shock," Bethea said. "We expected the student section to look good, but we had no idea that it had become as viral as it did and that the former students' side would be just as perfect as the students' side."

Added Robertson: "When we started this, the argument was whether we could sell 5,000 or 7,000 shirts. At the end of the day, when you had 80,000 people with shirts that had been printed or the

colored shirts they brought from home...it was just amazing. We were speechless and didn't know what to say or what to expect. When we walked in the stadium and saw it, it was pretty incredible."

The Aggie football team knew it was about to perform on a stage that only a school like A&M could construct. Head coach R.C. Slocum even had his staff shed their standard coaching attire and wear the "Standing For America" shirts on the sideline.

"I'll never forget the sight and am reminded of it when I see the picture," Slocum said. "But when we jogged out on the field and saw red, white and blue, it was an incredible feeling to see the immediate patriotism and to know that we had been attacked. Everybody dug deep and forgot their individual differences."

Quarterback Mark Farris said he was always amazed how the feel of the stadium and how an atmosphere could change from the time the players ended warm-ups until they reappeared 20 minutes later to run onto the field.

But on this day, Farris and the team were blindsided by what they saw.

"I don't think there is any other place that could have pulled that off," Farris said. "I remember when I first heard about it, I didn't know if they would be able to pull it off. But then when I saw it, it was just pretty amazing and one of those things you'll never forget."

The Aggies went on to beat Oklahoma State, 21-7, but anyone who was at Kyle Field or watched the game on television won't remember much about the game action. It's the Aggie Band spelling out "USA" during their halftime show and a stadium glistening in red, white and blue that remain forever etched in our minds.

Patriotism filled Kyle Field just days after the 9/11 attacks. Approximately 70,000 shirts were sold and \$180,000 in donations to the NYC police and fire departments' relief funds were directed to the families of the fallen emergency responders.



Twenty years later, the five lead organizers for the RWB Out game are all married with young children. The group recently reunited at Kyle Field for the RWB Out recreation event.

After the RWB Out game, superfan and 12th Man Foundation donor David Evans helped organize a trip to New York City so the student organizers of the event could personally hand over the \$180,000 in donations to the NYC police and fire departments' relief funds, which were directed to the families of the fallen emergency responders.

Several entities chipped in for the trip, as Continental Airlines provided five round-trip tickets at no cost, while a Hilton hotel comped all the rooms during the Big Apple excursion. An anonymous A&M former student even contributed \$200 for each of the Aggie students to use as spending money.

The policemen and firefighters were floored with the RWB Out event and eagerly accepted the university's invitation to attend a game at Kyle Field the following season.

TWENTY YEARS LATER

This past winter, the student body leadership at Texas A&M University reached out to A&M's athletics department with the intent to recreate the RWB Out game in remembrance of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. This moment, which kicked off the 2021 Aggie football season on Sept. 4, is a true testament of the power and spirit of the

12th Man standing both for gameday and for our country.

As for the five A&M students at the heart of RWB Out, they are excited about the recreation by current students and remain connected by friendship and certainly their roles in organizing the 10 days of cotton chaos.

All five are married with young children, and they have all enjoyed success in their fields.

Kourtney Gruner is currently an Assistant Program Director in the Master of Industrial Distribution Program at A&M and is also pursuing her doctorate in higher education administration at the university.

"A flood of emotions come back as I recall the Red, White and Blue Out game and what it meant at the time," said Gruner, who lives in the Brazos Valley with her husband, Gus '01, and two sons, Cooper Olsen (10) and Brady Connell (5). "I'm grateful for the opportunity to be one of the voices for the event – although the event was and is still about the Aggie community and family displaying support to those affected by the 9/11 attacks. RWB Out particularly still stands for me as the perfect display of the core values of Texas A&M – excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service."

An oil and gas business professional, Josh

COURTESY OF RWB OUT ORGANIZERS (FAMILY PHOTOS); TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS (ALL OTHERS)

Rosinski adds that the experience has given him more conviction in life to pursue something that he knows in his gut is the right thing to do.

“There were some initial hurdles to getting RWB Out started and different decision points along the way that could have gone either way based on how we were thinking at the time,” said Rosinski, who lives in Dallas with his wife, Laura '04, and three daughters, Elle, Livy and Nora. “We pushed through and just went all in on something we all believed in and that is something I have really tried to remember as life goes on.”

Nick Luton, a partner in a Houston residential real estate firm called Luton Underwood Development Partners, says he is filled with countless memories from RWB Out that will last a lifetime.

“I enjoy sharing stories with others who were there in 2001 that never fail to create emotions as if it was much more recent than 20 years ago,” said Luton, who lives in Spring Branch with his wife, Alex '05, and three sons, Lane (10), Sam (7) and Cade (3). “I love seeing the images from that day show up in social media posts throughout the year and reading the comments about the pride

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WE PUSHED THROUGH AND JUST WENT ALL IN ON SOMETHING WE ALL BELIEVED IN AND THAT IS SOMETHING I HAVE REALLY TRIED TO REMEMBER AS LIFE GOES ON.

— JOSH ROSINSKI '02

that Aggies felt participating in a simple way that collectively created such a memorable statement of patriotism.”

