

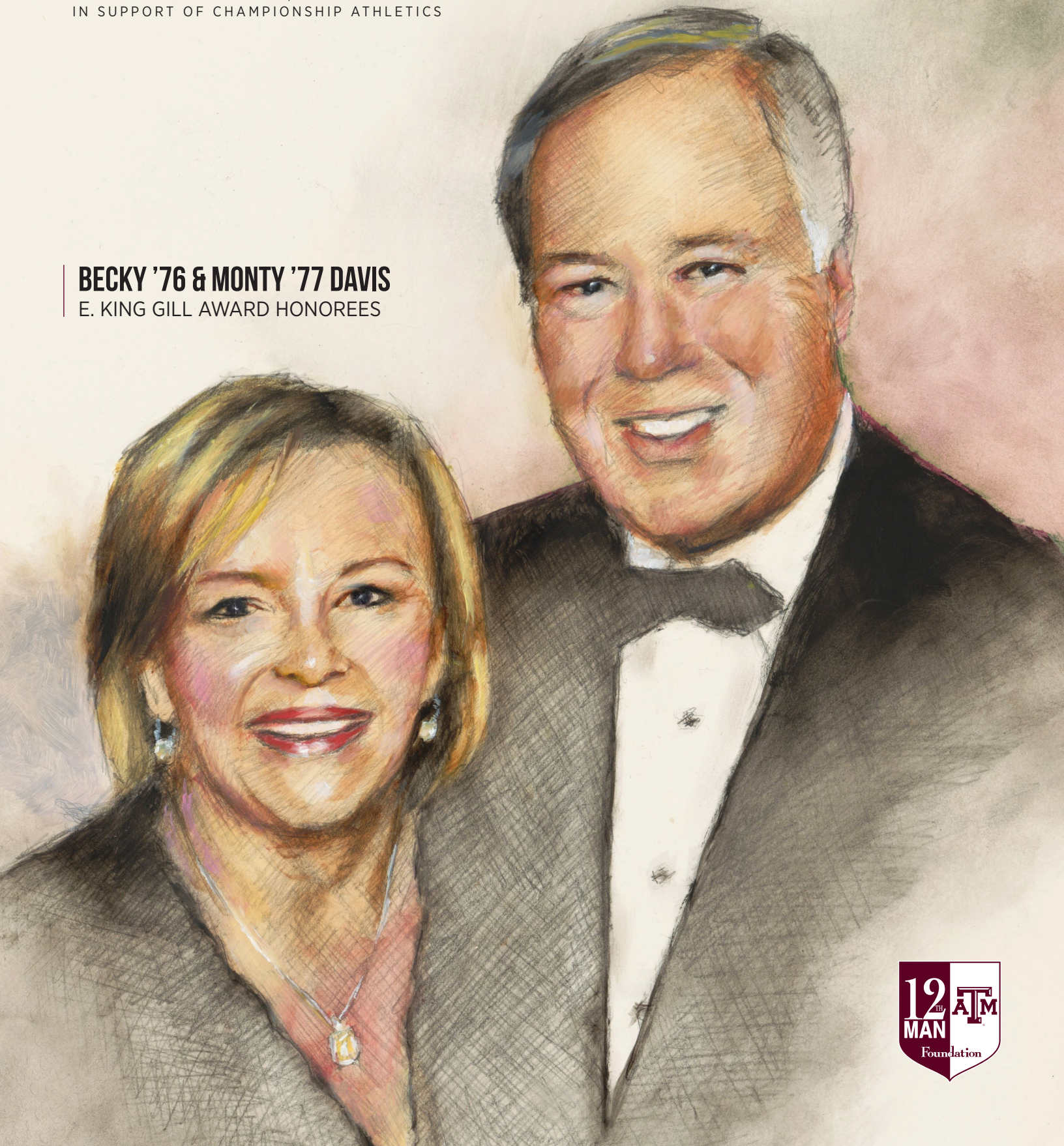
12th Man

2023 | VOLUME 28, NO. 2

FUNDING SCHOLARSHIPS, PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES
IN SUPPORT OF CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS

BECKY '76 & MONTY '77 DAVIS

E. KING GILL AWARD HONOREES





TO OUR DONORS,

We are deeply grateful for your continued support and investment that provides essential resources for Texas A&M Athletics. While the dynamic landscape of college athletics development is complex, your loyal contributions remain the cornerstone for our student-athletes' success. Undoubtedly, your steadfast commitment was foundational this fall as our organization and Texas A&M University experienced various changes.

In November, we celebrated the service of outgoing 12th Man Foundation Board of Trustee members David Coolidge '87, Michelle Hickox '89 and Past Chair, Chris Cooper '89. The 12th Man Foundation stands stronger today because of the remarkable leadership and insights they each instilled throughout their tenure. We commend David, Michelle and Chris for their commitment to excellence, passion for Aggie Athletics and advancement of the 12th Man Foundation's mission.

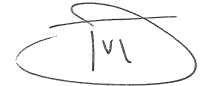
Additionally, The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents named General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III as the 27th President of Texas A&M University following his great success in an

interim role. As a former dean of the Bush School of Government and Public Service and United States Air Force four-star general, we are confident that the university is in great hands. On behalf of the 12th Man Foundation, we welcome his leadership and wisdom.

We recently beckoned a new era of Aggie Football with Texas A&M hiring Mike Elko as the program's head coach. We are excited to have Coach Elko back in Aggieland and look forward to the culture and guidance he will integrate within the football program. During times of coaching transitions, the 12th Man Foundation stands ready to support Texas A&M Athletics when unexpected financial needs arise from those changes. Our organization is specifically structured and diligently stewarded so we can assist whenever called upon. Having that ability is all made possible by the unwavering commitment of our donors and the fiscal responsibility of our dedicated staff.

Change is inevitable in today's world of college sports, yet we have a core competency that will forever remain and set us apart — the 12th Man. Our donors and season ticket holders are the integral foundation that allows Texas A&M Athletics to compete at the highest level. Thank you for enriching the Aggie student-athlete experience for those here today and for generations to come.

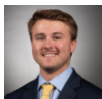
Gig 'em!



Travis Dabney '96
President & CEO

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



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Coordinator



Lorena Galindo '23
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Coordinator



Taylor Hoke '22
Coordinator of
Stewardship



WELCOME BACK TO AGGIELAND MIKE ELKO

The 12th Man Foundation proudly welcomes new head football coach Mike Elko! Texas A&M named Elko as the football program's head coach in November. As Aggie Football's defensive coordinator and safeties coach from 2018-21, Elko helped Texas A&M finish with four straight bowl trips and an overall record of 34-14. He was a semifinalist for the Frank Broyles Award (the nation's top assistant coach) in 2021 and was named the 2022 ACC Coach of the Year in his first season at Duke.

CONGRATULATIONS JACOB GREEN '80

Vice President of Principal Gifts Jacob Green '80 was inducted into the Prairie View Interscholastic League Coaches Association Hall of Fame in July. The 12th Man Foundation extends a huge congratulations to Jacob for this outstanding recognition and accomplishment!





CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN

The 12th Man Foundation proudly hosted an event on Sept. 1, 2023, to commemorate lead Centennial Campaign donors Wayne Roberts '85 and David Coolidge '87 for their generous support of Texas A&M Athletics. Roberts' gift spearheaded the renovation of the now **Bright-Slocum Center for Texas A&M Football** while Coolidge committed a pledge for the construction of the **Coolidge Football Performance Center**. Both facilities reside in the **Graham Athletic Complex** located directly south of Kyle Field.

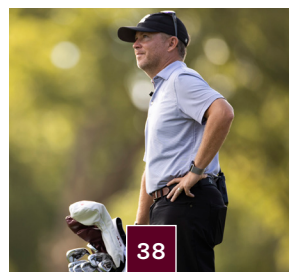




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COVER PAINTING BY WILLIAM ROSE

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It is challenging to find words that accurately express how honored I am to be the new editor of *12th Man Magazine*. I am extremely humbled and thrilled to take on this role, and it is truly one of the greatest highlights of my career and life.

Growing up in my hometown of Fairfield, Texas, I was immersed in a community built upon faith, hard work and camaraderie. Academics, agriculture and athletics defined my upbringing — so naturally, Texas A&M University was the perfect collegiate fit. Instantly, Texas A&M's deep history, core values, rich traditions and inexplicable Aggie Spirit captivated my heart the moment I first stepped foot on campus. I chose my undergraduate degree to pursue my interests of media communications, graphics and magazine production with the goal of one day working in a marketing profession. I made countless memories and friendships pulling tickets, swaying to the Aggie War Hymn and standing with the 12th Man at Kyle Field, Blue Bell Park and Reed Arena. At the time, it felt like I was just following my passions and making the most of my college days. Yet behind the scenes, it was all preparing me and laying the foundation for where I am today — the 12th Man Foundation.

This award-winning magazine, incepted in 1996 by Homer Jacobs '87, was the first publication of its kind to produce content on behalf of an athletic fundraising organization. Though I never knew Homer, I know from firsthand accounts he was truly a one-of-a-kind individual and devoted Aggie. He lived out his passion for Texas A&M Athletics, connecting its athletes and programs to their selfless supporters and inspiring readers with every story he composed. Homer made everyone feel known and celebrated. He was wholeheartedly dedicated to his purpose as a sports journalist, which led to his creation of the *12th Man Magazine*. In the words of his close friend and co-worker, Rusty Burson, "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" — and I could not agree more with that perspective.

It is my commitment that we continue to write those good ones for our readers. I consider it a privilege to carry on Homer's legacy alongside my fellow staff members and ensure that the *12th Man Magazine* inspires, educates and conveys immense gratitude for the support of the 12th Man — the premier fanbase in the country.

Gig 'em,

Ivy Robinson

Ivy Robinson '20
Editor of *12th Man Magazine*



GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP



Give the gift of membership to an Aggie in your life! When you give, you directly impact 600+ Texas A&M student-athletes by helping to provide tuition, books, medical care, nutrition, academic support and so much more. Plus, your gift of membership will award the recipient **12th Man Foundation priority points** and all of the benefits associated with the membership level of your contribution. As the contributor, you will receive a **tax receipt** from the 12th Man Foundation.

TO GIVE TODAY, VISIT [12TH.INFO/GTG23](https://12th.info/gtg23) OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW!



DEMANI RICHARDSON '23

An unexpected gift for the 12th Man: 26 returns for '23

BY OLIN BUCHANAN

PRESENTS DO NOT ALWAYS COME IN GIFT BOXES.

Sometimes, they come in 280 characters or less.

Case in point: Demani Richardson, a starter since the first football game of his freshman year, gifted Texas A&M another season with him at safety. On New Year's Day of 2023, Richardson announced via Twitter his intention to forego the NFL Draft and return for a "super senior" season at Texas A&M. As valued gifts typically are, it came as a big surprise and was well received.

"People were surprised," Richardson recalled while sitting back in a chair inside the Bright-Slocum Center for Texas A&M Football at the Graham Athletic Complex. "People were telling me thank you all the time. They would come up to me in stores or gas stations and be like, 'Are you Demani? Thank you for coming back!' like I am giving them something."

