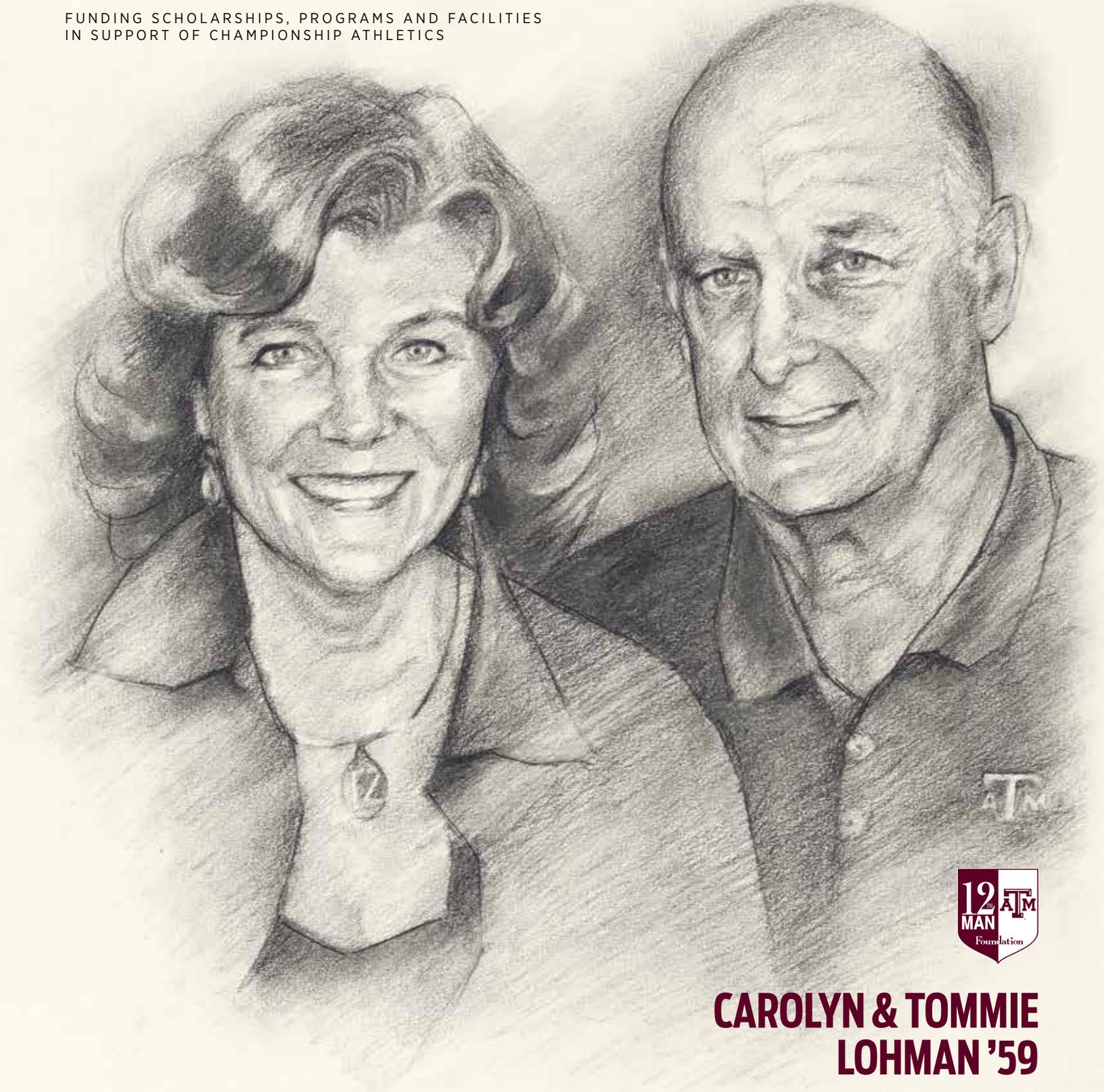


12th Man

SPRING 2018
VOLUME 23, NO. 1

FUNDING SCHOLARSHIPS, PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES
IN SUPPORT OF CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS



**CAROLYN & TOMMIE
LOHMAN '59**

E. KING GILL AWARD
HONOREES



12TH MAN FOUNDATION
1922 FUND



**THE 1922 FUND REPRESENTS
OUR DESIRE TO PERMANENTLY
ENDOW SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ALL
AGGIE STUDENT-ATHLETES.**

It is an initiative that will benefit student-athletes from all teams, with different backgrounds and upbringings, and it is one that will forever resonate.

Texas A&M Athletics was changed forever on January 2, 1922.

That was the day E. King Gill was called from the crowd to put on a uniform and stand ready for his team.

It was a transformative moment in Aggie history, and E. King Gill's actions still shape the fabric of our school. The 12th Man tradition was born that day, and Gill's legacy of support is the most visible part of what makes Texas A&M so unique.

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

“AN ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP IS THE MOST IMPORTANT AND SPECIAL THING I’VE EVER RECEIVED. TO BE A PART OF THE AGGIE NETWORK FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL.”

– Christian Kirk '19

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS STAFF AT 979-260-7595 FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE 1922 FUND

The 12th Man Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization

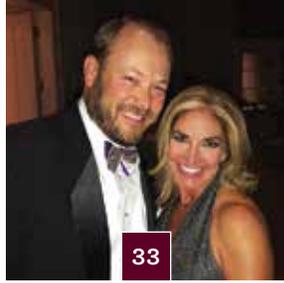


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12th Man

VOLUME 23, NO. 1
SPRING 2018

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Funding scholarships, programs and facilities in support of championship athletics



THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION CONGRATULATES THE 39 TEXAS A&M STUDENT-ATHLETES WHO EARNED DEGREES IN DECEMBER

SUPPORT TEXAS A&M STUDENT-ATHLETES THROUGH A SCHOLARSHIP GIFT
CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595



SHAMIER LITTLE
WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD



KEITH FORD
FOOTBALL



BIANCA FABRIZIO
WOMEN'S GOLF



DAMION RATLEY
FOOTBALL

Zoe Alaniz
Women's Swimming
& Diving

Kohl Anderson
Men's Track & Field

Jay Arnold
Football

Connor Black
Men's Golf

Reagan Boenker
Softball

Kris Brander
Men's Track & Field

Aaliyah Brown
Women's Track & Field

Nicholas Cobb
Football

Cedric Collins
Football

Noel Ellis
Football

Kara Erickson
Women's Track & Field

Bianca Fabrizio
Women's Golf

Christian Farris
Men's Track & Field

Keith Ford
Football

Jake Hubenak
Football

Madison Hudkins
Women's Swimming
& Diving

Darrell Jackson
Football

Andrea Jonama
Women's Golf

Gaines Kinsey
Men's Track & Field

Cole Lankford
Baseball

Shamier Little
Women's Track & Field

Rachel Lucht
Equestrian

Jordan Mastrogiovanni
Football

Sycerika McMahon
Women's Swimming
& Diving

Sarah McEntire
Equestrian

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Women's Track & Field

Walker Pennington
Baseball

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Soccer

Damion Ratley
Football

Dalton Rowan
Men's Track & Field

Mason Strickland
Women's Tennis

Ryan Teel
Men's Track & Field

Don Thomas
Men's Basketball

Shelbi Vaughan
Women's Track &
Field & Volleyball

Hardreck Walker
Football

Courtney Weisbart
Equestrian

Michael Werenski
Men's Golf

Boomer White
Baseball

Priest Willis
Football

AGGIE ACCOLADES



SEC CHAMPS!

The women's swimming and diving team won its third straight conference title after a dominating, wire-to-wire performance in their home pool at the 2018 Southeastern Conference Championships in February. In just its sixth year in the elite conference, A&M became the fourth team to win at least three straight SEC women's team titles.

HALL OF FAMER

Aaron Glenn, defensive back and special teams standout for Texas A&M 1992-1993, was one of 17 to be inducted into the 22nd class of the Texas Black Sports Hall of Fame in February. He was joined at the event by fellow hall of famer, Aggie legend and 12th Man Foundation Vice President of Major Gifts and Endowments Jacob Green as well as R.C. Slocum, his former coach and the winningest football coach in A&M history.

NCAA TOP 10 AWARD

Texas A&M swimmer Sarah Gibson received the NCAA's Today's Top 10 Award at the NCAA Convention in January. The award recognizes former student-athletes for their successes on the field, in the classroom and in the community. Gibson was the CoSIDA Academic All-American of the Year in 2017, as well as a two-time first-team Academic All-American in 2016 and 2017. Additionally, she was Texas A&M's first winner of the SEC's coveted H. Boyd McWhorter Scholar Athlete of the Year award in 2017 and the 2017 SEC Co-Scholar Athlete of the Year in swimming and diving.



COMPLIANCE CORNER
LET COACHES
HANDLE
RECRUITING

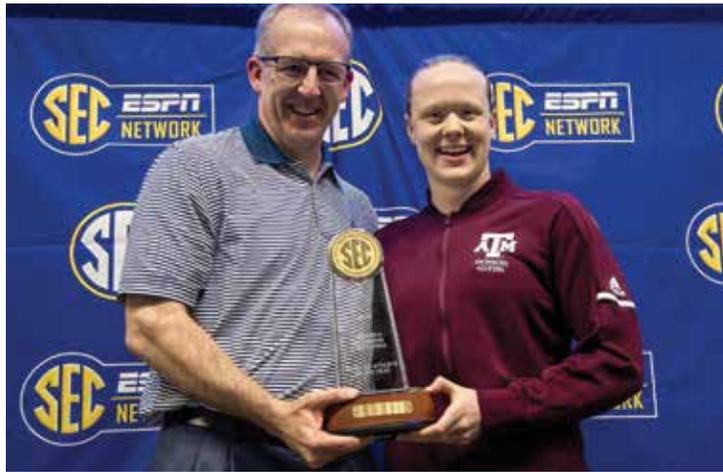
Former students and fans want Texas A&M to excel in recruiting, and many desire to help in these efforts. However, since 1987, NCAA Bylaw 13.1.2.1 has generally prohibited fan and former student involvement in recruiting.

Currently, NCAA rules specify that any recruiting contact with a prospective student-athlete (PSA) or the PSA's relatives or legal guardians shall be made only by authorized Texas A&M staff members. The rule adds that in-person contact as well as correspondence including texts, Tweets, Facebook messages, emails and telephone calls by representatives of an institution's athletics interests (e.g., Texas A&M boosters, which includes most of its fans) are generally prohibited.

Fortunately for fans of Texas A&M sports teams, our coaches are excellent recruiters and they are familiar with these PSAs. In the event that NCAA rules allow involvement and a coach wants you to be involved in recruiting, that Texas A&M coach will inform you of how you may be involved (e.g., offering a summer job to a high school graduate). Otherwise, please leave recruiting to the Texas A&M Athletics staff.

PLEASE CONTACT US
WITH QUESTIONS

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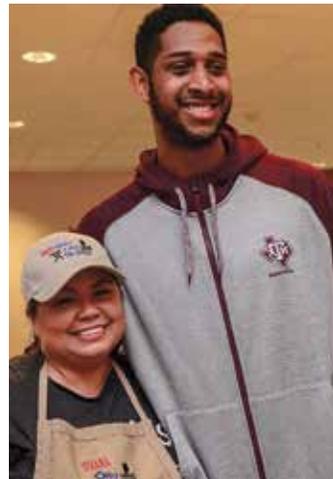


◀ **SCHOLAR-ATHLETE**
OF THE YEAR

Lisa Bratton was named the SEC's 2018 swimming and diving female Scholar-Athlete of the Year in February. Bratton, from Richland, Wash., is a senior majoring in ocean engineering with a 3.71 grade point average. She is a member of the SEC Honor Roll, the Texas A&M AD Honor Roll and the College Swim Coaches Academic team. Bratton is the Vice President of Omega Epsilon, which is the Ocean Engineering Honor Society.

SEC COMMUNITY ▶
SERVICE TEAM

Tonny Trocha-Morelos (men's basketball) and Anriel Howard (women's basketball) were both named to the 2017-18 SEC Community Service Team. Trocha-Morelos has volunteered for Still Creek Ranch, Aggies CAN and Boys and Girls Club basketball camps and traveled to Haiti with an A&M delegation in 2017. Howard has volunteered for Aggeland Humane Society, Aggies CAN, local elementary schools and public parks and visited the Texas Children's Hospital with her team.



◀ **RECORD BREAKERS**

The Aggie track and field foursome of Ilolo Izu, Devin Dixon, Mylik Kerley and Robert Grant claimed a conference title in the 4x400 relay at the SEC Indoor Championships hosted at Gilliam Indoor Stadium in February. They broke the SEC Indoor meet record, Texas A&M school record and Gilliam facility record, and are now ranked third on the all-time collegiate list and hold the American collegiate record.

AD HONOR ROLL ▶

Over 300 Texas A&M student-athletes were honored as AD Honor Roll recipients in January. They earned a fall semester GPA of 3.0 and above and represent 11 different colleges and departments on campus. Baseball led all men's teams with a 3.05 GPA, while the Women's Swimming & Diving team captured the women's top honor with a 3.29 GPA.



FACILITIES UPDATE

Kevin Hurley, Senior Associate Athletics Director for Athletic Facilities

TEXAS A&M SWIMMING & DIVING FACILITY

With the help of 12th Man Foundation donors, Texas A&M swimming and diving is looking to build a much-needed facility that will serve as the program's center for student-athlete wellness, dryland training, locker rooms and team meeting space. The facility will feature a grand entrance for student-athletes and recruits, showcasing the program's accomplishments while serving as a front door for both the men's and women's teams.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595 TO SUPPORT SWIMMING & DIVING OR ANOTHER FACILITY PROJECT

DAVIS DIAMOND ▶

LEAD DONORS: BECKY '76 & MONTY '77 DAVIS

Although the facility will not yet be complete, the new home for Aggie softball is scheduled to begin hosting games this season.