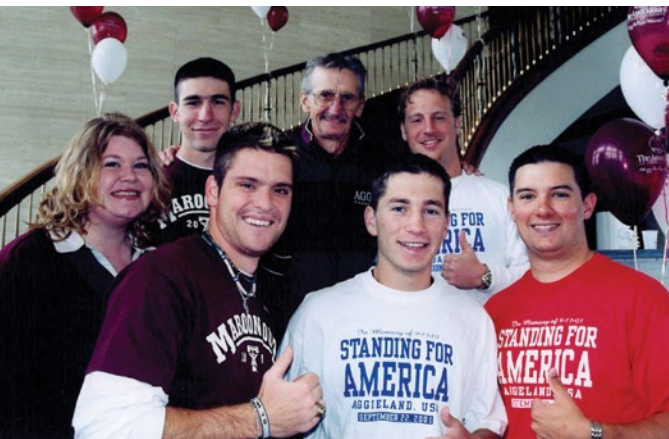
Eric Bethea – the author of the post that started it all 20 years ago – now oversees Executive Compensation at Hess Corporation.

“The RWB Out helped me recognize how important it is to trust and rely on others,” said Bethea, who lives in Houston with his wife, Alana '03, and three kids, Mac (12), Ellie (10) and Emma (8). “We had thousands of volunteers from students to former students to administrators to community members, and all were critical to making the original RWB Out a success. I try to take that to my professional life and manage in a way that demonstrates trust and allows others to make contributions. It’s amazing what can be accomplished with teamwork, collaboration and a shared goal.”

Cole Robertson, a partner in a private equity fund called BP Partners, says the activities, experiences and emotions of those 10 days are still as fresh in his mind as if they happened yesterday.

“Even today, I am still amazed at the power of the Aggie spirit,” said Robertson, who lives in Dallas with his wife, Robyn '03, and three kids, Lee (10), James (7) and Claire (4). “It has often been said that the RWB Out could not have occurred at any university, and I truly believe that. I think it’s a sense of selfless service that Aggies have that propels us to accomplish great feats.

“Josh, Nick, Eric, Kourtney and I get a lot of the recognition. I remember the other hundred-plus student volunteers from all across campus who helped selling shirts, running the shirt press, driving U-Haul’s of blank T-shirts, coordinating volunteers and the countless other activities that took place that week. They didn’t do it for recognition. They did it because they wanted to be a part of something bigger than themselves and to try and help Aggieland and the nation heal. Those people and what they represent is why I love Texas A&M so much.”



ADRIENNE PACE

Manager of Donor Services

BY MACY TORONJO & BRIAN DAVIS '01



ABOUT ADRIENNE

- » BORN IN LAKE CHARLES, LA.
- » IS MARRIED TO A COLLEGE STATION POLICE OFFICER
- » HAS THREE DOGS – JACKSON, DIXIE AND DIESEL
- » CAN SPEAK AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Adrienne and her husband, Lonnie, have been married since April 2018. They live in Aggieland with their three dogs – Jackson, Dixie and Diesel.

ADRIENNE PACE ALWAYS DREAMED OF BEING AN AGGIE.

A native of Lake Charles, La., Adrienne grew up in Louisiana until moving to Houston when she was 8 years old. Now, she's proud to call Aggieland home.

Adrienne first became part of the 12th Man Foundation staff prior to the 2016 football season when the organization tabbed a local staffing agency for help in the Donor Service Center.

What started as a part-time job quickly evolved into a blossoming, full-time career in customer service that has been rewarding for Adrienne, the 12th Man Foundation and its donors.

Over the past five years, Adrienne has served the organization in a variety of roles with donor services and ticket sales. She was promoted to assistant manager of donor services in 2018 and moved into a ticket sales account executive role in 2019 before being promoted again in 2020 to her current position as manager of donor services.

“Adrienne is a vital part of how we serve our donors here at the 12th Man Foundation,” said Justin Morgan, senior director of ticket sales and development. “She has shown a passion to develop her skill set as she has gone from team member in our Donor Service Center, to a successful sales representative on our ticket sales team, to her current role as the manager of our

“

IT HAS BEEN VERY REWARDING TO BE ABLE TO WORK IN AN AREA THAT I AM SO PASSIONATE ABOUT.

— ADRIENNE PACE

Donor Service Center. Adrienne's passion to develop those skills has allowed her to serve our donors at a high level, and I'm excited for the future she has with our organization.”

In her current role with donor services, Adrienne is part of the front line of customer service assisting donors and ticket buyers. She's the friendly voice on the phone, always upbeat and ready to help answer any question and do whatever she can to solve any problem.

And in the true spirit of the 12th Man, Adrienne is always standing ready when called upon no matter the task.

“She is the ultimate team player, not only performing her job at a high level and earning praise from the donors and ticket buyers she interacts with on a daily basis, but always the first to volunteer when others need help around the office,” said Michael Solomon, senior vice president of annual fund and donor services. “She has shown tremendous determination during her time with the 12th Man Foundation, and I look forward to what she will continue to do to make an impact on each and every person she encounters.”

For Adrienne, providing excellent customer service while working with donors and building relationships for the 12th Man Foundation is her favorite part of the job.

“I have come to realize that I have a passion for customer service and for helping people,” she said. “It has been very rewarding to be able to work in an area that I am so passionate about.”





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