Richardson said his decision was based on what was best for A&M and his future.

"I appreciate them feeling like I gave them a gift," he added.

Richardson quickly showed a knack for being in the right place at the right time after his arrival from Waxahachie High School as a Top 100 national prospect in 2019.

In the first game of the 2020 season, Richardson deflected a Vanderbilt pass that Leon O'Neal intercepted to quell a fourth quarter threat in a 17-12 victory. In 2021, he had a key goal line interception to deny Alabama a touchdown in a 41-38 victory. In 2022, he returned fumbles for touchdowns in victories over Arkansas and LSU.

For Richardson, it was easy to give A&M another season because he had already received



Demani Richardson
@therealdemani

...

Happy New Years, just wanted to let y'all know that I'll be using my covid year and finish out school and get my degree at the best university! I can't wait to prove the doubters wrong man. #GigEm



“

**I REALLY APPRECIATE EVERYTHING
A&M HAS DONE FOR ME, THE 12TH
MAN AND HOW LOYAL THEY ARE.**

— DEMANI RICHARDSON '23





so much.

“Ever since I got here it has felt like family,” Richardson said. “The coaches, community, 12th Man, teammates — you just feel like a family here. Having that and having them behind me made me want to come back.”

Of course, there were other factors in Richardson’s decision to postpone a professional football career. He played with nagging injuries in 2022 that he felt compromised his level of play.

During the 2023 season, the fifth-year starter rarely left the field while helping land A&M among the nation’s best in total defense.

As Richardson prepares to take the next step, NFL franchises will surely be interested in a 215-pound, 6-foot-1, physical safety.

“Demani is just a great young man first and

foremost,” Texas A&M Director of Athletics Ross Bjork said. “A lot of times you see an 18-year-old bloom over a five-year period, but Demani has always been the same. He is mature beyond his years. I think what he realized was, ‘Maybe I can help my value in the future, but also if that does not work out, look at what I am benefitting for being here at A&M.’”

A&M has benefitted from Richardson’s return, too. Every football program would reap reward from a skillful player with experience, leadership qualities and an unrelenting hunger to give everything he has to a fan base that has meant so much to him.

“I really appreciate everything A&M has done for me, the 12th Man and how loyal they are,” Richardson said.

Richardson arrived at Texas A&M as a Top 100 national prospect in 2019. In the 2022 season, he led A&M with 73 tackles and was among the team-leaders with five passes broken up.



TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS / CRAIG BISCHACRE (BOTTOM) / KATIE LUFFMAN (TOP)

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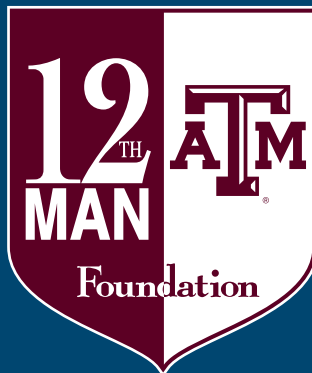
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BECKY '76 & MONTY '77 DAVIS

2022 E. King Gill Award Honorees

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

PHOTO BY JP BEATO

THE DAY STARTED LIKE ANY TYPICAL OCTOBER SUNDAY

for Becky and Monty Davis.

They attended church before returning home to prepare for one of their favorite pastimes – an Aggie Softball game. Texas A&M was hosting Houston in a fall contest that afternoon.

Becky and Monty arrived at Davis Diamond shortly before game time and chatted with friends and fellow fans as they made their way to their seats, situated as close to the home team dugout as possible.

As they approached their section, the Davises were greeted by Travis Dabney, 12th Man Foundation President and CEO, who encouraged the couple to find their seats for a special presentation.

The Aggie Softball team lined up on the field directly in front of the Davises and then promptly parted to ensure Becky and Monty had a clear view of the venue's videoboard.

Then came the surprise video played for everyone at Davis Diamond, announcing that Becky and Monty were the recipients of the 2022 E. King Gill Award.

"I was crying," said Becky. "I could not believe it."

"It took a minute before I figured out what was going on," added Monty. "It was a wonderful surprise, and we were extremely honored to be in that group of people. It could not have been a better moment or at a better place."

When the Davises turned around, they were surprised again by friends and family who were waiting to congratulate the couple for the well-deserved honor.

"Becky and Monty embody what it means to be an Aggie and represent what makes Texas A&M a special place," Dabney said. "They are deeply ingrained in the Texas A&M community, are invested in the success of our student-athletes and want the very best for our university. They are extremely deserving of this recognition."

FULFILLING A DREAM

Maroon has been one of Monty's favorite colors for most of his life, but not always because of Texas A&M. Coincidentally, maroon and white were his school colors growing up in Killeen, Texas.

"It was good for wardrobe management," he joked.

Before enrolling at A&M in 1974, Monty did not have any affiliation with Aggieland, and no one in his family had earned a college degree.

What he did possess were parents who aspired to provide Monty and his younger brother, Lloyd, with opportunities that had been unavailable to them.

"That was their dream," Monty said. "They both grew up on farms and worked at the local bank. They did not push us to go to college, but they worked hard to make it possible."

Monty visited Aggieland while in community college and ultimately decided to become an Aggie because of the school's strong academic standing. Choosing A&M was also an affordable option for his parents, although Monty worked while in college to help pay for his education.

Monty and Lloyd both decided to come to A&M, and in 1977, Monty became the first in his family to graduate from college.

"Divine intervention directed us to Texas A&M," said Monty, who fell in love with the university during his time on campus. "It was a great experience that changed my life."

BAR 707

A major part of that life-changing experience occurred at a party in the summer of 1976 when Monty met Becky Woodruff.

Unlike Monty, Becky had a deep-rooted connection to Aggieland.

"It was kind of all things Aggies," recalled Becky, who grew up south of Fort Worth in Cleburne, Texas. "I had uncles and cousins who went to A&M,

“

**BECKY AND MONTY EMBODY WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AGGIE
AND REPRESENT WHAT MAKES TEXAS A&M A SPECIAL PLACE.**

— TRAVIS DABNEY '96



Football season ticket holders and 12th Man Foundation donors for more than 45 years, Becky and Monty discovered an opportunity to strengthen their connection to Texas A&M Athletics in 2011 after reading a 12th Man Magazine article explaining the need for a football player development center.

and we would often spend our weekends watching my cousins march with the Corps of Cadets.”

Becky started her college journey at Texas Tech in the fall of 1972, but she soon realized it was not the right fit and embraced her Aggie heritage by transferring to A&M the following year.

She studied education at A&M, and prior to the start of her senior year in Aggieland, Becky and her roommate decided to host a party. Monty attended, tagging along with a mutual friend who he was living with at the time.

A few days before the party, Monty called Becky to ask her out on a date.

“We went to a bar at 707 Texas Avenue,” Monty recalled. “We can’t remember the name of the bar, but we know exactly where it was. That was our first date.”

“In fact, we bought a ranch,” added Becky, “and that is the name of the ranch...Bar 707.”

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

The Davises were married in August 1977, shortly after Monty received his bachelor’s degree in accounting from A&M.

The couple started their lives together in Houston, where Monty began working his first job as

an accountant for the energy corporation Dresser Industries. As he gained experience, Monty transitioned into the company’s international division and earned an opportunity to work overseas.

“They sent me on a little assignment to Aberdeen, Scotland, for a month,” Monty said. “That is when we became very interested in the international aspect of the business.”

That month across the pond opened a door for Monty, and it eventually led to the company relocating the Davises to Scotland for a brief period followed by a three-year stint in Wimbledon, London.

The couple returned home to Texas when Monty was recruited to be the vice president of the company’s Core Laboratories division. Then, in the early 1990s, the Davises moved to Calgary, Alberta, where Monty accepted an executive leadership opportunity with BOVAR Inc.

The Davises enjoyed the next five years in Canada raising their two daughters, Kelsey and Cristina, as Monty advanced to chief executive officer of BOVAR. Then, in 1998, came a calling to return home to Texas.

“Kelsey, our oldest daughter, was a junior in high school at that time,” said Monty. “We started telling her about all of the good colleges that were close to

where we were living in Canada.”

“She looked at us like we were crazy,” added Becky. “She said, ‘I’m going to Texas A&M.’”

COMING HOME

If Kelsey was going back to Texas, so were the Davises. As fate would have it, Monty had an opportunity to return to Houston that summer of 1998 and become the chief operating officer for Core Laboratories.

“It all fit,” Monty said. “We moved back, and I stayed there for the rest of my career.”

He spent the next 20 years helping grow the oilfield services company into an industry leader in reservoir optimization.

“We assisted and advised oil and gas companies all over the world,” Monty said. “We worked for national oil companies, from the biggest integrated oil companies down to the smallest independent oil companies.”

With the Davises back in Texas, Kelsey and Cristina were able to attend A&M while staying close to home. Both Aggie daughters earned degrees in international studies, with Kelsey graduating in 2004 and Cristina in 2012. Cristina continued in The Bush School, earning a Master of International Affairs degree in 2014.

Monty, who retired in 2018, credits much of his professional success to his desire to work with people from different cultures around the world.

“I was fortunate enough to travel to over 50 countries through my business ventures,” he said.

MAKING A CONNECTION

For Texas A&M, Becky and Monty’s decision to move back home proved to be transformational.

Football season ticket holders and 12th Man Foundation donors for more than 45 years, the couple discovered an opportunity to strengthen their connection to Texas A&M Athletics in 2011 after reading a *12th Man Magazine* article explaining the need for a football player development center.

“We were on our way to Luby’s for a date night,”

“

**WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO
LUBY’S FOR A DATE NIGHT.
WE STARTED TALKING
ABOUT THE ARTICLE AND
THE IDEA OF MAKING A
MAJOR CONTRIBUTION.**

- MONTY DAVIS '77



Monty recalled. “We started talking about the article and the idea of making a major contribution.”

A week later, they decided to contact the 12th Man Foundation to inquire about supporting the project. Shelley Nemece, the senior administrative coordinator of major gifts at the time, answered the call.

“It was late on a Friday afternoon,” Shelley recalled. “The phone rings, I pick it up and Monty Davis is on the other end of the line asking about supporting the latest capital campaign.”

“I mentioned we were interested in doing something in the neighborhood of a million dollars,” added Monty. “There was a little pause, and she said, ‘Stu will call you right back.’”

Stu Starner, the 12th Man Foundation’s senior vice president of major giving at the time, quickly returned the call, setting the stage for Becky and Monty’s first major investment in Texas A&M Athletics. The couple’s lead gift resulted in the construction of A&M’s \$25 million state-of-the-art football training facility which opened in 2012 as the Davis Center for Football Player Development.

“We knew how important the facility was for the future of the football program,” Monty said. “Becky and I decided that was something we wanted to get involved with, and we were excited to be a part of getting that project completed.”

LEAVING A LEGACY

The couple’s engagement with Aggie Athletics

continued to grow in 2014 when Monty was nominated to serve on the 12th Man Foundation Board of Trustees. He served on the board through 2020, including a tenure as chair in 2019.