"We have several seniors who have been huge components of the softball program, so we want to honor them by giving them the opportunity to play at Davis Diamond before the regular season is over. The goal is to begin moving the team into the locker room in the first part of May with construction completion in June. The field, dugout and lights are already set for game action. We're going from literally the worst softball stadium to the best softball stadium in the country."

- KEVIN HURLEY



◀ E.B. CUSHING STADIUM

LEAD DONORS: AMY & TIM LEACH '82

Texas A&M track and field is expected to move into its new home in September.

"While the softball facility is all about timing, track is all about the track. There is a lot of work required with the soil and the track itself to ensure that it is precise so that competitions and events will be sanctioned by the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations) - the governing body for track and field. We're going from a stadium in track and field that can't even host a home meet to being able to host and be in consideration for a NCAA Championship."

"I believe that you're going to see that Davis Diamond and E.B. Cushing Stadium - just like the rest of our facilities - will be the gold standard in college athletics. I'm looking through maroon-colored glasses, but I really believe that. A tip of the cap goes to 12th Man Foundation donors. There's not another school in the country that is doing what we're doing in terms of facilities and the way we fund them. It's amazing to see how everyone jumps on board when we start a new project."

- KEVIN HURLEY

“

A TIP OF THE CAP GOES TO 12TH MAN FOUNDATION DONORS. THERE'S NOT ANOTHER SCHOOL IN THE COUNTRY THAT IS DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING IN TERMS OF FACILITIES AND THE WAY WE FUND THEM.

- KEVIN HURLEY



**SHANNON '86 & WAYNE '85 ROBERTS
TEXAS A&M BASKETBALL STUDENT-ATHLETE CENTER**

LEAD DONORS: SHANNON '86 & WAYNE '85 ROBERTS

One of the finest facilities in all of college basketball, the new home for the Aggie men's basketball program opened in September 2017. The sleek space includes a team meeting room, nutrition station, locker area, recreation room and equipment room.

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
FACILITY
RENOVATION**

12th Man Foundation donors are invited to help support a renovation project for the Texas A&M women's basketball facilities.

Our aim is to transform the existing locker room into one of the finest in the nation, providing the very best experience for A&M student-athletes.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595 TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THIS PROJECT



CINDY TAYLOR '84

Chair of the 12th Man Foundation Board of Trustees



CYNTHIA B. "CINDY" TAYLOR '84

CHAIR
12TH MAN FOUNDATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER AND DIRECTOR OF
OIL STATES INTERNATIONAL, INC.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PRIORITIES WHILE SERVING AS CHAIR OF THE BOARD?

First, I think it's important to embrace Jimbo Fisher and his coaching staff. They have changed their lives and their families' lives to be part of the A&M family in hopes that this will be a great place for them to live and work. So, it's critical that we embrace the change and support them in every way.

It's also very important to get the donor base engaged with them. I'm very excited that Champions Council Weekend in March featured Coach Fisher as well as his new staff because we want the donor base to get exposure to them.

We have spent a tremendous amount of time and effort with the Game Day Experience Task Force. We tested some things last fall and plan to continue prioritizing and implementing improvements while integrating them with the new coaching staff.

We also need to finalize the construction and funding for Davis Diamond and E.B. Cushing Stadium. Internally, we need to complete and roll out our strategic plan that sets goals for the organization and helps everyone on staff direct their time, energy and effort in productive ways.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT REGARDING THIS YEAR'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES?

We have the great benefit of continuity of the past, and a wonderful thing about this organization is the fact that so many stay actively engaged and involved. I love that people serve for four years and you have three new faces on the board each year. I am confident Kevin McDonald, Don Meyer and Jay Graham are going to be fantastic additions to the board. They were chosen because of their commitment to the organization and their commitment to athletics.

WHAT SHOULD DONORS EXPECT FROM THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION IN 2018?

We are making donor satisfaction a priority. We want to hear from our donors, understand their concerns, needs and priorities, and try to be responsive to those to the extent that we can. The main thing is trying to make every experience the best it can be.

In some ways, fans coming to one of our facilities is similar to opening your home to guests. You want to be proud of what you have. We weren't proud of our softball facility and we didn't have a home for our track and field student-athletes. Those are things that we want to focus on to make optimal experiences for donors and fans. We also want productive environments for our student-athletes and coaching staffs.

A primary obligation that we have is to be responsible stewards of donors' money. With the investment they generously provide, we want to create great programs and facilities that everyone will be proud of.

WHAT LED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER IN BUSINESS?

Growing up, I thought I wanted to be a coach. I tell anyone who coaches that they have the greatest impact early in a person's life. I later realized

“
WE ARE MAKING DONOR SATISFACTION A PRIORITY. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM OUR DONORS, UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERNS, NEEDS AND PRIORITIES, AND TRY TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THOSE TO THE EXTENT THAT WE CAN.

— CINDY TAYLOR '84



Cindy '84 and her husband, Allan '83, as well as their three sons, one daughter-in-law and a soon-to-be second daughter-in-law, are all Aggies.

you don't get to just be a coach...you have to teach as well. While I liked teaching, it wasn't the career path I was looking for. Then, I thought I wanted to be a doctor, but I didn't have the kind of mentors to show me the path to achieve that dream.

I was fortunate. Somewhere along the way in high school I was directed toward business. I'm good at it...it's just something that I was designed to do. I've had great mentors and people who have given me opportunities to advance in my career.

What I do now is serve on the board of Texas Children's, and in a way that satisfies my passion for children and medicine. And the 12th Man Foundation satisfies my passion for athletics. You have to love what you do because it is a huge time commitment.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GIVE BACK TO TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS?

First of all, I love athletics. I spend every spare moment doing something active outdoors whether it's playing tennis, riding a bike, walking, jogging or running a half marathon.

My husband, Allan, and I are former students. We have three boys – two who are former students and one who graduates in May. Our daughter-in-law and soon-to-be second daughter-in-law are also graduates. So, we love this university.

We want to make it even better than it is for generations to come and we are willing to give back to ensure long-term success.

I always say to follow what you love and pursue your passion, and I think people tend to support what they are passionate about in life. Where we spend our time is where we want to donate our money and our energy. In addition to athletics, we support the Mays Business School and the engineering school.

For us, it was important to be exposed to the 12th Man Foundation's mission of funding scholarships, programs and facilities in support of championship athletics, and to understand that athletics is not supported by state funds. Rather, donors are the backbone of our athletic programs.

The largest single donation we have made was for the R.C. Slocum Nutrition Center. R.C. is one of our greatest ambassadors, so having his name associated with the facility made a big difference to Allan and I. After raising three boys who all played sports growing up, we understand the importance that proper nutrition has on athletics.

It all comes back to having the belief that the contributions you make not only have an impact on the quality and success of the programs, but obviously make a difference for the student-athletes themselves. ■

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- » President, Chief Executive Officer and Director of Oil States International, Inc.
- » One of 46 female CEOs in the Fortune 1000
- » Active on the Mays Business School Development Council, Association of Former Students and 12th Man Foundation
- » Recipient of Texas A&M Women's Former Students Network Legacy Award, Mays Outstanding Alumni, Aggie 100 Summit Award, McLane Leadership Award and Distinguished Alumnus
- » National finalist of the 2012 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year in Energy and Clean Tech
- » Husband, Allan '83, and three Aggie boys

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- » BBA in Accounting (1977)
- » 35+ years of experience in the oil and natural gas business
- » Chief Operating Officer for Core Laboratories N.V.
- » Lead donors for The Davis Center for Football Player Development and Davis Diamond with wife, Becky
- » Gifted lead donations to the R.C. Slocum Nutrition Center and Kyle Field Redevelopment Project
- » Active on the Development Council for Mays and was named an Outstanding Alumnus
- » Endowed scholarships through the Mays Honors Program and the Association of Former Students
- » Two Aggie daughters

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR



FROSTY GILLIAM JR '80
ODESSA, TX

Aghorn Energy, Inc.

- » BS in Petroleum Engineering (1980)
- » President of Aghorn Energy, Inc., which he founded in April 1988
- » Texas Registered Professional Engineer and member of the Petroleum Engineering Industry Board
- » Recognized by the College of Engineering as an Outstanding Alumni in 2012
- » Lead donors of the Rhonda and Frosty Gilliam, Jr. '80 Indoor Track and Cox-McFerrin with wife, Rhonda
- » Two children and one granddaughter



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SCOTT WOODWARD
COLLEGE STATION, TX
Director of Athletics

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WWW.12THMANFOUNDATION.COM



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THE WOODLANDS, TX
Superior Energy Services

- » BS in Petroleum Engineering (1983)
- » Former member of the Corps of Cadets, Fightin' Texas Aggie Band and Ross Volunteers
- » President/CEO and Director of Superior Energy Services since 2010
- » 25 years at BJ Services in a variety of engineering, operations and management positions in both international and sales divisions
- » Member of Texas A&M's Petroleum Engineering Industry Board, the College of Engineering Advisory Council and the President's Board of Visitors for the Corps of Cadets
- » Awarded an Ernst & Young's 2013 Transformational CEO from the U.S. Gulf Coast Area
- » Wife, Anne, and six children



HENRY B. "HANK" PAUP '70
FORT WORTH, TX
Attorney

- » BBA in Finance (1970)
- » Former member of the Corps of Cadets and Ross Volunteers
- » Distinguished Military Graduate and retired Second Lieutenant (USAR)
- » Set the school record for the mile swim at the SWC championship meet in 1969
- » Graduated from SMU School of Law in 1973 and founded his own firm in 1983
- » Endowed 10 Texas A&M University scholarships with wife, Anne
- » Major donors to the Sports Museum and are Lettermen's Club and Diamond Champions Council members
- » Two children and two grandchildren



JOHN D. SCHILLER JR '81
COLLEGE STATION, TX
Particle Drilling Technologies

- » BS in Petroleum Engineering (1981)
- » Held leadership positions for Superior Oil, Burlington Resources, Seagull Energy, Devon Energy and Ocean Energy
- » Founded Energy XXI (Bermuda) Limited in 2005 and served as Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer and President
- » Inducted into TAMU's Petroleum Engineering Academy of Distinguished Graduates in 2008
- » Named the 2014 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year
- » Serves on Texas A&M's College of Engineering Advisory Board, member and past chairman of Petroleum Engineering Industry Board
- » Wife, Kristi, and three children



ROBERT DENNIS '83
TYLER, TX
Orthopedic Surgeon

- » BBA in Management (1983)
- » Former member of the Corps of Cadets and Ross Volunteers
- » Attended medical school at UT Houston and completed residency at UT San Antonio
- » Completed a Sports Medicine fellowship in Sydney, Australia
- » Co-founded Texas Spine and Joint Hospital in Tyler, Texas
- » Member of Champions Council and previous captain of the East Texas Chapter
- » Active member of Athletic Ambassadors and Premium Services Committee
- » Wife, Sheli, and one son

2018 BOARD OF TRUSTEES



DARRYL HEATH '84
COLLEYVILLE, TX
Heath Family Holdings

- » BS in Industrial Engineering (1984)
- » 30+ year career at Accenture in DFW
- » President of Heath Family Holdings, an investment/advisory company
- » Chairman of the Fort Worth Champions Council and a member of Athletic Ambassadors
- » Member of A&M's College of Engineering Advisory Board, Association of Former Students Leadership Council
- » Sponsors and volunteers for various programs within Memorial Student Center with wife, Bettye
- » Board member of the College for All Texans Foundation
- » Four sons



RAY HUFFINES '74
PLANO, TX
Huffines Auto Dealerships

- » BBA in Management (1974)
- » Former member of the Corps and founding member of the Parson's Mounted Cavalry
- » Represents the third generation to oversee Huffines Auto Dealerships (9) in DFW area
- » Member of the Plano Rotary Club and past chairman of the Plano Chamber of Commerce
- » Former vice chairman of Plano Economic Development Board and Advisory Board
- » Member of the Plano Salvation Army, Hendrick Scholarship Foundation and DBU Trustee
- » Wife, Anne, and four children



BOYD CHERRY '67
BRYAN, TX
Retired (Energy Industry)

- » BS in Electrical Engineering (1967) and Computer Science MBA (1970)
- » Former member of the Corps of Cadets and the Ross Volunteers
- » Served two years in the U.S. Army as an Ordnance Officer
- » Held management positions in engineering, corporate finance, investor relations and marketing
- » Has contributed to organizations including the Corps of Cadets Association, Mays Business School, A&M Foundation, Association of Former Students
- » Supports the 12th Man Foundation through capital campaign gifts with his wife, Zou
- » Members of Champions Council and Athletic Ambassadors



CHRIS COOPER '89
CHATHAM, NJ
Deloitte & Touche LLP

- » BA in Accounting (1989)
- » Began career in Dallas with Deloitte & Touche LLP
- » Relocated to the northeast and was admitted to the firm partnership in 2000
- » Led and provided services to Deloitte's preeminent global audit clients in various industries
- » Serves as leader of the Life Science and Healthcare Audit practice of the U.S.
- » Supports the Mays Business School and the Association of Former Students with wife, Theresa
- » Football season ticket holder since 1999 and has donated generously to many capital funding projects
- » Three boys