The Davises generously volunteered their time, leadership and advocacy during a transformational time for Texas A&M Athletics and the 12th Man Foundation. Monty’s seven years on the board were bookended by the historic redevelopment of Kyle Field and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Becky and Monty have been incredibly supportive of every A&M program and of the staffs of the 12th Man Foundation and Texas A&M Athletics,” said Dabney, noting the significant impact of Monty’s steady leadership on the board. “It has been amazing to watch their engagement grow and to see the unbelievable connection they have with the student-athletes and coaching staffs.”

Another facility project caught the Davises’ attention while Monty was serving on the board. During a tour of the aging Aggie Softball Complex in November 2015, Becky recognized the dire need for a new facility. And she felt they needed to do something about it.

“Once Monty saw the facility,” said Becky, “he was on board right away.”

The Davises committed the lead gift for the project, and the following April, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved the construction of a new softball stadium.

Davis Diamond, the new home of Aggie Softball,

While on a tour of the Aggie Softball Complex in 2015, Becky took notice to the program’s need for a new facility and felt led to take action. The Davises generously committed the lead gift for the \$28.6 million project, allowing the finest softball stadium in college athletics to become a reality on April 27, 2018.



“
**THEY SUPPORT YOU ON AND OFF THE FIELD,
 WANTING YOU TO DO YOUR BEST IN SPORTS, IN
 SCHOOL AND IN LIFE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL.**

— ERICA RUSSELL '18

opened on April 27, 2018. The \$28.6 million project provided A&M with the finest softball stadium in college athletics.

“It was great to see Davis Diamond come to fruition, primarily for the young ladies on the team,” Monty said. “It was a great leap forward for the program, not just the stadium, which everybody gets to see, but also the training, locker room and player development areas that are really second to none.”

SPECIAL BOND

Becky and Monty had never been to a college softball game before committing the lead gift for Davis Diamond. Now, it is safe to say they are the program’s biggest supporters.

Through their generous philanthropy, the Davises have established a special connection with the staff and student-athletes associated with the Aggie Softball program.

“We have been fortunate to make some major

financial investments,” said Monty, “but more rewarding has been the emotional investment we have with those young ladies. They are true student-athletes, and we are extremely proud to be associated with them.”

The couple’s unwavering support on and off the field is impacting Aggie student-athletes during their time on campus and beyond. Former A&M softball standout Erica Russell says it is difficult to describe what Becky and Monty’s support has meant to her.

“They support you on and off the field, wanting you to do your best in sports, in school and in life outside of school,” said Russell, who played for the Aggies from 2015 to 2018. “I am so thankful I have the opportunity to be involved in their lives.”

Now living in Bryan, the Davises rarely miss an Aggie home game and enjoy inviting the team into their home for special occasions a few times each year.

“We try to support them in any way that we can,” Becky said. “We consider it a wonderful investment of our time and resources.”

PAYING IT FORWARD

While their initial philanthropy centered around football, the Davises now support every Aggie program, and Texas A&M has benefitted greatly from their generosity.

“I have always been thankful to A&M for providing me with a foundation for success,” Monty said. “My parents provided me with strong guidance, a

The Davises have established a special connection with the student-athletes and staff of the Aggie Softball program. In the photo below, Becky enjoys a moment with head coach Trisha Ford after throwing the first pitch for the 2023 season opener on Feb. 9.



TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS / CRAIG BISAGRE (LEFT) / EVAN PILAT (RIGHT)



THE E. KING GILL AWARD

Established in 2011, the E. King Gill Award is presented annually to a person or couple who has been an influential investor and ambassador for Texas A&M Athletics.

The prestigious award honors supporters who have generously helped the 12th Man Foundation realize its mission of funding scholarships, programs and facilities in support of championship athletics. The recipient is selected based on financial commitment, exemplary service and leadership as a volunteer advocate, ethics and a high level of distinction as a role model.

The honorees of this prestigious award are recognized on an engraved plaque in the Claudia and Rod Stepp '59 Grand Lobby, located just outside the 12th Man Foundation offices.

E. King Gill Award Honorees

2011	Col. George J. Eppright '26 Carolyn & Jack E. Little '60
2012	Kay & Jerry S. Cox '72
2013	Judith & Weldon Jaynes '54
2014	Alice & Erle A. Nye '59
2015	Dorothy & Artie R. McFerrin '65
2016	Susan '13 & Sam '70 Torn
2017	Carolyn & Tommie E. Lohman '59
2018	Sharon '81 & Jim Wilson '81
2019	Trisha & L.C. "Chaz" Neely '62
2020	Rhonda & Frosty Gilliam Jr. '80
2021	Robyn '89 & Alan Roberts '78
2022	Becky '76 & Monty '77 Davis

“
**THEY WOULD DO ANYTHING
THAT WOULD BETTER
TEXAS A&M. AND THEY ARE
INCREDIBLY HUMBLE PEOPLE.**

— CAROL MEYER '78

moral foundation and a strong work ethic before I came to A&M, but I attribute a lot of my success to the university. Because of that, it has always been a pleasure to give back to A&M.”

In addition to their dedication to Aggie Athletics, the Davises have been steadfast supporters of The Association of Former Students and Mays Business School. The couple endowed a business honors scholarship program in 2013.

Carol Meyer, a longtime friend of Becky and Monty along with her husband, Don, says the Davises epitomize the Aggie spirit.

“They would do anything that would better Texas A&M,” said Meyer, a 1978 graduate of Texas A&M. “And they are incredibly humble people. They are doing it because of their love of the university and their love of the kids.”

Davis Diamond and the Davis Center for Football Player Development stand as tangible legacies of the couple’s generosity, but their impact extends far beyond bricks and mortar. They are creating lasting connections that will influence generations.

The Davises’ story is a testament to the transformative impact that one couple’s dedication can make, accentuating why Becky and Monty were recognized with the 2022 E. King Gill Award.

“Becky and Monty are unbelievably generous, not only financially but also with their time and commitment to their community and to our university,” Dabney said. “They are just good people, and Texas A&M is extremely fortunate to have them amongst its half a million graduates.”



TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS | 12TH MAN FOUNDATION



SYDNEY

BOWLES '26

Aggie Women's Basketball guard is engineering a bright future

BY THOMAS DICK

"I WOULD LIKE TO MAJOR IN ENGINEERING."

The phrase spoken by an incoming freshman left athletics staff saddled with the well-intentioned concern that many athletic programs share across the country. Typically, the advice following would be to steer a student-athlete to a more manageable major as they juggle the task of being a student and an athlete.

When Aggie Women's Basketball's Sydney Bowles offered up that sentiment upon enrolling at Texas A&M, she enjoyed a much different experience.

"When I told them I was going to major in engineering they were like, 'Ok, you want to do this, we are going to make sure you are doing your best at it no matter what,'" Bowles said. "Even though it is a tough major, they still want me to have a really good GPA and not just get by, so they are all-in on nurturing my success."

The Aggie coaches and support staff showed their dedication to helping Bowles traverse her selected path.

"I think being a student-athlete in the first place is tough, but engineering is really no joke," Bowles said. "But I have all the support I need with our learning center. I am in there all the time, every day. Sometimes my appointment is only an hour,



TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS / ETHAN MITO



The pursuit of excellence extends beyond the court for Sydney Bowles. The Georgia native's desire to succeed not only in competition but in the classroom as well, was facilitated by her parents.

Now she is pursuing an engineering degree at Texas A&M University, furthering her love of mathematics.

but I will be there three or four hours just trying to get things right.”

Surviving the first year, Bowles is excited for all the engineering school has to offer going forward. This summer, Bowles found out she is steering toward mechanical engineering.

“I am really open to learning in all areas of engineering, but mechanical is my preference,” Bowles said. “Mechanical engineering is everywhere. It is one of the most diverse kinds of engineering disciplines. Mechanical engineers touch pretty much every single business.”

Her path toward engineering was a no-brainer for someone who grew up attracted to math and science. As a child, nothing got Bowles more excited than multiplication tables.

“I have always had a competitive spirit,” she said. “When we got a new set of multiplication tables, I wanted to finish first. I think it is super rewarding when you have a really difficult problem and you are able to solve it.”

Her pursuit of academic excellence has been facilitated along the way by her parents. Her father, Leon, is an electrical engineer, and her mother, Tara, is an attorney.

“My dad and my brother would help me with my math homework,” Bowles said. “And my mother would always help me with papers. They really helped me establish good work habits on the school side.”

A native of Georgia who was committed to play for A&M head coach Joni Taylor while she was still coaching the Lady Bulldogs, Bowles had to make a quick adjustment when coming to Aggieland. After experiencing a bit of homesickness early on, she adapted to life in the Brazos Valley with the help of her new Aggie family.

“I tell people all the time that I would not want to play for or be around any other coaching staff in the country,” Bowles said. “I really love them, and they are so nurturing on and off the court. They really create a family-like environment. They kept me level-headed throughout the craziness of the first year in the classroom and a difficult season on the court.”

In a season which the program was hit by a rash of injuries, Bowles was a stalwart, one of only three Aggies to appear in all 29 games. She led the team with 29 starts and 853 minutes on the court. Bowles also scored the most points and ranked third on the team in scoring average with 9.1 points per game.



“
I THINK BEING A STUDENT-ATHLETE IN THE FIRST PLACE IS TOUGH, BUT ENGINEERING IS REALLY NO JOKE. BUT I HAVE ALL THE SUPPORT I NEED WITH OUR LEARNING CENTER.

— SYDNEY BOWLES '26



Bowles made a significant impact during her freshman season. She was one of three Aggies to appear in all 29 games and led the team with 29 starts and 853 minutes on the court. Bowles also scored the most points and ranked third on the team in scoring average with 9.1 points per game.

“At the time it was very trying,” Taylor said. “But you look at her now, playing every game and getting all those minutes was invaluable. You think about how she will be playing by the end of her sophomore year and the beginning of her junior year and, she’s going to be a nightmare for other teams. She’s going to be that kid in this league that we are like ‘Oh my gosh, is she still around?’ because she got so much mileage and so much experience. She showed up every single day, practiced really hard and got better.”

Bowles, who was a keynote speaker at Champions Council Weekend in April 2023, possesses a load of gratitude for 12th Man Foundation supporters.

“Obviously the support we get from the donors is just amazing whether it is through the scholarships or the facilities,” Bowles said. “And honestly,

“

THE FOUNDATION THAT TEXAS A&M HELPS YOU BUILD IS AMAZING, AND I AM GOING TO MAKE THE MOST OF EVERYTHING AGGIELAND HAS TO OFFER.

— SYDNEY BOWLES '26

the most underappreciated thing is the face-to-face support they always give us. I enjoyed meeting so many donors at Champions Council Weekend. They really accepted me with open arms and expressed so much support and how excited they were for the season.”

Along with her involvement at Champions Council Weekend, Bowles is embracing every opportunity to grow. In June, she took part in an NIL Summit presented by INFLCR in Atlanta, Georgia. The summit featured over 500 student-athlete delegates with over 100 speakers and more than 50 brands in attendance.

“The opportunities presented here are second to none,” Bowles said. “The foundation that Texas A&M helps you build is amazing, and I am going to make the most of everything Aggieland has to offer.”