RANDY HALE '85
HOUSTON, TX
Rock Hill Capital

- » BBA in Accounting (1985)
- » Began career at Arthur Andersen & Co. in Houston
- » Founded Rock Hill Capital in 2007 and serves as Managing Director
- » Active investor and founder of several private businesses
- » Past President of Houston Venture Capital Association
- » Member of the Association for Corporate Growth
- » Chairman of the Board of Boys and Girls Country of Houston, Trustee of Boys and Girls of Houston Endowment Fund
- » Established a Permanently Endowed 12th Man Scholarship in 1998 with wife, Tracy
- » Three children



JAY GRAHAM '92
HOUSTON, TX
WildHorse Resource Development

- » BS in Petroleum Engineering (1992)
- » CEO and co-founder of WildHorse Resource Development Corporation
- » Member of the Petroleum Engineering Academy of Distinguished Graduates
- » Serves of the Petroleum Industry Advisory Board and the College of Engineering Advisory Council
- » Co-founder and advisor to Texas A&M's Petroleum Ventures Program
- » Founded the April and Jay Graham Fellowship for Military Service Initiatives at the Bush Institute with wife, April
- » Serves of several other charitable boards beyond his career field
- » Two boys



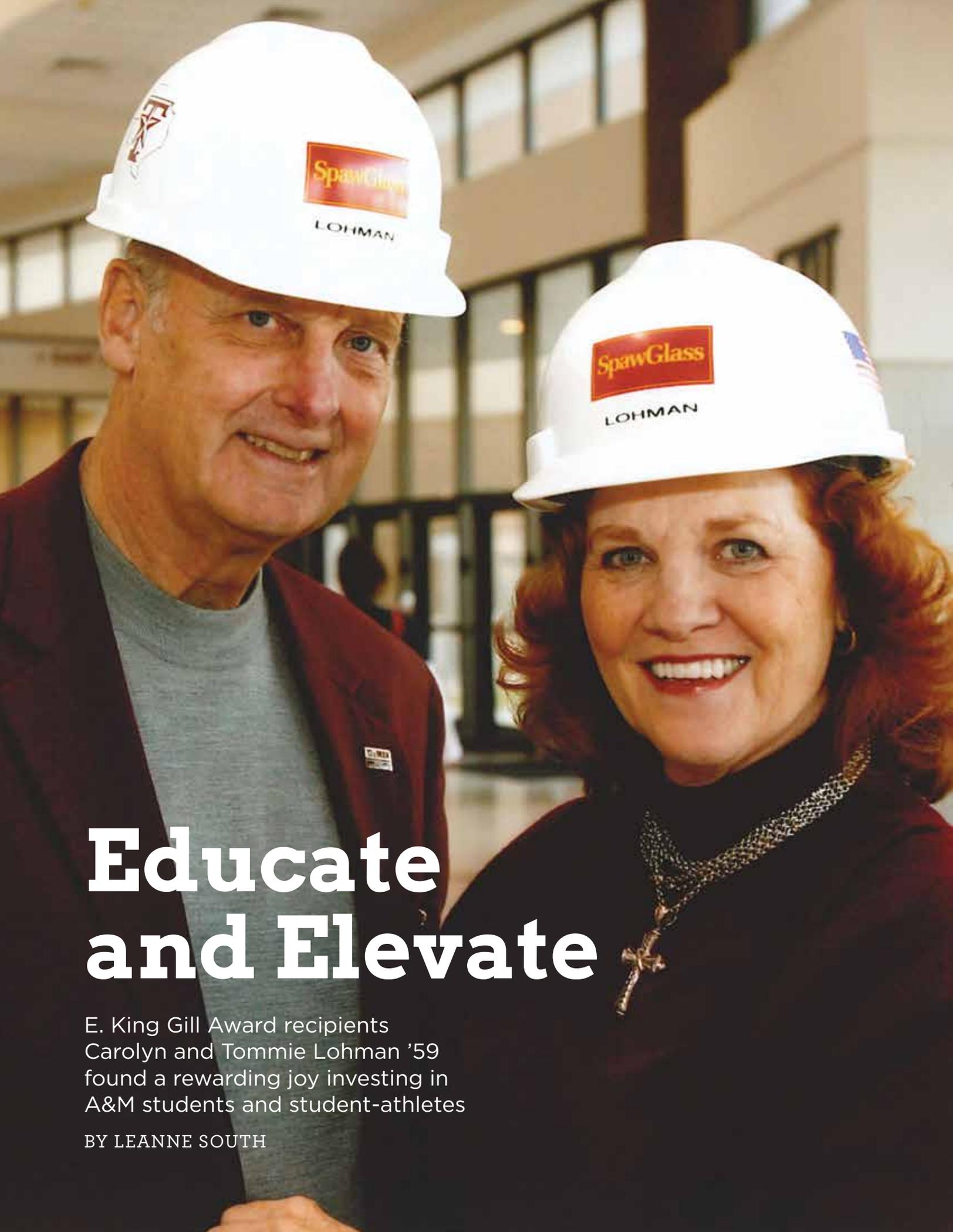
KEVIN MCDONALD '89
HOUSTON, TX
Keane

- » BS in Agricultural Economics (1989)
- » Keane's Executive Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary
- » Held professional leadership positions at Valero Energy, Anadarko Petroleum and Cooper Industries
- » Served as President & Chief Executive Officer and acting General Council of Arms of Hope
- » Practiced as a partner at international law firm Fulbright & Jaworski LLP
- » Served at Marathon Oil on the Deputy General Counsel of Corporate Legal Services and Government Relations, Deputy General Counsel of Governance, Compliance & Corporate Services, and Assistant General Counsel
- » Wife, Nathalie



DON MEYER '78
SAN ANTONIO, TX
Hallmark Specialty Underwriters, Inc.

- » BS in Animal Science (1978)
- » 35+ years of experience in the insurance industry
- » President of Hallmark Specialty Underwriters, Inc.
- » Has made generous donations to several 12th Man Foundation capital campaigns and A&M Foundation endowed scholarships with wife, Carol '78
- » Serve as Captains of the San Antonio Champions Council
- » Two Aggie children



Educate and Elevate

E. King Gill Award recipients
Carolyn and Tommie Lohman '59
found a rewarding joy investing in
A&M students and student-athletes

BY LEANNE SOUTH

“

**IT'S OVERWHELMING. TO BE
ACKNOWLEDGED WITH SUCH
AN AWARD IS HUMBLING. THAT
SOUNDS SO TRITE TO SAY, BUT
IT REALLY IS HUMBLING.**

– CAROLYN LOHMAN

IN OCTOBER 2017, Carolyn and the late Tommie Lohman '59 were announced as recipients of the prestigious E. King Gill Award.

Carolyn, with her grandson Cason by her side, was honored at halftime of the Texas A&M-Auburn football game on Nov. 4, 2017. Tommie, class of 1959, passed away in 2012.

“To be acknowledged with such an award is humbling,” Carolyn said during the recognition. “That sounds so trite to say, but it really is humbling. I wish my husband could have been here for this. It’s great to be here with Cason, though, because he’s so much like his grandfather. I’m so proud of him.”

Fixtures at A&M sporting events and longtime supporters of Aggie Athletics, the Lohmans have been instrumental in A&M’s rise to athletic prominence. They embody every aspect of the award, which is presented annually to 12th Man Foundation donors who have generously helped the organization realize its mission of funding scholarships, programs and facilities in support of championship athletics.

AGGIE ROLE MODELS

Tommie was destined to work in the oil industry. He grew up in Shreveport, La. and learned the business from his father, the late Zeke Lohman, Jr.,

a wildcatter. Zeke encouraged Tommie to attend A&M because he believed the university’s values and education would serve his son well.

Carolyn met Tommie the summer between his junior and senior year at A&M when he interned with Shell outside of her hometown of Quitman, Texas. She was in summer school at TCU when a friend encouraged her to come home for a visit to meet a handsome Aggie who came to the Dairy Queen every night.

The two hit it off and spent the 1958 fall semester traveling back and forth between College Station and Fort Worth. Toward the end of the semester Tommie proposed, saying they had to marry so he could stay in College Station and focus on his studies. They wed on Dec. 27, 1958.

With a degree in petroleum engineering, Tommie’s first job took the couple to Beeville and launched a successful career, most of which was spent as an executive with Texas Oil & Gas and as president of Delhi Gas Pipeline. Tommie earned a reputation as frank and ambitious with high standards. He loved the oil and gas industry and sought to mentor promising young employees.

Tommie was a hard worker, but never let his career interfere with family. This excerpt from his 2012 obituary encapsulates it best:

Carolyn, with her grandson Cason, was honored at halftime of the A&M-Auburn football game on Nov. 4, 2017, after she and husband Tommie were named recipients of the E. King Gill Award. Tommie, class of 1959, passed away in 2012.



Whether rocking the babies to sleep, decorating their birthday cakes, watching them play ball, skiing with them on the “black diamond” ski runs at “Skistone,” exploring London or golfing together in Scotland, there was nowhere Tommie would rather be than with his family.

Carolyn’s parents’ approval of their marriage included one stipulation: that Carolyn finish her education. Her father, W.C. “Carroll” Swearingen, graduated from A&M in 1940 and was the first in his family to attend college.

Wherever Tommie’s job took the family, Carolyn found a college where she could take classes. After 11 years, two children and eight colleges, she earned a degree in home economics education from the University of Houston.

Carolyn taught high school for four years and gained a reputation as someone students could count on for help. Following a move to Dallas, Carolyn returned to college, earned a master’s degree in counseling psychology from SMU and started a 17-year career as a counselor.

After Tommie and Carolyn retired to Houston

to be near their grandchildren, they turned their attention to volunteer opportunities at A&M. They eventually relocated to College Station in the early 2000s.

DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

The College of Engineering tapped Tommie’s experience by asking him to serve on its advisory council and later the college’s External Advisory and Development Council. He was involved in several other organizations including the A&M Legacy Society and Texas Aggie Bar Association.

Carolyn joined the Dean’s Development Council within the College of Education and Human Development. At her first meeting, she volunteered to help with a new awards ceremony and was asked to chair the event.

“That’s when I learned that there is always something you can do to help,” she said. “All you really need to do is show up!”

Carolyn’s continuous involvement led to the creation of three freshman learning groups by the mid-2000s. More than a decade later, over 1,000

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**I CONSIDERED
CAROLYN LOHMAN MY
FAIRY GODMOTHER
AT TEXAS A&M.
WHEN SHE IS TALKING
TO YOU, SHE MAKES
YOU FEEL SPECIAL.
THAT’S HER GIFT.**

– JORDAN GREEN '15

freshmen have passed through a Lohman Learning Community, a first-year experience program for students pursuing education majors.

One of those freshmen was then-Aggie men’s basketball player Jordan Green, who met Carolyn during a Lohman Learning Community social. After the event, he gave Carolyn a ride to her car parked across campus.

“I considered Carolyn Lohman my fairy godmother at Texas A&M,” Green said. “After that event, we sat in the car and talked for half an hour. She asked about my goals, my future. When she is talking to you, she makes you feel special. That’s her gift.”

Carolyn brought leaders in education and athletics together to discuss ways to help student-athletes succeed in earning their degree.

She is especially proud to have helped establish the Texas A&M Coaching Academy in 2013. Directed by former Aggie basketball player and coach Dr. John Thornton, the Academy mentors students interested in becoming coaches.

For several years, Carolyn also helped lead a





THE E. KING GILL AWARD

Established in 2011, the E. King Gill Award is presented annually to a person or family 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

Giving back has been a hallmark of Tommie and Carolyn's lives. Their early gifts to A&M centered on students, but they also made significant contributions to help elevate the football and basketball programs.

dining tutorial that guided student-athletes through a formal dinner at a formally set table.

CASTING A NEW VISION FOR FUNDRAISING

In 1999, Tommie was appointed to the 12th Man Foundation's Board of Trustees, serving as chair in 2003 and immediate past-chair in 2004.

Aging stadiums and a need to build facilities for several women's sports at A&M spurred the 12th Man Foundation to launch its first capital campaign in 2000. The Championship Vision, chaired by Carolyn and Jack Little '60, raised \$52 million for a south end zone complex at Kyle Field along with new softball and soccer facilities.

The successful campaign proved that Aggies were willing to support athletics, and the 12th Man Foundation leadership recognized a need to meet this new reality.

Weldon Jaynes '54, who followed Lohman as board chair in 2004, said Tommie strongly supported building a professional major gifts staff.

"Tommie was respected among the board members as a leader and problem solver," Jaynes said. "There were real concerns, though, about the cost of creating such a staff. What happens if it doesn't work?"

In a close vote at the 2004 summer meeting, the

“

**WE REALIZED WE
COULD KEEP PUTTING
MONEY IN THE BANK,
OR WE COULD DO
SOMETHING TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE.**

– CAROLYN LOHMAN



COURTESY OF CAROLYN LOHMAN

board approved creating a major gifts office.

Fortunately for the Foundation and Aggie Athletics, the major gifts office has proven to be a risk worth taking. After 13 years and several successful capital campaigns thanks to many dedicated donors, A&M is among the national leaders in funding athletic scholarships, programs and facilities.

“Without Tommie, there might not be a professional major gifts staff,” Jaynes said, “and the 12th Man Foundation would not be where it is today.”

LEAVING A LEGACY

When the Lohmans began to consider donating to A&M, they looked first at students.

“We realized we could keep putting money in the bank,” Carolyn recalled, “or we could do something to make a difference.”

They made gifts to the College of Engineering and the College of Education and Human Development that supported student learning and teaching faculty.

Their first gift to support athletics endowed a student-athlete scholarship. Later, they sponsored a banquet honoring student-athletes’ academic

success. Carolyn believes that student-athletes have two jobs in college, and it is important to celebrate their academic achievements.

The Lohmans have also made significant contributions to help elevate the football and basketball programs.

When A&M hired a new women’s basketball coach in 2003, Tommie and Carolyn were among the first to meet the charismatic Gary Blair. As Blair and then-men’s basketball coach Billy Gilispie began taking their respective teams to the NCAA Tournament, the Lohmans stepped up to support both programs with a \$1.5 million lead gift for new facilities at Reed Arena. The 3,595-square-foot Carolyn and Tommie E. Lohman ’59 Grand Lobby at the Cox-McFerrin Center for Aggie Basketball opened in 2006 and serves as an integral space for hosting recruits and events.

Before Tommie passed away, the Lohmans also discussed a gift to the 12th Man Foundation for the \$25 million Campaign for Aggie Football to upgrade football facilities. In 2012, Carolyn honored his memory with a \$1 million lead gift for the magnificent entrance to the Bright Football Complex. The 4,000-square-foot Tommie E. Lohman ’59

On Oct. 6, 2017, friends and family joined staff members from the 12th Man Foundation in surprising Carolyn on Kyle Field with the announcement that she and Tommie were the 2017 recipients of the E. King Gill Award.





Center opened in 2013, and is a welcoming gathering space for coaches, student-athletes, recruits and their families.

Today, Carolyn carries on the passion she and Tommie shared for athletics and academics.

“Tommie was full of energy who played as hard as he worked,” Carolyn said. “And that was a good challenge for me.”

Still involved with the College of Education and A&M Athletics, Carolyn is a regular at Aggie football as well as men’s and women’s basketball games and enjoys traveling to postseason tournaments. Above all, she wants to see every student-athlete earn their degree as well as shine in their sport.

Indeed, the Lohmans have left a legacy that will benefit students and student-athletes for years to come.

“Tommie and Carolyn have been extraordinary donors, but more than anything, I’m glad to have called Tommie my friend and to still call Carolyn my friend,” said Travis Dabney, 12th Man Foundation President and CEO. “I have a tremendous amount of respect for everything they have done in their professional lives and their philanthropic lives. Texas A&M is lucky to have them.”

COURTESY OF CAROLYN LOHMAN (THIS PAGE); MICHAEL KELLETT '91 (FACING PAGE)

“
**TOMMIE AND CAROLYN
HAD A VISION OF WHAT
A&M COULD BE. I’VE BEEN
SO IMPRESSED THAT
CAROLYN HAS CARRIED
ON THAT VISION. I KNOW
TOMMIE WOULD BE SO
PROUD OF THIS MOMENT.**

– R.C. SLOCUM

ANNUAL FUND

Annual donations are critical to funding scholarships and programs for Texas A&M Athletics

GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO SUPPORT TEXAS A&M

Strengthen your connection with an annual gift to the 12th Man Foundation in support of championship athletics at A&M.

CONTACT THE ANNUAL FUND STAFF AT 979-260-2397

THE ANNUAL FUND DEPARTMENT IS dedicated to producing and facilitating excellence. With a vision that stems directly from that of the entire organization, the Annual Fund is designed to fund scholarships and programs in support of championship athletics.

HOW THE ANNUAL FUND IMPACTS A&M ATHLETICS

Annual donations make an enormous impact on A&M Athletics. Donors to the Annual Fund include both individual ticket buyers and season ticket holders who pay an annual seat contribution or make additional philanthropic gifts. Those gifts provide a significant portion of Texas A&M Athletics' budget.

WAYS DONORS CAN BECOME MORE INVOLVED

Annual Fund gifts can conveniently be made during the football season ticket renewal process or at any time by calling our staff or visiting our website. Donors are also encouraged to become members or strengthen their current membership through the following programs:

MVP (419 members)

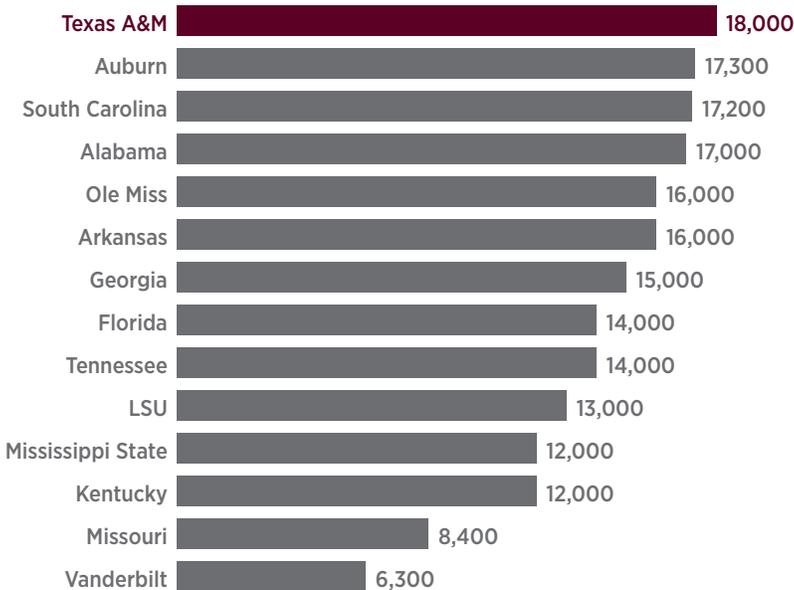
Active donor who makes an Annual Fund gift of at least \$750

In sports, the Most Valuable Player award is an honor typically bestowed upon the best-performing player. At the 12th Man Foundation, the MVP designation honors our generous donors who support championship athletics through a yearly philanthropic contribution to the Annual Fund above and beyond their required seating contribution. Thanks to the generosity of our 12th Man Foundation MVPs, Texas A&M Athletics is competitive in athletics and in the classroom. MVPs are invited to a 12th Man Foundation tailgate at a home football game each fall. Contact Samantha Milroy for more information.

Eppright Distinguished Donors (1,556 members)

Individuals and businesses who have contributed at least \$100,000 (see listing on page 52)

The Eppright Distinguished Donors program recognizes those who have made a commitment to lifetime giving in support of Texas A&M Athletics. Members are honored at an annual event and recognized on the wall in the lobby of the Bernard C. Richardson Zone at Kyle Field. Contact Samantha Milroy for more information.



SOURCE: CSL INTERNATIONAL (2017 DATA)

ATHLETIC DONORS IN THE SEC

In the nation's best conference, 12th Man Foundation donors set the standard as the largest athletic donor organization. Texas A&M ranks first in the SEC in number of athletic donors and is 28 percent higher than the conference average (14,014).

“

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT AND LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU IN PRESERVING THE TRADITION OF CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.

— MICHAEL SOLOMON '04

Athletic Ambassadors (322 members)

Active donor who is a priority season ticket holder, has donated at least \$1,000 to the Annual Fund and at least \$1,000 to a Foundation capital campaign (annual dues are \$800)

The Athletic Ambassadors program exists to raise awareness and support for the 12th Man Foundation and its mission of supporting championship athletics through annual and capital fundraising campaigns. Members are invited to exclusive events including the annual Athletic Ambassadors Summer Meeting, held at a resort with athletics administrators, coaches and student-athletes. Contact Samantha Milroy for more information.

New Grad

A&M graduate within the past five years

The New Grad program is an exclusive membership opportunity for new graduates of Texas A&M University. New graduates receive their first year of membership in the 12th Man Foundation free – a \$150 value – and enjoy many benefits including special pricing on season tickets and invitations to exclusive events. Contact Callie Boenigk for more information.

THE ANNUAL FUND STAFF

For more information about the Annual Fund or how to become more involved with the 12th Man Foundation, please contact:



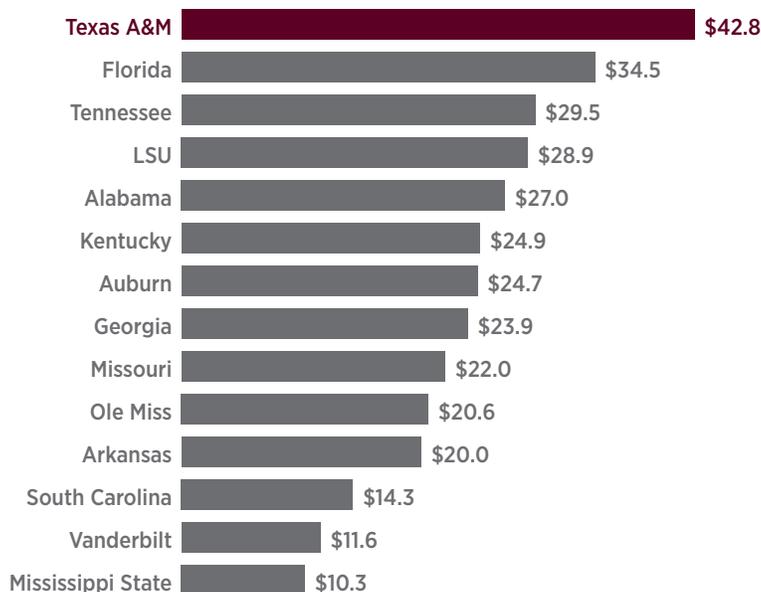
MICHAEL SOLOMON '04
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
OF ANNUAL FUND AND
DONOR SERVICES
michael@12thmanfoundation.com
979-260-2395



SAMANTHA MILROY
DIRECTOR OF ANNUAL FUND
samantham@12thmanfoundation.com
979-260-2397



CALLIE BOENIGK '14
MANAGER OF ANNUAL FUND
cboenigk@12thmanfoundation.com
979-260-2394



SOURCE: CSL INTERNATIONAL (2017 DATA)

SEC ATHLETIC DONOR REVENUE

The 12th Man stands alone atop its peers in the Southeastern Conference. Texas A&M's donor revenue of \$42.8 million ranks first in the SEC and is 79 percent greater than the conference average (\$23.9 million).

SEASON TICKET RENEWALS

Renew your football season tickets March 5 - April 2 to secure your seat for the Jimbo Fisher era

TO ACCESS THE ONLINE RENEWAL SYSTEM, LOG IN TO YOUR MEMBER DASHBOARD AT WWW.12THMANFOUNDATION.COM USING YOUR DONOR NUMBER AND PASSWORD. THEN SELECT THE "SEASON TICKETS" TAB AND FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW.

What if I do not know my donor number?

Please click "Forgot donor number?" on the login screen. If you do not know the email address on your account, please contact the 12th Man Foundation staff at 888-99-AGGIE.

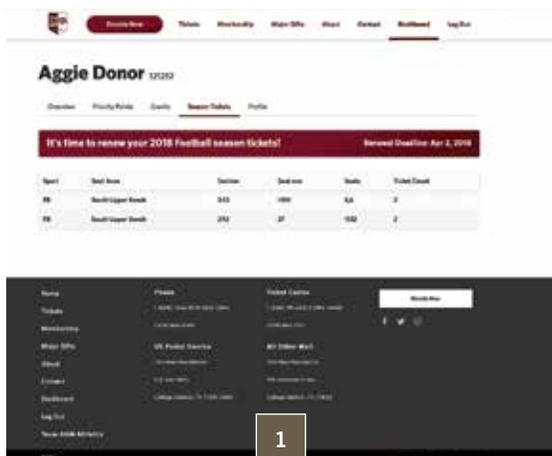
What if I do not know my password?

Please click "Forgot your password?" to retrieve your password.

Can I come to the 12th Man Foundation offices for assistance completing my renewal?

Yes, you may come to the 12th Man Foundation offices for assistance with your 2018 renewal form. Our offices are open from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday.

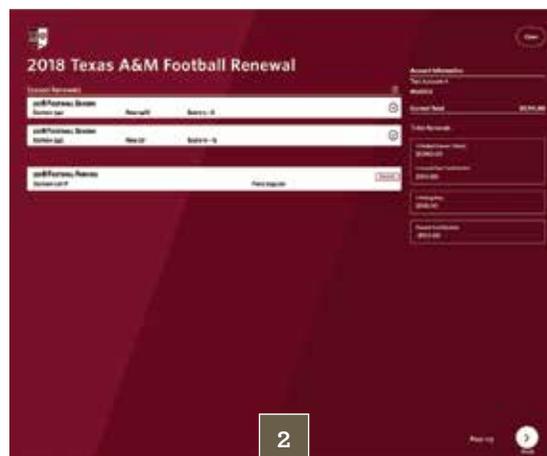
CONTACT THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION STAFF WITH RENEWAL QUESTIONS AT 888-99-AGGIE



1

Once you have logged in to your Member Dashboard and selected the "Season Tickets" tab, click the maroon bar that says "It's time to renew your 2018 Football season tickets!"

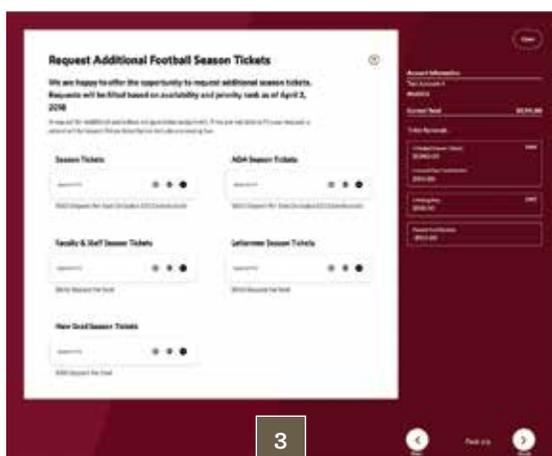
The deadline to submit your renewal is April 2, 2018.



2

Here you will find your current seats and parking for the 2018 season. To view and/or release seats, click the down arrow in the seating box.

If you release seats, you relinquish all rights to those seats for the current and future seasons.



3

To request additional season tickets, use the boxes on this page. Updates will populate in your ticket summary in the right column when you advance to the next page.

For any questions or concerns, please call our office at 888-99-AGGIE.