AMY JANAC

12th Man Foundation's Senior Manager of Ticket Operations & Events

BY KATELYN BUYS '14



ABOUT AMY

- » STARTED WORKING AT THE ATHLETIC TICKET OFFICE IN 1986
- » JOINED THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION STAFF IN 2003
- » FAVORITE AGGIE SPORT IS BASEBALL
- » MOST EXCITING AGGIE GAME TO ATTEND WAS THE 1998 BIG 12 CHAMPIONSHIP
- » FAVORITE THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE OF WORK INCLUDE VISITING MLB BALLPARKS, READING, SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY AND GROWING HER ONLINE BOUTIQUE

Spanning decades, a special tradition has brought Aggie students together, filling them with excitement as they gather to pull their tickets for home football games. This tradition is an essential part of Aggie culture, symbolizing the strong bond between Texas A&M and its supporters — the 12th Man. And for an impressive 32-year stretch, one unwavering Aggie has stood as the devoted custodian of this treasured tradition — Amy Janac.

A native of Bryan-College Station, Amy has a profound bond with Texas A&M. Prior to her time at the university, she attended Bryan High School. Her path within the university's ticket office, guided by her mother who was once a ticket office employee, commenced during her high school years.

Amy's commitment to her profession has led her to a full-time role as Senior Manager of Ticket Operations & Events at the 12th Man Foundation. Throughout the football season, she orchestrates the intricate dance of student ticketing: managing sports passes, coordinating student ticket pull and guiding the dedicated group of student workers who ensure the impeccable execution of this grand tradition.

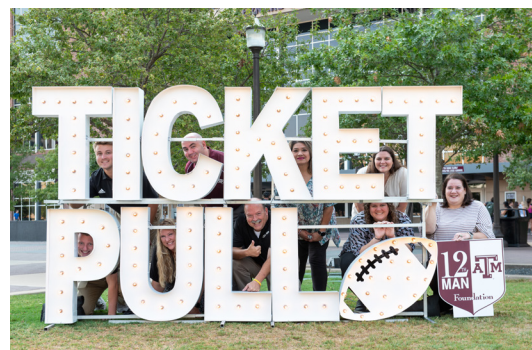
"On ticket pull week, Amy arrives sometimes hours before other staff to make sure everything is ready to go when the windows open," said Lacey Williams, vice president of ticketing. "She is the reason the ticket pull process has been successful year in and year out."

Between football seasons, Amy seamlessly transitions into the role of preparation, readying for the next surge of Aggie passion. Overseeing the processes of sports pass sales through the Howdy portal and ensuring the timely procurement of those sports passes by eager students, Amy's influence is extensive. Furthermore, her responsibilities extend to ticketing Aggie Baseball and lending a helping hand to various other ticket office endeavors throughout the year.

"I have worked with Amy for 30 years now," said Chris Carson, manager of ticket events and internal sales. "She is one of the most organized people that I have ever been around and is also the most giving person I have ever known. These are the qualities that have allowed our professional relationship and friendship to grow through the ups and downs over the years."

Beyond the demanding world of ticketing, Amy's heart finds its greatest joy in family. A devoted aunt, her happiness derives from supporting her nieces and nephews in all of their endeavors. In addition to her dynamic professional role, she also manages her own online business — a testament to her tenacity and unyielding determination.

Amy's impact is also reflected in the development of the numerous student workers who have spent time in the ticket office during their college careers. Her deep understanding of their challenges is rooted in her own past experiences, as she once occupied their shoes. She values the moments when these young Aggies have positive experiences and lasting connections. It is heartwarming for her to see former student workers, now parents themselves, encouraging their own children to follow the same path.



In the tapestry of Aggie tradition and spirit, Amy stands as a shining example of dedication and devotion.

"Anyone who has pulled a ticket in the last 30 years has felt the impact that Amy Janac has made at this university," said 12th Man Foundation President & CEO Travis Dabney. "Her role as the protector of this cherished tradition is a testament to her exceptional work ethic and passion for creating memorable experiences for every Aggie."

If you have stood as a proud member of the 12th Man over the past three decades, take a moment to tip your hat to the incredible impact of Amy Janac — the architect of cherished experiences and enduring connections for students at Texas A&M.

AINIAS

SMITH '22

“Subzero” sparks a return for a super senior season of Aggie Football

BY KIRI STANFORD '14

TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS

ON THE FIELD, AINIAS SMITH IS A FORCE OF NATURE.

His presence is like a spark that ignites the Aggie spirit, and his decision to return for a fifth season with Texas A&M Football was nothing short of electrifying. It is not just about his extraordinary talent — it is the heart and soul he pours into every moment.

WOULD HAVE, COULD HAVE, SHOULD HAVE

Smith faced a monumental decision in choosing to return for his “super senior” season. In 2022, when he suffered a gut-wrenching leg injury while throwing a block downfield against Arkansas at AT&T Stadium, Aggie fans felt the collective ache. He was not just a versatile player — he was the embodiment of the Aggie spirit. He was selfless, determined and always willing to give his all for the team.

One of the most dynamic athletes in Aggie Football history, Smith’s decision to return in 2023 was not a choice made lightly. It was a result of intricate desires converging into a singular, powerful decision. The stars aligned in a way that favored his health.

“Even though I was healing quickly, I knew that I would not be prepared in the way I would want to be for the NFL Combine,” Smith said. “The combine is really the only chance you get to impress



Ainsias Smith, a Missouri City, Texas native, became one of 10 receivers in program history to total six or more 100-yard outings. Smith is a true standout on the field and a passionate leader among his teammates.

those guys, and I wanted to be able to put my best self forward.”

Excellence was the only option.

The prospect of showcasing himself in his prime, combined with the thought of completing what he had started in the 2022 season, propelled Smith’s desire to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with his Aggie teammates once more.

“I think a big part,” said Smith, “other than the timeline not lining up, was just wanting to get back with these guys.”

The desire to further his education added another strong argument in favor of Smith’s return. In December 2022, Smith earned his bachelor’s degree from Texas A&M in university studies and then embraced the opportunity to pursue his master’s in recreation, parks and tourism sciences.

Of course, the fact that Aggie fans also really wanted to see him in maroon again did not hurt, either.

“The fans here are next level,” Smith said. “Their support means the world to me, and I knew I wanted to come play in front of them again.”

While other options were on the table — NFL and transferring to name two — Smith ultimately chose to follow his heart. The chance to transfer was not foreign to him, given his older brother Maurice’s pivotal role in shaping college football’s transfer portal.

“People don’t realize I am the younger brother of the guy who helped make some of these transfer rules,” Smith said with a chuckle. “A lot of guys look at transferring, but they don’t realize the grass is not going to be greener on the other side.”

For Smith, returning to Aggieland was the only answer. He wanted to find out what could have happened and leave it all on the field.



““

THE FANS HERE ARE NEXT LEVEL. THEIR SUPPORT MEANS THE WORLD TO ME, AND I KNEW I WANTED TO COME PLAY IN FRONT OF THEM AGAIN.

— AINIAS SMITH '22

SENIORITY IN MANY WAYS

Smith knows he brings a wealth of value to his team in more ways than just his football skills. His confidence, honed through experiences both triumphant and challenging, emanates from him.

“Having my experience, I am able to see things before they happen and make adjustments on the field accordingly,” he shared. “I am comfortable under the lights and playing out there. I am not nervous, especially at home, playing while all our fans are yelling.”

His leadership is a quiet but potent force, steering the team with a steady hand. Most importantly, he feels at home on the field, a comfort that translates into remarkable moments that ignite the 12th Man.

During his time at Texas A&M, Smith has not just made plays — he has lifted his teammates’ spirits with encouraging words and pats on the back. The glue of the program, he finds joy in his teammates’ success and has been there for every high and every low.

MORE THAN A COMEBACK

The offseason was not a break for Smith — it was an opportunity to rebuild. He poured effort into rehabilitating his ankle, inching his way back to full strength. His days were filled

with rehab sessions, team workouts, extra training and daily ankle maintenance — each second spent in pursuit of excellence.

Then, on Sept. 30, 2023, one year and six days after the demoralizing injury that prematurely ended his senior season, Smith enjoyed a moment of redemption at AT&T Stadium.

The Aggies were leading Arkansas by 11 points with under 8 minutes remaining in the game when Smith raced backwards to A&M’s 18 yard line to field a Razorback punt. Fifteen seconds of “Sub-zero” brilliance later, Smith was celebrating with his teammates and Aggie fans in the endzone following a jaw-dropping, 82-yard return for his first touchdown of the season.

Smith recorded a career-high 202 all-purpose yards in his redemption game and earned Southeastern Conference Special Teams Player of the Week honors after helping lead the Aggies to a 34-22 win.

“It was a breath of relief,” said Smith following the game. “Just to be able to come in, do what I did, it was great. I was just grateful to God.”

Smith’s return to Aggieland symbolizes more than a comeback — it is a beacon of hope. His versatility, leadership and sheer determination will undoubtedly leave a legacy that will impact Aggie Football for years to come.

Smith graduated in 2022 with a bachelor’s degree in university studies. In addition to his NFL career goals, he has interest in entrepreneurship and owning his own business someday.





AMY BURK '19

Guiding the next generation of volleyball athletes

BY CAMRYN GARNER '21

A FORMER STANDOUT STUDENT-ATHLETE AND CAPTAIN,

Amy (Houser) Burk's journey as a student-athlete provided her with invaluable leadership opportunities. Now serving as a director and lead recruiting coordinator for Houston Skyline Volleyball, Burk is shaping the lives of young athletes and equipping them with the skills and mindset required to thrive both on and off the court.

Burk began her volleyball journey at Houston Skyline as a player in 2011. The top-ranked youth club volleyball program in the Houston area and one of the top programs nationally, Houston Skyline is well known for producing high-caliber athletes that go on to have success at the collegiate level and beyond.

At Houston Skyline, Burk was coached by program founder Jen Woods. Her mentorship and guidance helped pave the way for Burk's successful career. With Woods' assistance in the recruiting

process, Burk chose to attend Texas A&M and became a member of the Aggie Volleyball program in 2015.

As an Aggie student-athlete, Burk fully embraced the program's core values and thrived in her role as a team leader. During her senior season, she quickly learned to adapt into a mentor figure for a younger roster of girls as the sole senior on the team, all while navigating a coaching change.

"I just had a passion for leadership," Burk said. "As a player, I worked super hard and invested a lot into the relationships I had with the people around me. My biggest goals were focused around leadership, bettering the lives of others and representing what it means to be an Aggie."

Burk's leadership skills became apparent as her teammates voted her recipient of the program's most esteemed Aggie Excellence Award for two consecutive years — a recognition presented to



community. Winning the American Volleyball Coaches Association Club Coach of the Year Award for the 15-year-old division in 2022 served as a testament to her coaching abilities and unwavering dedication to her athletes.

“It was amazing to be recognized amongst so many people across the nation that are really talented,” Burk said. “I could not do it without the support of my husband, as we invest and pour a lot into our players. I am very proud, but also very aware that there are so many factors that combined to this award that were not just me.”