4

Here you can opt in or out of the 2018 seat selection and upgrade process. If you requested additional season tickets, "Yes" will be selected by default.

The seat relocation and new seat selection period will take place in May.

SEASON TICKET RENEWAL TIMELINE

March 5: Football season ticket renewals began online. Paper renewal forms will not be mailed.

March 14-16: 12th Man Foundation offices closed for Spring Break.

March 30: 12th Man Foundation offices closed for Good Friday.

April 2: Deadline to submit football season ticket renewals. Everyone should be paid in full, or on a payment plan, by this date.

Late April: Information about expected available inventory for the relocation and new seat selection process will be sent by email.

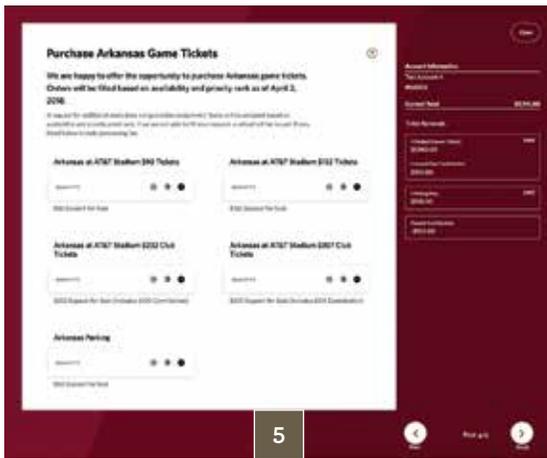
Late April: Seat relocation and new seat selection appointment times and instructions for accessing the system will be sent by regular mail and email.

May 1: Scheduled payment #2 due. Donors who opted for a payment plan will have the second payment processed.

May: Seat relocation and new seat selection period.

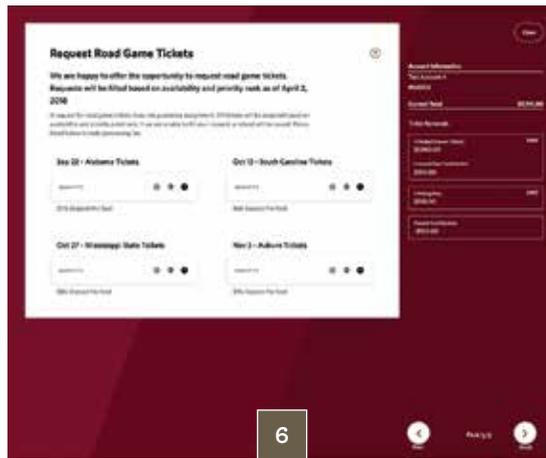
June 1: Scheduled payment #3 due. Donors who opted for a payment plan will have the final payment processed.

Priority points for seat relocation and the new seat selection process will be calculated for contributions and ticket payments received by April 2, 2018.



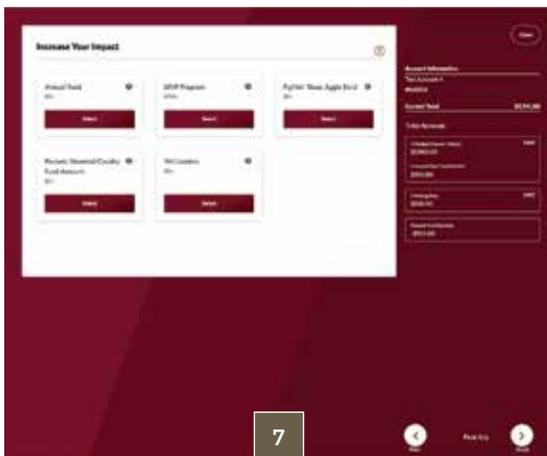
If you would like to purchase tickets to the 2018 Arkansas game at AT&T Stadium, you can add your requests here.

Orders will be filled based on availability and priority rank as of April 2, 2018.



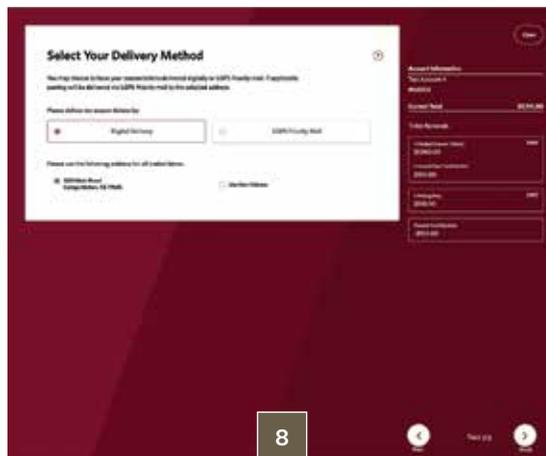
You can request road game tickets on this page of the renewal process.

Requests will be filled based on availability and priority rank as of April 2, 2018.



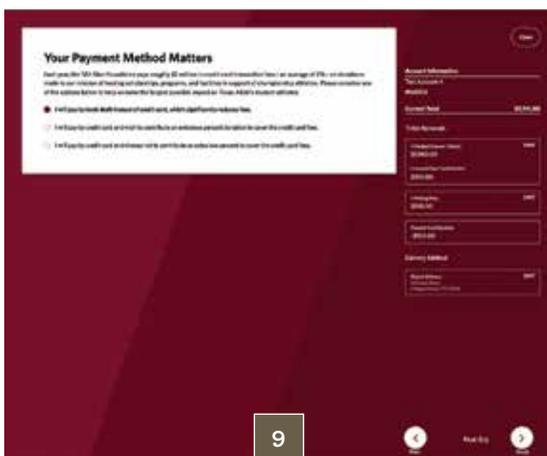
Here you can increase your impact with donations to the Annual Fund, MVP Program and support organizations.

Contributing to the Annual Fund during the renewal process is a convenient way to directly impact student-athletes.



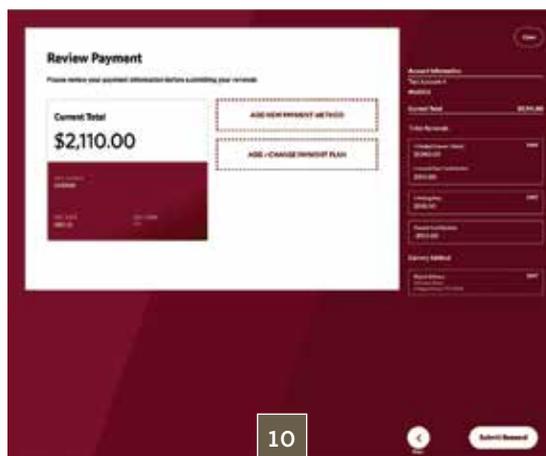
You may choose to have your season tickets delivered digitally or USPS Priority mail.

If you choose to have your tickets mailed, please ensure the address listed is correct.



You may select bank draft or credit card as your payment method. Bank drafts significantly reduce the fees that the 12th Man Foundation has to pay.

If you choose to pay an extra two percent to cover credit card fees, that amount will be considered an annual donation that is tax deductible and accrues priority points.



On the last page you will input your payment information. You can choose to pay the full balance or set up a payment plan. When you are finished, click "Submit Renewal".

If you click "Close" at any point before submitting your renewal, you will exit the renewal process and void all selections you have made.



KYLE FIELD CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION

In 2013, Texas A&M initiated an ambitious campaign to redevelop iconic Kyle Field.

Built on the premise of Shared Vision, Shared Commitment and Shared Benefit, the Kyle Field Campaign set the bar higher than any stadium redevelopment project in our country's history. At a price tag of \$485 million, the project was one that impacted current and former students, the local community and tens of thousands of season-ticket holders and contributors to Aggie Athletics.

The success and funding of the project hinged largely on donors to the 12th Man Foundation like you who were asked to invest through Kyle Field Campaign gifts toward this historic endeavor as well as make annual seat contributions to pay for the construction bonds. Not surprisingly, Aggies stepped up, answered the call, and allowed Texas A&M to pursue this bold vision of a stadium that is unrivaled in collegiate athletics.

On February 23, 2018, we proudly announced the overwhelmingly successful conclusion of the Kyle Field Campaign.

Because of your dedication and support, it is appropriate we say thank you. You are the foundation on which college football's finest facility was built upon and we are grateful for the way you have forever impacted Texas A&M.

MOVING FORWARD, NEW SEASON TICKET PURCHASES WILL ONLY REQUIRE AN ANNUAL SEAT CONTRIBUTION IN ADDITION TO THE TICKET COST. NEW TICKET PURCHASES WILL NO LONGER REQUIRE A KYLE FIELD CAMPAIGN GIFT.

Keep this in mind as you consider adding additional season tickets, or if you have friends and family who are ready to experience the excitement of the 2018 Aggie football season with new head coach Jimbo Fisher.

To those whose pledge payments are not yet completed, please know your remaining pledges are crucial to the final success of this project. Should you have any questions regarding the Kyle Field Campaign, our staff is available to answer any questions by calling 888-826-1284.

Because we cannot say it enough, thank you for your commitment to the Kyle Field Campaign.

Your support has left an indelible impact on Texas A&M and for that we are grateful.

STEPHANIE '94 & JOSH DAVIS '94

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

STEPHANIE AND JOSH DAVIS ARE making a difference for Texas A&M Athletics.

The Aggie couple is helping provide A&M student-athletes the best opportunities to be successful with their generous support of the 12th Man Foundation's mission.

Josh's impact is also seen inside Kyle Field, Reed Arena, Olsen Field at Blue Bell Park and wherever an A&M team might be playing across the country.

To call Josh a passionate Aggie sports fan might be a bit of an understatement. He is a die-hard A&M football fan, a vocal supporter of the basketball team and he loves the baseball program.

Frankly, if A&M is competing in athletics, Josh is most likely in attendance or following it closely.

"I probably could be accused of being a little bit too passionate," he admitted. "But I love A&M and I love sports."

EAST COAST TO AGGIELAND

Like many Aggies, Josh's family and the way he was raised led him to love A&M and sports, but not always A&M sports.

He grew up in the Washington D.C. area and was a huge University of Maryland basketball fan – his dad's alma mater. A&M was out of sight, out of mind until the family moved to San Marcos when his father's job in the Treasury Department was relocated to Austin.

Josh's older sister was the first in the family to go to A&M. When it was his turn to choose a college, it came down to A&M and the University of Texas.

"Truth be told, I did not want to go to school a half an hour from home or 10 minutes from my dad's office," he admitted. "So, I followed my older sister to A&M."

Josh majored in accounting and finance and

attended every football and basketball game he could.

"I absolutely loved school," he said. "I loved A&M and the culture of the school."

CAREER AND FAMILY

During his junior year at A&M, a pledge brother introduced Josh to Stephanie, a fellow business student who the friend knew from high school.

"She graduated in 1994, moved to Atlanta for a job and lived there with my sister," said Josh, who took a "victory lap" before graduating in 1995. "When I finished school and took a job in Houston, she took a new job in Houston."

Josh and Stephanie married in 1998 and have three children – Joshua (15), Payne (13) and Libby (10).

“
CHAMPIONS COUNCIL IS A GREAT WAY TO GAIN A LOT MORE INSIGHT INTO WHAT IS GOING ON IN TERMS OF THE FUNDRAISING PROCESS AND PROJECTS THAT ARE UNDERWAY OR NEEDED.

— JOSH DAVIS '94



Like many Aggies at the time, Josh went to work for Arthur Andersen straight out of college. His career in finance has taken the Davises from Houston to Washington D.C. to Charlotte and now back to Houston, where he is one of five founding partners of Stellus Capital Management.

“Three of us are Aggies,” he said, “and we’ve all worked together for a very long time. I have basketball and football seats with one of my partners... we do a lot of fun things together.”

THE AGGIE EXPERIENCE

Since arriving on campus in 1990, Josh has witnessed some of the greatest moments in the past 20 years of Aggie Athletics, including some unforgettable comeback victories.

“The 1998 Big 12 Championship game and the 2016 Northern Iowa basketball game are as good as it gets for an Aggie fan,” he said.

Josh also likes to tell his friend and former Longhorn quarterback Shea Morenz how vividly he remembers him throwing the interception to safety Dennis Allen that clinched an Aggie victory in the 1993 A&M-Texas game.

Over the years, Aggie sports have provided the perfect family experiences for the Davises. Josh and Stephanie love the fact that it’s something they can all do as a family to create lifelong memories.

“We’ve been taking our children to basketball and football games since they were little,” said Josh, who first purchased football season tickets in The Zone when it opened in 1999. “While there are lots of things you can do as a family, this is one that everybody enjoys. It’s a great, wonderful thing for us to be able to do together and have that shared passion for the school and its teams.”

For Stephanie and Josh, A&M athletic events provide the perfect opportunities for their family to do things together that they all enjoy and are passionate about.

“

WHEN YOU HAVE A TEAM YOU CAN SUPPORT AND YOU CAN DO IT WITH YOUR FAMILY, YOU CREATE LIFETIME MEMORIES THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE WITH YOU.

— JOSH DAVIS '94

GIVING BACK

In addition to purchasing season tickets in two sports, Josh has steadily increased his involvement with the 12th Man Foundation over the years by donating to construction projects for Olsen Field at Blue Bell Park, the Cox-McFerrin Center for Aggie Basketball and the Bright Football Complex renovations. He also joined Champions Council and served as captain of the Houston chapter.

“Champions Council is a great way to gain a lot more insight into what is going on in terms of the fundraising process and projects that are underway or needed,” said Josh, who also contributes to A&M’s Mays Business School and serves on the advisory board for the Trading, Risk & Investments Program (TRIP). “It provides a window that you don’t normally have and definitely increases and keeps your excitement about potentially being more involved in helping out.”