In addition to her coaching responsibilities, Burk also serves as the lead recruiting coordinator at Houston Skyline. She has come full circle from her time as a young athlete, now having the opportunity to connect her athletes with some of the top collegiate volleyball programs in the country. Notably, Burk played a pivotal role in the recruiting process for former Houston Skyline athletes turned Texas A&M Volleyball standouts Logan Lednicki

Burk’s teammates voted her as the recipient of the Aggie Excellence Award for two consecutive years, an award that is presented to the student-athlete who best represents the Aggie core values.

the student-athlete who best represents the Aggie core values.

During this time, Burk realized with certainty that she wanted to pursue a career in coaching.

“I always wanted to work within sports, but I was not exactly sure what that would look like,” she said. “As I progressed through my time as a student-athlete, I spoke with Jen Woods about getting involved. She was able to loop me in as a coach on Houston Skyline when I was still playing at A&M in a traveling assistant coaching role.”

Upon graduating from A&M in 2019, Burk immediately stepped in as an assistant director at Houston Skyline. Along with her husband Nathan, a former member of the Texas A&M Men’s Club Volleyball team, Burk worked in a variety of capacities to support the Houston Skyline program including coaching, recruiting and managing various events and clinics for the club. When Woods, who is now the associate head coach of Texas A&M volleyball, made the decision to transition into an advisory role for the club in 2022, Amy and Nathan stepped up to serve as directors of Houston Skyline, now handling its day-to-day operations.

“Jen has played an absolutely huge role in my life,” Burk said. “There is no doubt in my mind that I would not be where I am today if she was not in my life.”

The leadership skills that were instilled in Burk from her mentors, teammates and coaches have enabled her to make a huge impact in the volleyball



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMY BURK | TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS (BOTTOM)



In 2022, Burk's coaching abilities were exemplified as she was awarded the American Volleyball Coaches Association Club Coach of the Year in the 15-year-old-division.

and Ava Underwood.

"One of the coolest things about my job is being able to see the opportunities that Houston Skyline athletes are getting, not just at Texas A&M, but also at other top programs in the country," Burk said. "It is definitely rewarding to see the other side of this now in my coaching career."

Looking ahead, Burk is passionate about her coaching career and the growth of Houston Skyline. With the goal of elevating the club's ranking to number one in the nation, Burk and her team strive to provide the best opportunities and support for their athletes. Above all, Burk's dedication to her athletes lies in their personal development, extending far beyond their performance on the court.

"The biggest piece of my job is to help my athletes mature as independent young women, find

their voice and understand what hard work looks like," Burk said. "My hope is that they are able to see how powerful they are as individuals. Not just as volleyball players, but how powerful they are going to be in life because of their experiences at Houston Skyline."

Burk's remarkable journey from student-athlete to coach is just one of many examples of the life-changing opportunities provided at Texas A&M. As she forges ahead, Burk is building a memorable legacy as a volleyball coach and a leader of future generations. Her profound belief in the power of volleyball, and the lifelong lessons it imparts, solidifies her impact as a coach — inspiring her players to become not only exceptional athletes, but also exceptional human beings.

“

THE BIGGEST PIECE OF MY JOB IS TO HELP MY ATHLETES MATURE AS INDEPENDENT YOUNG WOMEN, FIND THEIR VOICE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT HARD WORK LOOKS LIKE.

— AMY BURK '19



ANNUAL 1922 FUND DINNER

A unique benefit of being a 1922 Fund donor is an invitation to the annual dinner with Aggie student-athletes. This intimate gathering provides an extraordinary opportunity for supporters and student-athletes to build relationships outside of competition.





“
WITHOUT MY
SCHOLARSHIP, AND
WITHOUT TEXAS A&M
AND THE HELP OF THE
DIERLAM FAMILY, I
WOULD NOT BE WHO I
AM TODAY.

— EARNEST CROWNOVER III '22



On January 2, 1922, E. King Gill was summoned to stand ready for his team.

In the same spirit of Gill's support, the 12th Man Foundation's goal through the **1922 Fund** is to **fully endow scholarships for all Aggie student-athletes**. Philanthropic gifts to this fund are transformative investments that impact the success of Texas A&M Athletics.

For more information, scan the QR code with your phone's camera or contact our Major Gifts staff at 979-260-7952.



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The 12th Man Foundation thanks all philanthropic endowment donors for their generous investment in Aggie student-athletes

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Susan '81 & Johnny Allison
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Sarah & Mario M. Coll, III '84
James K. Collins, M.D. '86
JoAnn & David D. Cooper '55
Kimberley W. & Stephen F. Cooper '78
Kyle Cox '18
Patricia & Jay Craddock '95
Bonnie & Kevin Cunningham '84
Laura '87 & Chris Curran '87
Lisa & Charles Cusack '81
Dallas A&M Club
Robert L. "Rob" Davis '90
Tera L. Davis '94
Teresa & John Davis
Brad Dawkins '80
Dale D. DeRouen '54
Nancy J. Delboy '86
Kay & Mark Dierlam '61
Hillary '91 & Doug Dormer '91
Beth & A. Scott Dufford '82
Martí & David Dunton '85
Lisa '92 & R. Scott Dunwoody '93
David Eller '59
Joy & Ralph Ellis '52
Cara Ellison '86
Gretchen '91 & John Ellisor '92
Laura & Kim Eubanks '79
Charles Ferrara '89

Donna '83 & Darrell Flatt '83
Robert & Linda Flesher
Barbara & Ford Flurry '58
Kim Hammond Foss & Eric Foss
Linda & Buddy Fredrickson '67
Claudia '82 & Bradley R. Freels '81
Connie Fuller & William Fuller
Greg Light '80
Bill Lyons '59
Julia & David Gardner '78
Jill E. Gellatly '89
Debbie '85 & Ken Gerik '82
Mark Andrew Giamfortone Memorial
Rhonda & Frosty Gilliam, Jr. '80
Shannon '96 & John C. "Chris"
Glenney '96
Albert S. Goodloe '52
Shelley A. '00 & Michael R. Goolsby '00
Danny Green '46 Memorial Endowed
Swimming Scholarship
Donna '81 & Tony Gullo '78
Susan '85 & Joseph P. Gutkowski '84
Kim '81 & Paul G. Hagerty '80
Jon Hagler '58
Sharon & James Hail '72
Mary Ann Hale
Laura '91 & Daniel Hancock '91
Ashley & Robin Handel '94
Bill Hanna '58
Pam & Bill Hannes '81
Jody Hansen '86 Memorial
Alison '97 & Gregory Haralson '96
Claude Harmon Foundation
Stephanie '96 & Scott Harris '95
Bethany '95 & Dr. Bradley J. Hart '95
Shannon '91 & Karl Harvey '87
Kathy & Terry Hatchett '68
Dr. Bettye & Darryl Heath '84
Brigittee & George "Trey"
Henderson III '80
Jo & David A. Hendrick '85
Anne '78 & Mark Herod '78
George Hickox Jr. '80
Michelle '89 & Rob Hickox '90
Kay Douglas "Jack" Hicks '64
Tyler '91 & Mary Hjorth '92
Larry Hodges '88
Leslie '97 & Monty Holcombe '94

Paula Finch '80 & John H. Hollowell '79
 Sarah '23 & Dr. Thomas Hooper '82
 Carol & Karl Hopkins '89
 LaGena & Paul L. Horak '90
 Denise & Ronald Howard
 Laura & Braden Hunter '02
 Sandra & Michael K. Inman '79
 Candace & Michael T. Jacob '66
 Sandra & John R. "Ron" Jiura '69
 Linda & David Johnson '76
 Kimberly & Scott Kammerer '89
 Patricia A. '72 & Bruce R. Katt '72
 Manon & Matthew Kebodeaux '04
 Lisa '88 & Kevin Kennedy '86
 Corrie '99 & Eliot E. Kerlin Jr. '97
 Terrye Kohutek
 Lisa & Stephen Korkmas '80
 Verlin & Howard W. Kruse '52
 Michele & Jack Lafield '72
 H. Dean Lane '82
 W.W. Latimer '61
 C.C. Creations
 Kathy '00 & Zachary D. "Zach" Lee '00
 Brenda '06 & Justin Lehmann '07
 Chad W. Leiper '17
 Kelsey A. Leiper '12
 Angie '84 & Billy Lemmons '83
 Lori '81 & David LePori '81
 License Plates of Texas DBA
 Karen '82 & Leslie Liere '84
 Stacy '81 & Tom Light '81
 Pam '75 & Larry Little '73
 Marsha & David K. Lockett '76
 Drs. Karin & Richard B. "Bowen"
 Loftin '71
 Sandra J. '79 & Stephen K. London '79
 Lacey '03 & Levi Love '01
 Diane & Alan R. Lucien '76
 Marilyn & John Henry Luton '72
 Joe'l & Rocky Mafrige '93
 Reginald Mahadeo Jr. '93
 Ann & Charles Manning '82
 Matt P. Marek '89
 Nancy L. "Evans" Matz '73 & Jack W.
 Matz '71
 Ami & Chris May
 Lora & Marshall McAlpine '76
 Sandra '77 & Ed McClintock '77
 Jaime '97 & Michael McClain '93
 Reba & Kenneth McGee '60
 Karen & Andrew R. McKemie '74
 Karen '74 & Kyle McNeely '74
 Charles A. "Chuck" Meloy '82
 Meredith '93 & Christopher Messick '93
 Carol '78 & Don Meyer '78
 Cindy '91 & Kendall A. Miller '88

Katherine V. '03 & David B. Miller '00
 Vicki & Brian Miller '80
 Carla & Rick Moncrief '81
 Kim '93 & Jesse Montelongo '92
 Jennifer & Daniel Montgomery '86
 Robbie L. '86 & William A. Moore '86
 Cheri Steensma '89
 Kelley Morgan Foundation
 Lynette '77 & Sam A. Morrison '76
 Tina '93 & Trey Morsbach '92
 Theresa '90 & Rob O'Donel '90
 Sarah '04 & Casey Oldham '02
 Denise G. & Nolan A. O'Neal '82
 Ileana & David L. Osburn '81
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 Greg Ploss
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 Marilyn '75 & Mark Puffer
 Rhonda '86 & Rob Putz '83
 Perry D. Reed '76
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 Sue & Jess C. "Rick" Rickman III '70
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 Robbins '01
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 Marbella & James Rodriguez '89
 Julia & James Rouse
 Marilyn Scamardo
 Sandra Schneider '94
 Pat & Herbert L. Schwarz '49
 Jesse & Amy Seery
 Cathy '79 & Dennis Seith '79
 Denise '91 & Jeff Seldenrust '90
 Charlotte & John S. Sharp '72
 Carmen '85 & James L. Sheffield '85
 Catherine & Kenneth H. Sheffield '82
 Kim '88 & Boyd Sheffield '89
 Jean & Jason L. Signor '99