From meeting student-athletes to traveling to road games, Josh is grateful for the experiences he and his family have shared over the years.

“When you’re involved with the 12th Man Foundation, you have opportunities with athletics like Sideline Saturdays, where you can take your kids down to the sidelines on Kyle Field. Or in basketball, you become friends with the coaches and they invite you to shoot baskets at the practice facility before games. That’s amazing.

“Our kids have had so many neat Aggie experiences as a result of our involvement. I think those kinds of experiences are phenomenal.” ■

ENHANCE A STUDENT-ATHLETE'S EXPERIENCE

With their generous support and love for Texas A&M, Stephanie '94 and Josh Davis '94 are helping provide championship-level experiences for student-athletes.

Join Stephanie and Josh as Champions Council members and make a transformational gift to Texas A&M Athletics.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595

EVA PAALMA '18

Scholar student-athlete, tennis player and CEO

BY DOUGLAS PILS '92

EVA PAALMA HAS BEEN HELPING OTHERS for as long as she can remember.

Early in life, Paalma's parents told her that she did not need to travel to make a difference. She could easily serve others in her hometown of Tallinn, Estonia, on the coast of the Baltic Sea.

"Once you get into it you realize, 'Wow, I truly have an impact,'" said Paalma, one of two senior captains for the Texas A&M women's tennis team. "It started from home, definitely. But it started small with doing good things for my parents and my grandparents."

Paalma brought that giving spirit to Aggieland in 2014 and it's been growing ever since. That led to her being named to the 2016-17 SEC Women's Tennis Community Service Team, an honor that recognizes what student-athletes do beyond the court.

Paalma's list is long:

- Helped organize, promote and run the annual Aggies CAN food drive.
- Participated in Aggies Read, visiting local elementary schools to read and play.
- Helped out with Aggies Move, speaking to elementary school students about living healthy.

And she's the CEO of We³, the first female student-athlete leadership organization at A&M designed to motivate women to pursue goals and professional careers outside of sports.

"She doesn't accept anything less than giving her all in anything she does," A&M women's tennis coach Mark Weaver said. "People say that loosely sometimes, but I truly mean that on the tennis court, in the weight room, the classroom, life and all of the extracurricular things Eva does. That's just how she operates. She knows no other way."

Paalma sees the impact student-athletes make on young lives through simple actions. On a trip for

Aggies Read, a girl asked to wear Paalma's A&M jacket so she could feel like an Aggie student-athlete for 15 minutes.

"That's the moment that put it in perspective," said Paalma, who started her final season with a 7-0 record. "Student-athletes here don't often realize how big of a star they are in other people's minds.

"Being a full scholarship athlete here, I feel that Texas A&M has given so much to me. And as an international student, they have made me feel at home here. I feel like I owe it back to the community, and it makes me feel like the community deserves it. I do the most I can to give back."

The work with We³, or "We-Cubed," allows Paalma to give back to her closest community – female student-athletes at A&M. The organization started in 2016 as a book club with help from Kristi Mejias, the assistant director for student-athlete engagement for Texas A&M Athletics.

They read the book, "Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead" by Nell Scovell and Sheryl

We³'s mission is to encourage, equip, empower and unify Aggie female student-athletes through mentorship and by creating developmental opportunities.

“

TEXAS A&M IS A PLACE WHERE IF YOU WANT TO SUCCEED AND YOU'RE WILLING TO WORK HARD, THEY GIVE YOU EVERY RESOURCE AND ANYTHING YOU NEED.

— EVA PAALMA '18



We^3 hosted a women's networking night last fall that focused on network building and why it is important for a student-athlete's career after sports.



Sandberg. They met every three weeks, and after the third meeting, Paalma and former track student-athlete Kaila Brooks took over planning the discussions. In the spring, Mejias and her team challenged Paalma to take a more active role in the group's direction.

From that push, We^3 – Women Encourage, Equip, Empower – sprung to life. The group aims to fulfill all three of the “E’s” through unity, mentorship and developmental opportunities.

“I think it’s extremely important for student-athletes that we not only identify ourselves with success in our sports, but we also want to identify ourselves beyond the success of the field,” Paalma said.

The group presented their ideas to A&M Athletics senior staff, including athletic director Scott Woodward, for approval to move forward with the initiative. They left the meeting with the department’s full support. Now, the group plans two premiere events each semester as well as monthly meetings.

In the fall of 2017, We^3 held a women’s networking night that included a panel discussion with ESPN analyst and former A&M softball star Amanda Scarborough, A&M associate head coach for swimming Tanica Jamison, 2014 SEC women’s track and field athlete of the year Olivia Ekponé and current softball player Tori Vidales. Paalma and Brooks guided a discussion on network building and why it would be important for their careers after sports.

The big meeting this spring will feature all four female head coaches at A&M – Trelle McCombs (golf), Jo Evans (softball), Tana McKay (equestrian) and Laura Kuhn (volleyball). One text message from Mejias and all four said they would love to come talk with We^3.

Giving back to her fellow student-athletes through We^3 gives Paalma a lot of satisfaction, even though the group’s growing impact may not be seen immediately.

“What we are working on, it’s hard to see results right away,” Paalma said. “Especially since we’ve only been working on this for a year. We have some seniors right now, so we’ll be able to see how we’ve helped them going forward. We still see these little steps in the future.”

Thinking of her final matches and stepping off the court to work on her master’s in marketing at the Mays Business School this fall makes Paalma a little sad, but it reminds her that deciding to leave Estonia for A&M was the greatest decision in her life.

“Texas A&M is a place where if you want to succeed and you’re willing to work hard, they give you every resource and anything you need,” she said. “It’s in every aspect of your life. It’s professors in the classroom, academic advisers, coaches and trainers. It’s every little thing.

“They have opened so many doors for me. I think the real, real impact I’m going to see is in the upcoming years.”

COURTESY OF KRISTI MEJIAS

TEXAS A&M STUDENT-ATHLETES ARE SPECIAL

Aggie student-athlete Eva Paalma is exceeding expectations as CEO of Texas A&M’s first female student-athlete leadership organization.

You can contribute to student-athlete success by endowing a scholarship through the 12th Man Foundation’s 1922 Fund.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595

RHONDA & TODD OVERBERGEN '88

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01



Todd and Rhonda have significantly impacted A&M students and student-athletes with generous contributions to the Mays Business School as well as the 12th Man Foundation.

TODD OVERBERGEN THOUGHT HIS football playing days were over. Then his phone rang.

“Todd, this is Jackie Sherrill. We need a quarterback this fall, and I think you need to come down and play for us. Freshman practice starts in three days. You think you can be here?”

“Yes sir, I’ll be there,” Todd answered.

An all-state football and baseball player in high school, Todd had recently completed his freshman year at Central College in Pella, Iowa, which ended with a tough loss in the 1984 Division III Championship game. Todd was playing baseball at Central when he made the decision to transfer to Texas A&M to study engineering and walk on to the Aggie baseball team.

“I thought maybe my football career was over at that point, but I wanted to continue playing baseball,” said Todd, who had first considered going to A&M to play football and baseball when he was in

high school. “I called Mark Johnson, who was the baseball coach at the time, and he told me to come on down and walk on.”

Todd was set to move to College Station and join the Aggies for fall baseball when his phone rang that August.

The first call was from Tim Cassidy, A&M’s recruiting coordinator for football at the time. Cassidy had heard that Todd was transferring to A&M and wanted him to walk on and be the quarterback of the ’85 signing class.

“I thanked him for calling,” Todd said, “but told him that I had not thrown a football in eight months and wanted to focus on baseball.”

Sherrill’s call came about 10 minutes later.

“When I hung up the phone, I told my sister, ‘I guess I’m going to play football at A&M,’” Todd recalled. “I went to a local store and bought a Herschel Walker football and started throwing it at a telephone pole in the park to get my arm back in shape.”

A UNFORGETTABLE YEAR

Todd always had an affinity for A&M despite being born and raised 900 miles away on a farm in the small town of Oskaloosa, Iowa. He grew up watching the Thanksgiving Day rivalry between the Aggies and Longhorns, and he loved the way A&M running back Bubba Bean played the game.

“He was one of the reasons I came to A&M,” Todd said.

As a transfer, Todd had to redshirt his first year at A&M. He served as the scout team quarterback for the 1985 team that won the Southwest Conference and defeated Auburn in the Cotton Bowl. The 42-10 victory over Texas that season is a game that Todd will never forget.



The Overbergen family has enjoyed many memorable Aggie sports moments together through the years, including the extraordinary achievements in 2012-13 by Rhonda's first cousin – Johnny Manziel.

“It was so surreal,” he recalled. “It was so loud, and cotton was raining down from the stands. That was incredible. I met some of my best friends to this day on that team. It was such an awesome year.”

Interestingly enough, Todd’s quarterback coach that season was a young graduate assistant named Darrell Dickey. New A&M head coach Jimbo Fisher hired Dickey as his offensive coordinator in December.

“He was great, and I’m really glad he is back in Aggieland,” Todd said. “He is a very quality guy.”

STILL HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR IT

After a couple of seasons of football and baseball, Todd decided to hang up his cleats and focus on academics.

“I looked at my grades and I looked at my sports and thought, I better get after it,” he said. “My dad looked at me and said, ‘You better get after it.’”

Todd transferred from aerospace engineering to the business school and was set to graduate in 1988 with a bachelor’s in finance.

“There was a recession going on and not a lot of jobs in finance,” he said. “My wise old farmer dad said, ‘I think you need to stay and get your accounting degree. It doesn’t matter whether the ink is red

or black, they still have to account for it.’ So, I stayed another year and graduated with two degrees.”

After graduation, Todd took a job with R.H. “Steve” Stevens ’62 in the tax office at Arthur Andersen in Houston. He met the Aggie legend through his friend and roommate, Shawn Slocum. Steve was close friends with Shawn’s father and another Aggie legend, R.C. Slocum.

“Steve’s had a huge impact on my life,” Todd said. “He’s a great Aggie and a great mentor of mine. He is a perfect example of the power of the Aggie Network.”

Todd’s career in finance now spans nearly 30 years. In 2012, he and four partners founded Stel-lus Capital Management where he heads the Energy Private Equity platform.

ONE MORE DRIVE

Todd met his wife, Rhonda, in Houston when some mutual friends introduced them in 1995. They married in 1997 and have three children – Clayton (18), Carley (17) and Cole (12).

Rhonda, a University of Texas graduate, was eight months pregnant with Clayton on Nov. 26, 1999 – the day of the Bonfire game.

“She wasn’t feeling well when she woke up that

COURTESY OF RHONDA & TODD OVERBERGEN '88

morning, but she told me to go to the game and she would keep me posted,” Todd said. “I really wanted to go to that game.”

Todd went and with about 10 minutes remaining in the 4th quarter and the Aggies trailing, 16-13, his phone rang. Rhonda was having major contractions and he needed to go home and take her to the hospital.

“Everyone around me knew when that call meant,” he said. “But we had just gotten the ball back...So, I decided to watch one more drive.”

Todd and his good friend, David Hotze, watched anxiously as the Aggies marched down the field. Then, Randy McCown lofted a legendary 14-yard touchdown pass to Matt Bumgardner to put the Aggies ahead, 20-16.

“It was spectacular,” Todd recalled. “We were celebrating, and then I grabbed David and said, ‘We gotta go.’”

Todd and David ran through the parking lot and as they reached their car, Kyle Field erupted. Brian Gamble had just recovered Major Applewhite’s fumble to seal the Aggie victory.

Todd had just enough time to pick up some cigars and take Rhonda to the hospital. Their first-born Clayton arrived just after midnight.

This fall, he will be a freshman at A&M.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Todd has always been a sports fan, so supporting A&M Athletics has been the perfect way to keep him involved. It’s also something his family has enjoyed doing together – even Rhonda.

“She’s been a great sport and supporter of A&M,” Todd said. “Even though she’s an avid Longhorn as well, which is great.”

Rhonda grew up in Tyler in a family of Longhorns.

“I took a little bit of heckling in the early days,” Todd admitted.

Things changed in 2012, though, when Johnny Manziel took the college football world by storm. Johnny and Rhonda are first cousins.

“We’ve had a fantastic time with his success,” Todd said. “We spent a lot of time with Rhonda’s family at games and were able to go to New York for the Heisman Trophy presentation. It was a really special time and endeared A&M even further to Rhonda and her family, as well.”

Rhonda deserves the credit for introducing Johnny to then-5-year-old Aggie fan Charlie Dina and his battle with a rare form of cancer. She gave Johnny the yellow “Charlie’s Angels” wristband that he made famous during the 2012 season.

Longtime football and men’s basketball season ticket holders, Todd and Rhonda have significantly impacted A&M students and student-athletes. In addition to endowing a professorship in the Mays Business School, they are Champions Council members and have been generous supporters of 12th Man Foundation capital campaigns including the Olsen Field Renovation project.

“I’m a very big believer in the student-athlete and that it adds something really special to our university,” Todd said. “I think the better your program is, the better known your university is and that helps all of our alumni in everything they do. I’m a very big believer in having a great athletic program and if you can do it right, I think it trickles over to everything we do on the academic side.

“When I came to A&M I didn’t know a single person at the school. Looking back, I know the reason I loved my time there so much was because the great people there made it feel just like being at home.”

YOUR GENEROSITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

As Champions Council members and generous contributors to 12th Man Foundation capital campaigns, Rhonda and Todd Overbergen '88 have made an indelible impact on Texas A&M Athletics.

Join Rhonda and Todd in supporting A&M student-athletes today and tomorrow.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595

“

I THINK THE BETTER YOUR PROGRAM IS, THE BETTER KNOWN YOUR UNIVERSITY IS AND THAT HELPS ALL OF OUR ALUMNI IN EVERYTHING THEY DO.