Adam C. Sinn '00
 Tricia & Steven L. Sisney '83
 Karen D. '88 & Wylie S. "Scott"
 Slater '88
 Lori '95 & Dustin R. Smith '94
 M. Sean '83 & Tina L. Smith '82
 Nancy C. Lancaster Smith '76 & Ted H.
 Smith, Jr. '75
 Aimee Baggett Snoots '92 & Wynne
 Snoots, Jr.
 Sara Snyder
 Susan & Jim Snyder '94
 Stephanie & Scott Sparkman '85
 Brenda '85 & Travis D. Stice '84
 Carrie '98 & Jack Suh '97
 Eva & Gene Supak '67
 Claudette & Kenneth W. Sutton '59
 James C. '74 & Debra Parchman Swaim
 Sharon & Joel D. Talley '83
 Karen '84 & Doyle Taylor '82
 Richard Teague
 Jane Ann & Clyde Tew '59
 Texas A&M Ventures
 Perry Thompson, Jr. '63
 Audrey '96 & Dan Tinker '96
 Anne & Ward Tishler '52
 Secily '95 & Scott Torn '95
 Judy '78 & Tim Turner '74
 Mary & W. Walter Tyler '81
 Virgil Vaughn '31
 Lori & Patrick Veteto '74
 Meredith '03 & Matthew Villere '02
 Linda B. & Stephen H. Vincent '73
 Martha & Philip Vogel '79
 Shana & Max R. Vordenbaum '73
 NolaAnn '79 & Jeff Waggoner
 Keele '94 & Keith Waguespack '95
 Jane Leffel Wardlaw
 Jane & B. K. Watson '65
 Crystal M. & David R. Watts
 Emily & Joe H. Wellborn, Sr. '41
 Mark A. Welsh III
 Ashley '01 & Mark A. Welsh IV '01
 Kathy '81 & Denzil West '81
 Wes L. White '84
 James Wiley '71 & Glen Wiley '79
 David & Jean Wiley Foundation
 Judy '87 & Lucian Williams '88
 Julie '95 & Keith Williams '78
 Tracey '79 & Connie W. Williford '79
 Harriet & David B. Wolf '52
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 Linda & J.D. Woodward III '70
 Bradley L. Worsham '88
 Jimmy & Millie Wright '58
 Joey D. '14 & Eric R. Wylie '93



TERRY PRICE '90

Remembering Texas A&M Football's standout
letterman and defensive line coach

BY WILL JOHNSON '01

IN EARLY AUGUST OF 2013, JUST BEFORE THE START OF

Aggie Football's preseason camp, Terry Price held one of his renowned "D-Line Cookouts" at his College Station home.

There was the usual revelry and certainly the relishing of the meats Price served up.

Former Texas A&M defensive lineman Julien Obioha raved about the menu.

"Top notch," he said. "I cannot get better steaks anywhere else."

Price took pride in his grilling prowess.

"The best steak restaurant in the Brazos Valley is right here in my backyard," he once boasted with a smile. "I challenge any steak restaurant right now. Come and get it."

Despite some of the common touches to Price's cookouts, this one was different. It was held just days after defensive lineman Polo Manukainiu passed away in a car accident. His coach and teammates gathered to remember him.

"This is a time everybody needs to be together," Alonzo Williams, then a sophomore, acknowledged.

"This brings us together as a family," Price said at the time. "I always say Texas A&M is a family. It has been like that since I went to school here back in the 1980s."

That evening it became clear that Price was more than a coach and chef. He was their rock. The players leaned on him and needed him during this time.

For Price, it was part of the role. He spent his entire professional career in service of student-athletes. Before that, he was one himself.

Playing for the Aggies from 1986-89, Price helped the program to a 34-14 record. A&M won the Southwest Conference in 1986 and 1987. After the 1987 title, Price and the Aggies beat Notre Dame in the Cotton Bowl on New Year's Day of 1988. He lined up along the front of the famed "Wrecking Crew."

With this defense causing a ruckus, a riled-up Kyle Field proved to be very difficult for opponents. The Aggies were 21-3 in home games while Price was wearing the maroon and white. The burnt orange felt the brunt of the Crew's wrath. Price and the Aggies were a perfect 4-0 against Texas.

His coaching career began in 1992 with the Aggies as a volunteer. It was not long until he found himself in the SEC. From 1995-98, he coached the defensive line at Ole Miss, then held the same role at Auburn from 1999-2008. Price returned to Oxford and the Rebels' staff from 2009-11.

In 2012, Price moved to Lubbock and was ready to coach the defensive line at Texas Tech when a call came during the winter months, just after he had settled in.

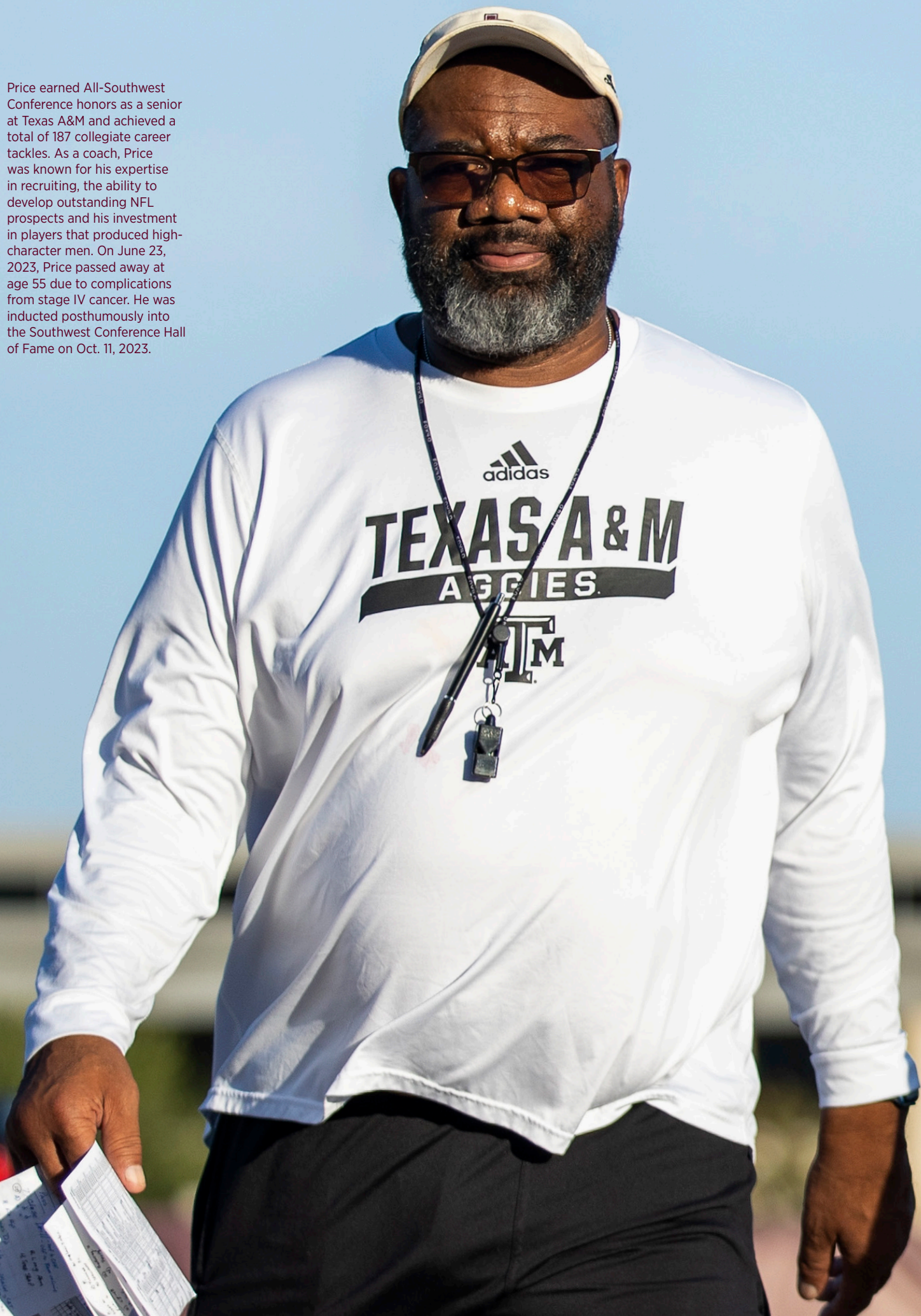
Price later divulged the contents of that phone call.

Kevin Sumlin had called and asked him to come to his alma mater to coach the defensive front. Sumlin had just been hired as A&M's head coach.

Price's version of the story explained that Sumlin told him to "think about it and call me in the morning."

So Price, as he put it, told his wife, Kenya, "I'm

Price earned All-Southwest Conference honors as a senior at Texas A&M and achieved a total of 187 collegiate career tackles. As a coach, Price was known for his expertise in recruiting, the ability to develop outstanding NFL prospects and his investment in players that produced high-character men. On June 23, 2023, Price passed away at age 55 due to complications from stage IV cancer. He was inducted posthumously into the Southwest Conference Hall of Fame on Oct. 11, 2023.



going to go in the other room and think about it. While I do that, you start packing.”

Price told this story in February of 2012 at a banquet in the Zone Club that celebrated A&M’s recent signing class.

He may have embellished the story somewhat, but it was clear how excited he was to come home to Aggieland.

He spent 11 seasons at A&M, recruiting and developing some great Aggie student-athletes. That list includes the only individual in program history to be selected with the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL Draft, Myles Garrett.

When hundreds gathered in July 2023 to celebrate the life of Terry Price, Garrett was there. He paid his respects and even spoke on behalf of the man who helped shape him into one of the best football players on the planet.

R.C. Slocum was also among the many who attended the gathering, offering a final thank you in front of all the lives Price had influenced.

The winningest head coach in school history, Slocum told a great story about the recruitment

of “TP” to A&M — right down to mentioning that Price was the only prospect he ever saw who arrived for his official visit in a coat and tie.

Price was special, and he affected the lives of so many. His impact made those around him better. No other place felt that influence like Aggieland.

Several who relayed stories about Price used the word “demanding” when describing his coaching style. He certainly was.

If one ever attended an Aggie practice, Price’s booming voice was likely the first sound they heard upon entering the gates of the Coolidge Practice Fields.

Price demanded a high level of performance from his guys, and he did not allow anyone to take a play off. He required them to be all in at all times. He expected them to give everything they had.

After watching Price for a while, it became clear as to why. It was because that is exactly what he did as a player and then as a coach.

In life, Terry Price gave his all for Texas A&M, and Aggieland will forever feel his impact.



TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS / CRAIG BISACRE (BOTTOM)

Price played for the Aggies from 1986-89, helping the program reach a 34-14 record. After winning the 1987 Southwest Conference title, Price and the Aggies beat Notre Dame in the Cotton Bowl on New Year's Day of 1988. His first season on the coaching staff in Aggieland was in 2012 when he helped the program transition to a 4-3 defense.



TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS / CRAIG BISACRE (MIDDLE LEFT & RIGHT) / EVAN PILAT (BOTTOM)

GERROD CHADWELL

How the game of golf found the Aggie head coach

BY CHAREAN WILLIAMS '86

GERROD CHADWELL LOVES HIS WIFE, PROFESSIONAL golfer Stacy Lewis. He loves that golf helped pay his way through college. He loves his job as head women's golf coach at Texas A&M. He loves his team.