— TODD OVERBERGEN '88

JERRY SCHMIDT

Director of Athletic Performance for A&M Football

BY WILL JOHNSON '01



JERRY SCHMIDT

DIRECTOR OF ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE (2018-)
TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL

HOMETOWN
HARVARD, NEBRASKA

PREVIOUS SCHOOLS
NOTRE DAME (1989-1994)
FLORIDA (1995-1998)
OKLAHOMA (1999-2017)

PERSONAL
BIRTHDATE: SEPT. 18, 1962
SPOUSE: ROBIN
CHILDREN: AUBREY & SAM

JERRY SCHMIDT COMES FROM ONE of college football's power programs in Oklahoma, but that did not stop Texas A&M from creating a wow factor upon his arrival.

"When you get off the plane, you look over and see the commitment with the stadium," Schmidt said. "It's amazing."

That sentiment continued when he stepped into his new quarters.

"The Davis Player Development Center is impressive and a facility you look forward to," Schmidt added. "It's the way a weight room should be built, the way it should be designed. It has a very good atmosphere."

Schmidt pinpoints the high ceilings and large windows as appealing amenities to the beautiful facility. He and the Aggies have made good use of it early in his tenure.

ALL IN

Although he had not crossed paths with Jimbo Fisher previously, Schmidt was impressed with the new Aggie head coach's intensity level, his attention to detail and how much he cares for his players.

While Fisher and the A&M assistants focused their relentless effort on the recruiting trail, Schmidt helped keep the house in order back in Aggieland.

"He doesn't need any problems here while he's on the road," Schmidt said. "Now is the phase where we make the players faster and stronger. He trusted me to handle the team, start them off and get them going in the right direction."

While many head coaches turn their program over to strength and conditioning during some of the winter and summer months, Schmidt insists there's a wholeness to the Aggies' efforts.

"This is a piece of the puzzle," he said. "The coaching staff, the training room, the equipment room...

everybody that's associated with Texas A&M football has to bring their piece. It doesn't matter if you're secretary or janitor, you have to be all in.

"Coach Fisher is driving the bus. Nobody has more energy than him. We have to match him, and even try to bring more."

BREAKING THE ICE

During a team meeting in early January, Fisher introduced Schmidt to the Aggie players. The head coach then turned the podium over to the leader of his strength and conditioning program.

The team responded well and Schmidt was anxious to get started.

"We had an ice storm that night," he recalled. "Probably an hour after the meeting, I received a text that school was going to be canceled the next day.

"Here's my first day, I have these big plans to get the team going, and all of a sudden school was canceled."

Schmidt sent out an invitation for players to voluntarily begin their work towards the 2018 season.

"I told them myself and my staff would be here," he said. "We'll have the same schedule. We want you to be safe, but we're going to be open if you want to come up and work out. We want to help you."

Nearly every player showed up.

"That's how hungry these guys are," Schmidt said. "They want to work. They want to win."

GREAT COACHES AND PLAYERS

Some of Schmidt's influences are incredible. He's worked for Tom Osborne, Lou Holtz, Steve Spurrier, Bob Stoops and now, Fisher.

"You take things from a lot of different coaches as far as discipline and believing and winning," he said.

Schmidt has helped players achieve historic heights for several decades, including six Heisman winners as well as dozens of All-Americans and NFL stars. Giving to student-athletes like that and seeing what they give back is a joy in his profession.

“They feel how much you care about them,” he said, “and they’ll go to great lengths of working as long as they know you care.”

“They believe in you and you believe in them. They buy into your program and the coaching staff, and pull everybody together.”

THE AGGIE SPIRIT

Perhaps the biggest reason that Schmidt is a great fit for A&M is because his heart does not necessarily lie with the superstar. After all, he’s at a school that raised a statue for a man that never played a down. This spirit is not lost on Schmidt.

“Everybody talks about the [Baker] Mayfields and the [Sam] Bradfords,” he said, “but you have to think about all the blue-collar guys that go through those offseason programs, who are not on scholarship and bring a lot to your program. You can’t thank those guys enough.”

He has seen what the 12th Man means to A&M’s

“

THE DAVIS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CENTER IS IMPRESSIVE AND A FACILITY YOU LOOK FORWARD TO. IT’S THE WAY A WEIGHT ROOM SHOULD BE BUILT, THE WAY IT SHOULD BE DESIGNED.

— JERRY SCHMIDT

past, and he is ready to take that into the future.

“It’s special,” Schmidt said. “When the 12th Man takes the field on special teams, it’s important. It brings the stadium together. Those are the guys that build your program.”

“The 12th Man may not always be as talented, but they come in and work their tail off to get that opportunity on special teams. And it affects your whole locker room. That’s what it’s all about.”

Schmidt knows what A&M is about, and his tireless work to bring a championship to Aggieland is well underway. ▀

Schmidt hit the ground running with the Aggie football team in preparation for spring practice, which begins March 19 and concludes with the Maroon and White Game on Saturday, April 14 at 4 p.m.



BRIAN DAVIS '01



“
I KNOW THE WORLD-CLASS
DEGREE THAT WE RECEIVE
HERE CAN TAKE ME FURTHER
IN LIFE THAN ANYTHING THIS
WORLD HAS TO OFFER.

— CASON SHERROD '18

CASON SHERROD '18

A positive force on the mound
and in the community

BY DOUGLAS PILS '92

WHEN THE KANSAS CITY ROYALS chose hard-throwing pitcher Cason Sherrod in the 13th round of the 2017 Major League Baseball draft, it seemed like a good bet that the Texas A&M bullpen would have a big hole to fill.

Sherrod was a workhorse in the Aggies' march to the 2017 College World Series, pitching in 30 out of 64 games, going 4-1 with four saves and a 2.89 ERA.

Looking back at the list of those drafted in the 13th round, all but four signed up for the chance to start chasing their MLB dreams. Fortunately for A&M, Sherrod was one of those four.

“I know the world-class degree that we receive here can take me further in life than anything this world has to offer,” said Sherrod, who was joined by fellow bullpen mate Kaylor Chafin (Mets, 32nd round) in passing up pro baseball for a senior season in Aggieland. “As far as baseball, obviously it's everybody's dream to make it to the big leagues, but sometimes you have to look at reality. Look in

the mirror and ask yourself, 'Is this really the risk you want to take?'"

For Sherrod, the risk would have meant having to wait to order his Aggie Ring. It has been ordered and he will pick it up in April.

The risk would have meant being further away from graduating. He will be as close as nine hours away from earning his sports management degree after this semester.

And the risk would have meant missing another shot at Omaha. He is one of three senior leaders on a team aiming to return to the College World Series this season.

"I've been really fortunate to be a part of three really great teams in '15, '16 and '17," he said. "The leadership we've had those three years has been something to look up to and learn exactly what it means to be a team leader and be successful in that aspect. I've always looked up to that and wanted to do that."

In reality, Sherrod has been displaying leadership characteristics ever since he set foot on campus in 2014. His work in the special needs community in Bryan-College Station is the place where that has been most evident for two reasons very close to his heart.

Born two months premature in 1996, Sherrod lost 53 percent of his hearing ability, requiring him to wear hearing aids. The other reason is his 29-year-old brother, Jordan, who has autism. Sherrod spends as much time as he can volunteering with children with hearing loss and autism.

"I've really tried to use my platform as much as I can to be an inspiration for other kids who might be going through the same thing, whatever disability they have or are going through," said Sherrod, whose grandfather, Bud Sherrod, was an All-American football player at Tennessee and an A&M assistant football coach in 1958-59.

"If they have a dream in life, they can accomplish it," he said.

Rob Childress said convincing Sherrod to wait a year on pro baseball made him the kingpin of his 2017 recruiting class, but the Aggie head coach did not want him around only for his pitching.

Childress wanted him around for his positive attitude. The kind of attitude that does not ask, "Why me?" when it comes to what cards life dealt Sherrod, but instead, "Why not me?"

"He's run with that (mentality) and that's the thing that makes me proud," Childress said. "It's easy to say that, but it's hard to live that. And he certainly has lived that. I admire him as much as any player I've ever coached in 30 years. I do. That's the best way to describe it. I've been proud of an awful lot of players, but I admire him as much as anybody. "He's pretty special to a lot of people."

Sherrod calls his decision to attend A&M an easy one because it felt like home. He's very thankful to the 12th Man for the opportunity to pitch for the Aggies.

"I'm very fortunate to be here on scholarship and have my tuition and school paid for," said Sherrod, who recently got engaged to Chandler Havens. They are planning their wedding for Oct. 27 of this year. "Not every family is financially able to pick off \$20,000 a year for school. It takes a big chunk out of a family's well being. My family wasn't really able to afford that, so I probably would have a lot of student loans to pay off. I'm very fortunate that I can get out of college debt free."

And the Aggies are fortunate that he's back for one more run to the College World Series. 



Sherrod, a senior sport management major, put his MLB dreams on hold to return for his final season at A&M.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

As a scholarship student-athlete, Cason Sherrod is making the most of his opportunity to earn an invaluable degree from Texas A&M University.

With a gift to the 1922 Fund, you can help support the 12th Man Foundation's desire to endow scholarships for all student-athletes.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595

CHRIS '05 & SHANNON BOWMAN

BY MATT SIMON '98

CHRIS BOWMAN IS A first-generation Aggie...by birth.

His mother worked as an assistant to a die-hard Aggie fan named Henry Goodwin. When Chris was born, part of his mother's compensation package was season tickets to A&M football games.

"My parents knew nothing of A&M, but my mom's boss wanted us to go to the games, so of course we went," Chris said. "I grew up in the late 80s, early 90s going to every home game and playing out on Kyle Field after the games. You can't do that and not grow up to be a die-hard Aggie."

When the subject of college choice came up in his regular high school guidance counselor meetings, there was no discussion.

"I'm going to A&M."

The guidance counselor, undeterred, pushed Chris for a backup school in case he wasn't able to gain admission.

His choice?

"Blinn...until I get into A&M. She literally looked at me and said, 'You're one of those.' And I said, 'Yes, I am.'"

And that was that.

GOD, FAMILY AND A&M

Chris and his wife, Shannon, were high school sweethearts and have been married for almost 11 years. Both came to A&M, and while Chris earned his degree in business finance in 2005, Shannon left after a few years to pursue her true love in culinary school.

"She attended long enough to tolerate me," Chris joked. "For me, it's just a part of who I am, and it is what it is. I always say that it's God, my family and A&M in order of what has made me who I am."

When Shannon became pregnant with their first child, Chris made one request. "I told her if we could put Kyle, Olsen or Reed in the baby's name



somewhere, I'd be happy."

The couple's 3-year-old son is named Hunter Reed.

BECOMING AN AMBASSADOR

Fresh out of college, Chris was introduced to the 12th Man Foundation's Athletic Ambassadors program by a man he considers one of his greatest mentors – Jerry Cox '72.

"I love the Athletic Ambassadors Summer Meeting because it is such a great opportunity to meet so many incredible people," Chris said. "You find yourself sitting with all these Aggies who have had a major impact on A&M, and you are able to visit and get to know them. It really makes for a great atmosphere. I've enjoyed it every single year."

Chris has become heavily involved with the

Chris and Shannon, with their 3-year-old son, Hunter, are actively involved with the 12th Man Foundation Athletic Ambassadors program and are football season ticket holders.

Athletic Ambassadors, serving on the membership committee several times and even emceed the business meeting in 2013. One of his favorite things about the group, especially for someone who joined in his 20s, is watching the younger generations become involved.

“When I first joined I was an outlier age-wise,” he said. “I’ve had the pleasure of seeing it morph into a lot of young Aggies, families and family activities. It’s been a joy of mine to be a part of that.”

Now in his mid-30s, Chris and his family have enjoyed spending time not only with fellow donors, but with student-athletes, coaches and yell leaders at the popular summer meetings. This year’s event takes place at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines in Bastrop, Texas, June 28-30.

REPRESENTING THE 12TH MAN

During the seat selection process for Kyle Field, Chris recognized an important role of Athletic Ambassadors.

“It was a hot-button issue for a lot of people,” he recalled. “It was really hard for the 12th Man Foundation, A&M Athletics and the university to make sure everyone had the right information. And for me, in that moment, it became very clear why we are Ambassadors.

“We really held a lot of value there because you had this group of 500 people that suddenly had the right information and were sent out into the general population. And our job was to make sure everyone else was getting the right information, not just what they were reading online.”

Meeting fellow Aggies is one of Chris’ favorite aspects about giving back to A&M. The generous support that he and fellow donors provide as

Athletic Ambassadors is crucial to the 12th Man Foundation Annual Fund’s mission to fund scholarships and programs in support of championship athletics.

THE AGGIE HEARTBEAT

In addition to being Athletic Ambassadors, Chris and Shannon are football season ticket holders and attend basketball and baseball games when they can.

Chris is a member of the Aggie Golf Association, which helps the men’s golf program compete at the highest levels of collegiate golf while providing academic support for student-athletes.

He is also a member of the Aggie Soccer Club, which brings donors closer to the program while enhancing academic and athletic support for soccer student-athletes.

He has also used his experience to give back to Aggie Athletics. Chris, who began his career at Merrill Lynch’s Private Banking & Investment group, has worked at UBS Private Wealth Management since 2008 and helps wealthy families with a broad range of financial issues. Chris and his team have volunteered their services to A&M football players who are preparing for the NFL Draft, which gives them an opportunity to ask questions and discuss responsible financial management before they are drafted.

Chris says the reason it’s so easy to be drawn to college athletics is that it is common ground, bringing current, former and future students together.