But how the game of golf found Chadwell? That is a unique journey.

"There are a lot of things I like about golf," Chadwell said. "I have always been a team guy, so I love baseball. I love football. I love basketball. I love being able to pass it to somebody. I love being able to take a shot. It is interesting how golf found me. I did not choose it. It chose me, and here I am. I do not doubt it or second guess it. It is one of those things that is weird. I cannot explain it."

Golf has been very good to Chadwell, and Chadwell has been very good at being a golf coach. He has become one of the top coaches in the country in his two seasons in Aggieland, leading the A&M Women's Golf team to the semifinals of the NCAA Championships in back-to-back years.

"I knew he had the potential to do this for a program, but I never thought he would do it this quickly," said Hailee Cooper, an Aggie golf student-athlete who transferred to A&M from the University of Texas for her final two seasons. "I was his first recruit to A&M."

Chadwell told Cooper that he wanted her to help lay the foundation for the Aggie Women's Golf program.

"He told me, 'We are going to build something here for the future, and I want you to help build that,'" she said. "It is really cool it ended up being my class to get to play on that stage for the first time in school history. None of us thought when we signed here that we would be in a contention for a national championship two years in a row.

There was no way we ever would have thought that."

Chadwell never dreamed his career would end up here.

His father, Jerry Chadwell, coached high school baseball and was an assistant high school football coach in Oklahoma, but he passed away when Gerrod was 8. His mother, Jane, later remarried, and Carlyle Meyerhoeffer introduced Chadwell to golf.

When he was 14, Meyerhoeffer and his grandfather, L.D. Thomas, took Chadwell to play a nine-hole course in Kingfisher, Oklahoma. He shot 127.

"It is a memory I will forever have," Chadwell said.

He was a star athlete at El Reno High School, and that included leading the golf team to a state runner-up finish as a senior despite having never taken formal lessons. East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, offered Chadwell a golf scholarship that paid 50 percent of his tuition and full room and board.

So, he became a college golfer.

Chadwell's first tee shot in college was memorable. It traveled all of 15 yards into a creek shortly after his coach, Chris Grace, tried to ease Chadwell's nerves by jokingly telling him, "Hey, do not put this one in the creek in front of you."

"He ended up playing pretty well in that tournament," Grace recalled, chuckling at the memory, "and he turned out to be a very good player. He stepped right in and became the glue as a freshman. Everyone took to him."

Grace believes that Chadwell's experience on the basketball court in high school played a significant role in his success on the golf course.

"They made the state semifinals twice and the state final once," Grace said. "It helped him develop grit and toughness."



“

IT IS INTERESTING HOW GOLF FOUND ME. I DID NOT CHOOSE IT. IT CHOSE ME, AND HERE I AM. I DO NOT DOUBT IT OR SECOND GUESS IT. IT IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT IS WEIRD. I CANNOT EXPLAIN IT.

— GERROD CHADWELL

Chadwell earned All-American honors in 2001, and that could have been the end of his relationship with golf. He earned a bachelor's degree in exercise science in 2002 and a master's degree in sports administration in 2003. When he walked across the stage at East Central University, Chadwell had no idea what his future held.

He had served as an assistant coach on the Redlands Community College Women's Golf team in 2002-03, with the Cougars finishing third nationally. Then, it was on to Dave Pelz Golf in South Florida, where, as a short-game instructor, Chadwell worked with all levels of golfers, including tour professionals.

“Shortly after getting there, I realized South Florida was not going to be my forever place,” Chadwell said. “After two years there, I just had this urge to get into coaching like my father. Golf was going to be the natural fit because that was my recent experience, but I really had no idea where or what.”

Redlands Community College, which is in his hometown of El Reno, Oklahoma, called Chadwell to offer him a job coaching the women's golf program. Chadwell did not want to coach women, and he did not want to move back to his hometown — he wanted to coach at a “big” school.

Since his hiring, Chadwell's impact on the Aggie Women's Golf team has been dynamic. During his first season at Texas A&M, the Aggies qualified for the semifinals of the NCAA Championships. In 2023, the team won the SEC title with a win over No. 5 Mississippi State and went on to defeat No. 11 Texas in match play at the NAAs.

“It was a three-strike job,” Chadwell said, “but it was like I was thrust into it. I think that speaks to my faith and belief of, ‘Ok, this is where I am being led to go.’”

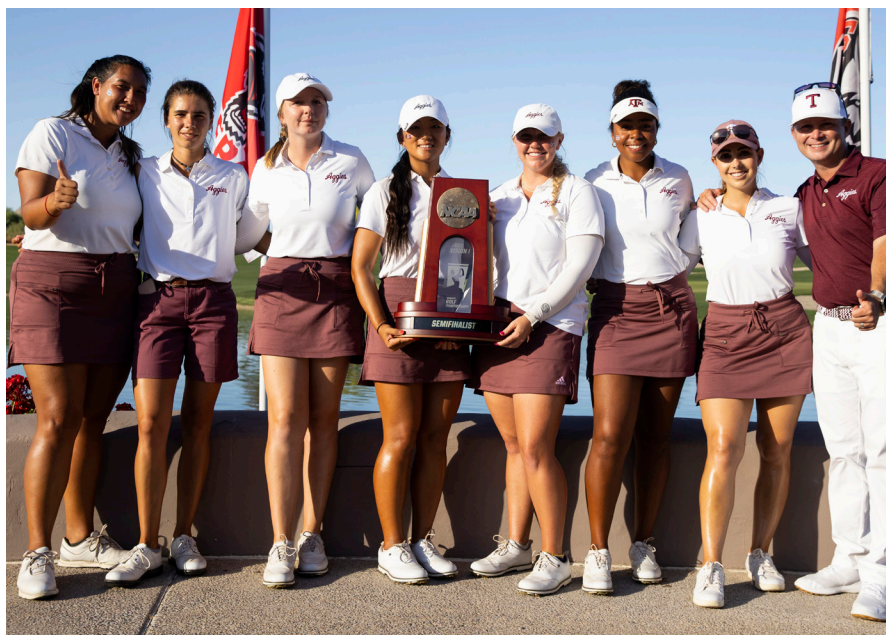
The previous coach had taken his top five players with him to Tulsa, but Chadwell recruited a new team and won the NJCAA National Championship in his first season in 2008. Redlands repeated in 2009 before finishing third in 2010. Chadwell won NJCAA National Coach of the Year honors in his first two seasons as a head coach.

It was the first of a career of quick turnarounds and coach of the year honors, and it set his career path. After three seasons as an assistant coach at the University of Oklahoma, Chadwell was hired by the University of Houston in May 2013 as the first coach in program history. The Cougars won three American Athletic Conference Championships, and Chadwell was voted the conference's coach of the year three times in his seven seasons.

“Being a male coach in a female sport, it is not easy to get these big-time jobs,” said Lewis, a two-time LPGA Player of the Year and a two-time LPGA major champion. “So, he kind of went through some frustrations to get where he is now. It is really cool to see all that hard work he has put in finally paying off.”

The Aggies hired Chadwell on June 8, 2021, though he was not convinced A&M had real interest until the offer came. He calls it his “Yankees” job,” a desired destination he plans on never leaving.

“During the search, coach Chadwell's name kept coming up,” Director of Athletics Ross Bjork said. “His passion for teaching young women the game of golf, his focus on academics and preparing his players for life made him the clear choice as the search concluded. The only question in our mind



TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS / ETHAN MITO



was whether his wife, Stacy, could wear maroon instead of red since she played golf at Arkansas.”

In Chadwell’s first season, A&M went to the semifinals of the NCAA Championships after finishing stroke play as the No. 3 seed and defeating Florida State in the quarterfinals.

The Aggies won the SEC title in 2023 with a 3-2 win over No. 5 Mississippi State. A&M rallied in the NCAA Championships to qualify for match play and defeated No. 11 Texas 3-1 before seeing their season end to No. 2 Wake Forest, which won the national title.

“No one had any clue that he would

turn things around this quickly,” Bjork said. “We did feel that if he could turn around the culture and morale of the program, that we could be competitive and steadily build the program over time. To be in back-to-back final fours of match play and be SEC Champions after only two years is a miraculous turnaround that no one could have predicted.”

The Aggies are ahead of schedule and right on time. The only thing missing now is a national championship.

“The stars aligned, and magic happened,” Chadwell said of the quick turnaround. “I think it is great to see that it is doable here, and I think that is going to

be attractive for future student-athletes.”

The reluctant golfer turned reluctant golf coach is now a reluctant golf father, with 5-year-old Chesnee Lynn already swinging a club. Golf is his life, love it or not.

“I think God has a sense of humor,” Chadwell said, “because no way in a million years would I have thought I would be coaching women’s golf, married to a professional golfer and then have a daughter. It is just so funny that here I am, but here I am.”

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40 YEARS OF THE 12TH MAN KICKOFF TEAM

The squad who defeated the odds and became
the epitome of the Aggie Spirit

BY WILL JOHNSON '01

THEY WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME.

They loved football and Texas A&M. This was not just standing tall for their cherished university — they had the opportunity to take action.

When Jackie Sherrill created the 12th Man Kickoff Team in time for the 1983 season, many around the program and around the country were skeptical. They could not see how a team of walk-ons could be successful when matched up against scholarship athletes. A deeper look would have shown skeptics the burning desire these student-athletes had to represent Texas A&M to the fullest.

The 12th Man Kickoff Team went out and covered kicks with great success, defying the odds. Sherrill's gamble paid off, and for the kickoff team members, the memories they gained from their days in maroon and white were priceless.

Inaugural member Ike Liles said Sherrill showed a tremendous amount of guts and courage in his decision to entrust the group of walk-ons to cover kickoffs for the Aggies.

It all started when Liles made the first-ever tackle by a kickoff team member on opening night of 1983 season against the California Golden Bears.

"We were slobberin' hungry to go hit somebody," Liles said.

The team had to wait until after halftime to cover their first kick. The Aggies unsuccessfully tried an onside kick to start the game, and then were held scoreless through the first two quarters. Then, A&M kicked off following a third quarter field goal.

"The stands were going crazy," Liles recalled. "We kickoff and run down there. I'm behind a 4.3 guy. They pick him up. So, it's just me and the returner. Luckily, I got him and hung on until the cavalry came."

Liles first hit the Cal returner at the 12 yard line and finally brought him down with several teammates at the 16. The 12th Man in the stands erupted during a moment that will forever live in Aggie lore.

"At the time I didn't really understand how big a deal it was," Liles said. "I thought it was just a tackle."

COVERING THE KICK

In 1985, 12th Man Kickoff Team member David Coolidge made his debut on Kyle Field during A&M's home opening win over Northeast



Louisiana (now ULM).

One of the most generous supporters of Aggie Football since his time on campus, Coolidge recounts standing on the sideline and looking at his teammates who were ready to cover a kickoff for the first time.

“We are getting ready to do this?” Coolidge recalled thinking in a questioning, surreal manner.

As his memory of taking the field for the first time comes rushing back, a grin spreads across Coolidge’s face.

“I remember thinking, this is going to be awesome,” he said.

Coolidge successfully made the tackle on his first opportunity with the kickoff team.

The 12th Man Kickoff Team’s crowning moment came against Notre Dame in the Cotton Bowl on Jan. 1, 1988.

Scott Slater had just made a 25-yard field goal to up A&M’s advantage to 28-10 with 8:32 remaining in the game. The walk-on squad had to once again defend the dynamic 1987 Heisman Trophy winner Tim Brown.

Kickoff team member Sean Page had a front row seat.

Page had grown accustomed to seeing his teammate David Fly in the lane next to him. They had covered kickoffs side-by-side for quite some time.

“I look over and there is Warren Barhorst,” Page recalled. “I look at Warren and he says, ‘Watch this.’ I am like, ‘Oh no. Warren thinks outside the box.’”

Barhorst tackled Brown, and Page came in for cleanup. Then things got messy.

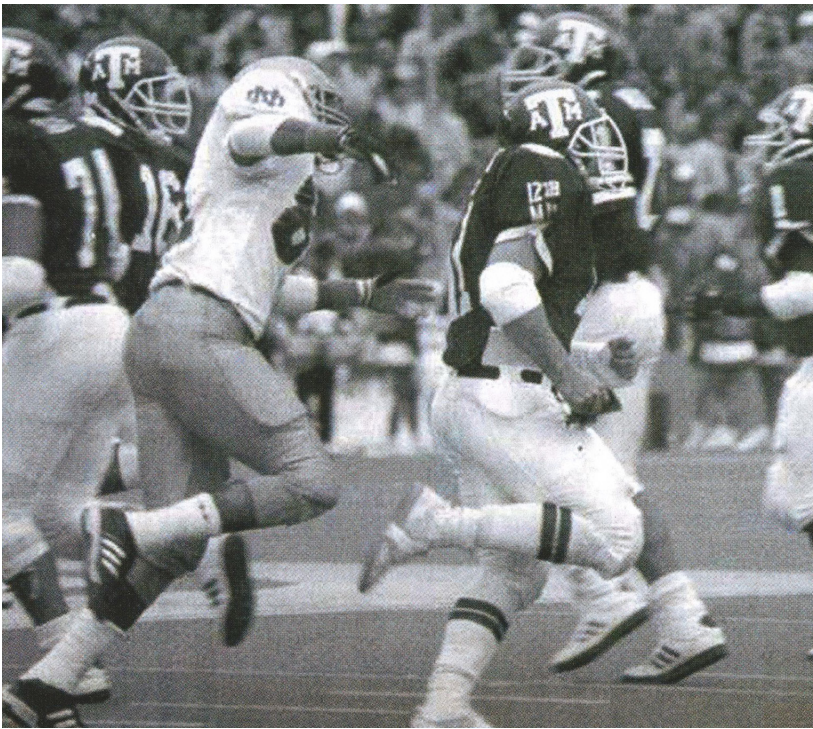
“I see Warren sprinting, and I am thinking ‘Warren, the play is over, and you did not run that fast down the field,’” Page said. “He has this towel in his hand and has a big grin.”

Barhorst had ripped Brown’s towel off his belt and planned to keep it as a souvenir. However, Brown wanted it back and chased after the Aggie walk-on, tackling Barhorst from behind before he reached

“
**WE WERE SLOBBERIN’ HUNGRY
TO GO HIT SOMEBODY.**

—IKE LILES ’84

David Coolidge ’87 covered his very first kick in September of 1985 when the Aggies beat Northeast Louisiana (now ULM) at Kyle Field and made the tackle during his initial trip down the field. Today, Coolidge is a strong supporter of Aggie Football through the 12th Man Foundation and provided the lead Centennial Campaign gift for the Coolidge Football Performance Center at the Graham Athletic Complex.



In the above picture, Warren Barhorst '88 makes a dash after snagging 1987 Heisman Trophy winner Tim Brown's towel. The iconic move occurred in the 1988 Cotton Bowl and received national recognition.

the sideline. A Cotton Bowl brouhaha ensued. The wrangle received national notoriety.

Barhorst was so seldom used that commentator Brent Musburger misidentified him as William Thomas on the CBS broadcast. Thomas, who wore number 11 like Barhorst, was a heralded linebacker who later received All-Southwest Conference accolades for the Aggies. However, on New Year's Day of 1988, the country was introduced to Barhorst.

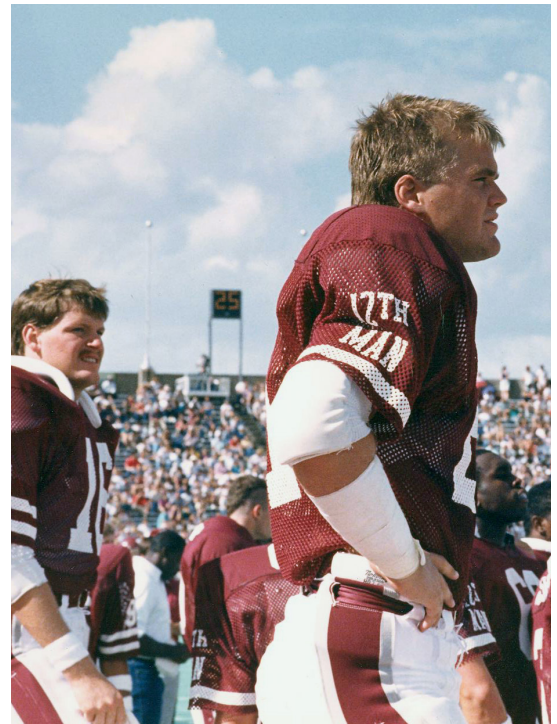
"I covered kicks for three years," Page said. "I never made as big of an impact as the one play Warren Barhorst was in on."

EARNING STRIPES

The 12th Man Kickoff Team's influence as a group went far beyond covering kicks. They were instrumental in preparing the Aggies in practice every week. They proved to be quite a talented scout team and often gave the starters a good look. Sometimes too good.

“
I THINK AFTER A WHILE, THE TEAM REALIZED IF
THEY HAD THE SAME TOUGHNESS AS WE DID, WE
COULD BEAT ANYBODY.

— DAVID COOLIDGE '87



Liles recalls a particular practice when he stood out playing strong safety.

"They were lead blocking with the fullback on me," Liles said. "Over and over and over. I was giving it everything."

Liles took the job seriously, and he did not intend on just going through the motions.

"I am going to win this fight," he recalled thinking. "A coach called me over to the side and said, 'Ike, would you let up a little bit.'"

On another occasion, Liles was getting the better of a teammate who was much higher on the depth chart.

"He got angry, and we started fighting," Liles said. "They just let us fight until we could not fight anymore. We earned our stripes."

Coolidge likened the group's determination to Rocky Balboa.

"He kept getting beat up, but he kept fighting," Coolidge said. "I think after a while, the team realized if they had the same toughness as we did, we could beat anybody."

Interestingly enough, Balboa's triumph over Ivan Drago in "Rocky IV" was released one day before Coolidge, the kickoff team and the Aggies dropped Texas, 42-10, on Thanksgiving of 1985 to start an Aggie trilogy. Three straight Southwest Conference titles, and trips to the Cotton Bowl, began that night. Cotton rained down from all of Kyle

Field's decks, and 12th Man towels were twirling feverishly.

The bond between the fans in the stands and players on the field cemented that evening.

BRIDGING THE GAP

The fan-team connection is another aspect that Sherrill elevated when he created the kickoff team. One of the most valuable commodities in sports, the unique bond between A&M students and Aggie Football was not quite there prior to the advent of this walk-on group.

"The talent we had at A&M was separated from the student body," Page recalled. "They were at Cain Hall doing their thing, and the students were doing their thing. There was a disconnect."

When the students came out of the stands to join the team and put forth all they had, things changed.

"When Coach Sherrill came up with the kickoff team because of their love and passion, he created a conduit between students, former students, fans and scholarship athletes," Coolidge said.

After a while, it was not just the student section on their feet on Saturdays at Kyle Field.

"Even those scholarship guys who came off the field after we scored a touchdown, who would normally sit on the bench, got off their chair," Coolidge recalled. "They walked toward the sideline and looked over the shoulder of the guy in front of them. They wanted to see what we could do. We had earned their respect."

It was clear this was the start of something special.

"It really brought the scholarship guys and the student body together," Coolidge said. "It created a bond."

That connection has served as the foundation of this school's spirit ever since. The role of the kickoff team has changed over time, but the same energy and passion at Kyle Field remains.

It started when Sherrill defied the skeptics and gave a group of walk-ons the chance to live out their dreams of representing Texas A&M on the football field. Defeating the doubters is usually how dreams come true.

It all began with the opportunity of a lifetime.

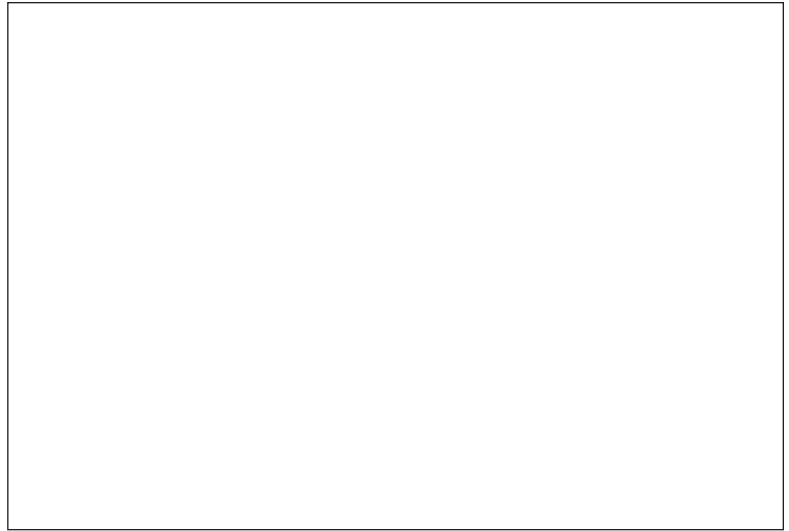


The 12th Man Kickoff Team was created by head coach Jackie Sherrill in 1983. Though many were skeptical of the walk-on group, the team quickly earned national respect and proved that the "impossible" was indeed possible. Sherrill understood the value of having a strong player-fan connection and fueled that bond with the creation of the kickoff team.





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AND FACILITIES IN SUPPORT OF
CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS



THEIR SPIRIT LIVES ON - A TRIBUTE TO THE 12TH MAN KICKOFF TEAM

On Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023, during Aggie Football's matchup against ACU, the stands erupted in roar as an entire kickoff team of walk-ons took to the field for the first time since 2006. With their towels valiantly waving, the unit paid tribute to the football era under head coach Jackie Sherrill and revitalized a storied tradition at Texas A&M. Their coverage was highlighted by seniors Alex Zettler and Will Smoot, who took a hit to ACU's kick returner, nearly causing a fumble. Earlier in the game, Sherrill was recognized on the field along with members of his legendary 12th Man kickoff teams.