“When Aggies from different places and different backgrounds join together in the stands, we are no longer different. We are the 12th Man, the heartbeat of Aggieland.”

ANNUAL GIVING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

As Athletic Ambassadors, Chris '05 and Shannon Bowman are making a significant impact on student-athletes with their annual contributions to Texas A&M Athletics.

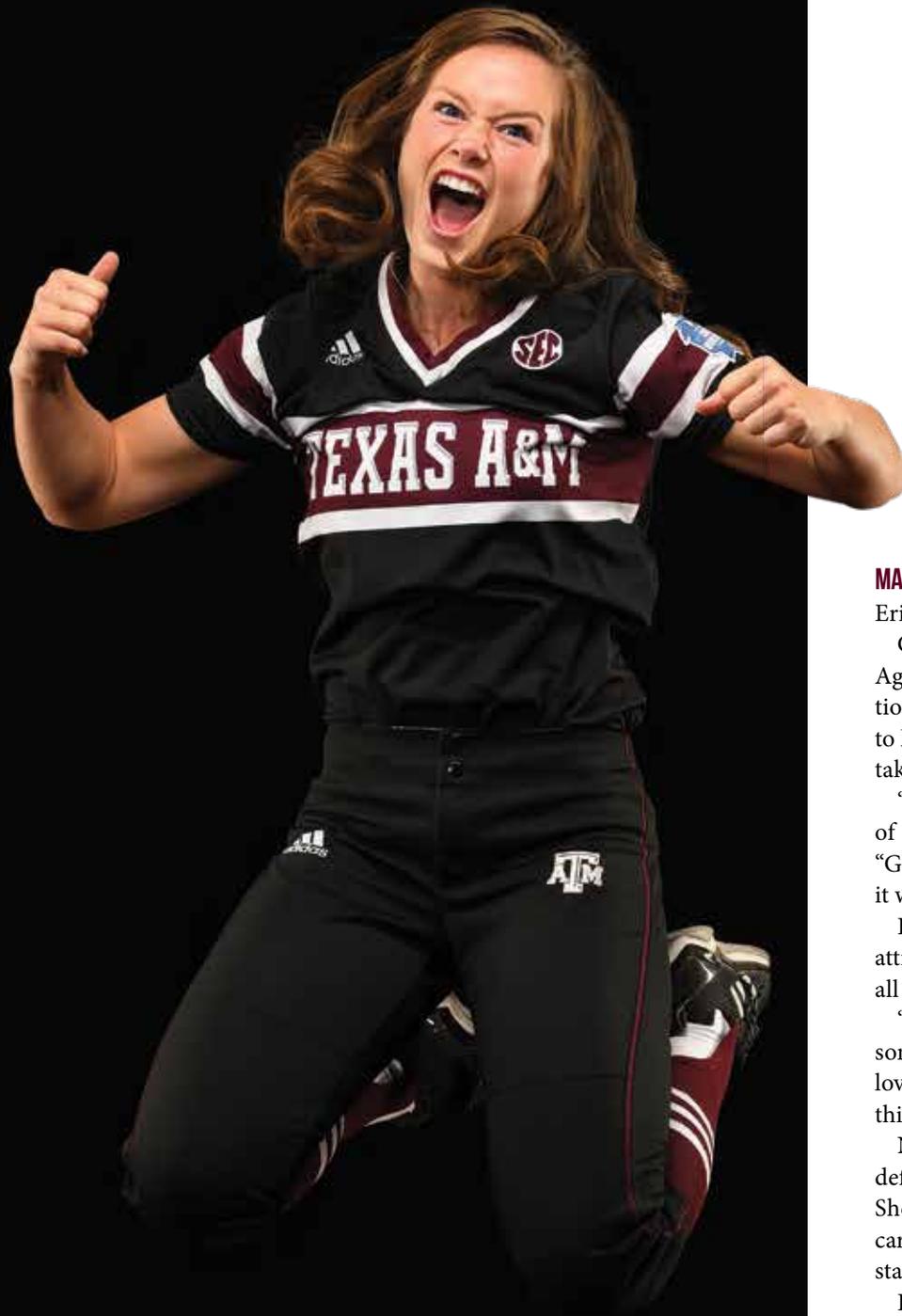
Join Chris and Shannon as Ambassadors to help fund athletic scholarships and programs.

CONTACT THE ANNUAL FUND STAFF AT 979-260-2397

“

I LOVE THE ATHLETIC AMBASSADORS SUMMER MEETING BECAUSE IT IS SUCH A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO MEET SO MANY INCREDIBLE PEOPLE. IT REALLY MAKES FOR A GREAT ATMOSPHERE. I’VE ENJOYED IT EVERY SINGLE YEAR.

— CHRIS BOWMAN '05



ERICA RUSSELL '18

Senior center fielder, community
volunteer and future professor

BY SCOTT RETZLAFF

A Bryan, Texas, native, Russell grew up in a family of Aggies and has been a part of the 12th Man her entire life.

MAKING THE MOST OF her college years is something Erica Russell takes pride in.

Growing up in Bryan, Texas, in a family of Aggies, Russell understands the history and traditions that Texas A&M embodies. The opportunity to leave her mark at the school is one she does not take lightly.

“I was able to go to football games and be a part of the 12th Man while growing up,” Russell said. “Growing up in a college town was different, but it was fun.”

It wasn't just the location and tradition that attracted Russell to A&M. Rather, the people made all the difference.

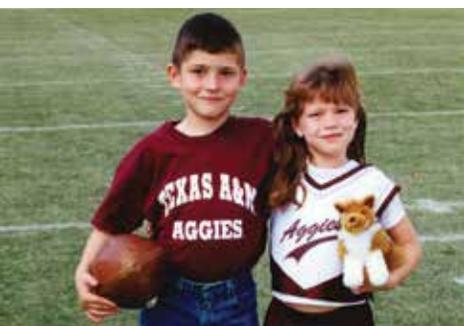
“Coach [Jo] Evans was one of the primary reasons I wanted to come here,” Russell said. “I also love the sense of family this school has and everything that A&M stands for.”

Now a senior, Russell has provided consistent defense as a fixture in center field for the Aggies. She has produced several web gems during her career, but an early-season play in 2017 certainly stands out.

In a win over then-No. 1 Florida State, Russell made a fantastic grab to rob a home run in the fifth inning. Russell's catch did not go unnoticed, earning a spot on ESPN SportsCenter's Top 10 list. The 2017 campaign was full of memorable moments for Russell and her team.

“The SportsCenter Top 10 was pretty awesome,” Russell admitted. “Being on the field with my teammates at Tennessee in last year's Super Regional also stands out, as does making the Women's College World Series. You dream about making it there as a little kid, so it was a dream come true to be a part of a team that made it.”

Russell's success goes well beyond the diamond. Her time at A&M has provided opportunities she does not take for granted.



Russell and her teammates have been heavily involved in the community, working with the Girl Scouts and assisting with Aggies CAN – the largest student-athlete led canned food drive in the nation. She also speaks highly of her experiences with the Special Olympics and the Down Right Perfect game for Down syndrome awareness.

“Erica is an exceptional young woman,” Evans said. “She is a compassionate person. She makes the people around her better. She is kind, considerate, thoughtful and willing to make sacrifices for the betterment of her friends, family and our program.”

A&M’s academics also have Russell heading down the right path. An agriculture and leadership major, Russell has already applied for graduate school and has her career goals planned out.

“A leadership class with Dr. Jennifer Strong changed my view on everything I ever knew about education and people,” Russell said. “I’m a people person. I really enjoy learning about what makes people successful and what motivates them. My long-term goal is to earn my PhD and become a leadership professor.”

With her athletic background, Russell also has not ruled out the potential of coaching.

“Coaching would be fun for me,” she admitted.

Erica Russell is seeking to change lives through her experience at A&M.

Invest in the future of Aggie student-athletes by giving to the 1922 Fund.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595

“Anything where I would have the opportunity to change peoples’ lives is what I’m interested in. So many have impacted my life, so I want to give back.”

It’s clear that Russell has embraced her opportunity as a student-athlete at A&M.

“I couldn’t be more grateful,” Russell said. “It’s a blessing to me, and it should be to anyone else who gets the tremendous opportunities we get. There are so many things that we have available to us at Texas A&M. Everything you could want as a student-athlete is provided to you.”

The blessings will continue for Russell and Aggie softball, as the opening of Davis Diamond is on the horizon. It’s hard for Russell to hide the smile when looking forward to the future home of the Aggies.

“Even if I get only one game on it, I’ll be grateful,” Russell said. “So many have put their money, time, sweat and tears into this stadium. So many players before us left their legacy here for us to even have a chance to have a stadium like this. As seniors, no matter how much time we get on the new field, we know we left our legacy for the people behind us to play there. That’s what we wanted. That’s what you’re supposed to do...leave a legacy.”

Expectations are high. Last year’s squad made it to the Women’s College World Series, and every starter is back this season. Russell and her teammates are not putting added pressure on themselves, though. It’s all about staying in the moment.

“It’s still a new year and a new team,” she said. “I want us to have fun, because the game is supposed to be fun. We play for each other and our legacy. We play for the fans, and for the little girls who were watching us in the World Series last year.”

Has Russell enjoyed her years in the maroon and white?

“Heck yes I have,” she answered. “I love Texas A&M so much.”

“

I COULDN'T BE MORE GRATEFUL. THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS THAT WE HAVE AVAILABLE TO US AT TEXAS A&M. EVERYTHING YOU COULD WANT AS A STUDENT-ATHLETE IS PROVIDED TO YOU.

— ERICA RUSSELL '18

DONALD '56 & JUDITH ROBBINS

BY MATT SIMON '98



In addition to purchasing football and basketball season tickets, Judith and Donald contribute to scholarships for student-athletes.

ONE OF THE FABLED "JUNCTION BOYS," Donald Robbins laughs when asked to share his memories of the time he spent with Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant and the rest of his Aggie teammates out in west Texas.

"We couldn't print most of them," he said with a chuckle.

Donald is the son of Cooper Robbins Sr., Class of 1928, who was a well-known Texas high school coach and later the freshman team coach at Texas A&M. With a family that centered around two things – football and the Texas Aggies – there was little doubt where Donald would go to school. He followed his older brother, Cooper Jr., to A&M.

Donald played football for his father as a freshman, and then was on the Aggie team that traveled to Kentucky and beat Bryant's Wildcats, 7-6, in 1953. At the end of that season, Bryant took the A&M job. A few months later, the legend of Junction was born.

"We went out to Junction in three air-conditioned buses, plus trucks with shoulder pads and equipment," recalled Donald, whose twin brother, Ronald, was also on the team. "We came back in one bus."

One of the casualties of the camp was all-conference center Fred Broussard. His departure left the team with a glaring hole in the offensive line.

"We did not have anybody who could deep snap for punts and extra points," said Donald, who played tight end on offense and defensive end on defense. "So, I'd run off the field when we were going to punt the football, pull a jersey on right quick and go back in and play center."

Donald, who wore No. 81, had to switch to a jersey with a number in the 50s in order to be eligible to snap.

BORN TO COACH

As the son of a coach, Donald always had the itch to explore the profession. While wrapping up his college eligibility, he taught weight training in the physical education department.

"When I was getting my master's, I was Elmer Smith's line coach on the freshman team," Donald said. "I sat in on all the practice schedules and planning and so forth."

Following a stint in the Army, Donald coached high school football in Port Arthur, Snyder and Big Spring, then in college at UTEP and as the head coach of the University of Idaho.

One of his players at Port Arthur Jefferson? Jimmy Johnson.

"Donald always said Jimmy knew what he was supposed to do and he knew what the other 10 guys were supposed to do," Donald's wife, Judith, said. "He was one of the smartest players he'd ever coached."

“He was the general on the field,” Donald added. “He was a heck of a football player.”

Five years ago, the town of Big Spring held a 50th-anniversary reunion for one of the school’s best teams in history – the 1963 Steers – of which Donald was the head coach. He was invited back and among other honors, was able to do the coin toss prior to the game that weekend.

“To me, that speaks volumes of the influence a coach has,” Judith said, “when 50 years later, your players remember you and still want to see you, have you around and honor you. The long-term character development is extremely important to us.”

CHARACTER MATTERS

Donald and Judith met while both were working in public school administration in Big Spring. Upon moving to Llano in the 1980s, they began attending Aggie football games, purchasing season tickets even to this day. They now live in Bryan and try to make as many A&M sporting events as they can.

“Even though I graduated from Hardin Simmons and my master’s is from Texas Tech, when I married Donald, my blood turned maroon,” Judith said. “Of course, that had to happen, since my husband, father-in-law, brothers-in-law, stepson and multiple nieces and nephews were all Aggies. Needless to say, there’s no burnt orange in any Robbins households.”

As much as they enjoy the games – “We especially love it when they win,” Judith said – they take

“

WE LIKE TO SEE STUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR ATHLETIC SKILLS AND PERSONAL CHARACTER, SO THAT WHEN THEY LEAVE A&M, THEY ARE BETTER IN ALL AREAS THAN WHEN THEY GOT HERE.

– JUDITH ROBBINS

a very special enjoyment in seeing student-athletes earn their degree.

No matter how long that takes.

“It makes you feel good to see someone you saw play 15 years ago all of a sudden in the graduating class,” Judith said. “And one thing we’ve always done is contribute not just to the athletic department, but to scholarships through athletics. Because providing scholarships for kids who might not have been able to attend otherwise is important to us, too. We like to see students develop their athletic skills and personal character, so that when they leave A&M, they are better in all areas than when they got here.”

Annual contributions by dedicated donors like the Robbins ensures that current and future Aggie student-athletes have the opportunity to earn a degree from our world-class university. 🍁

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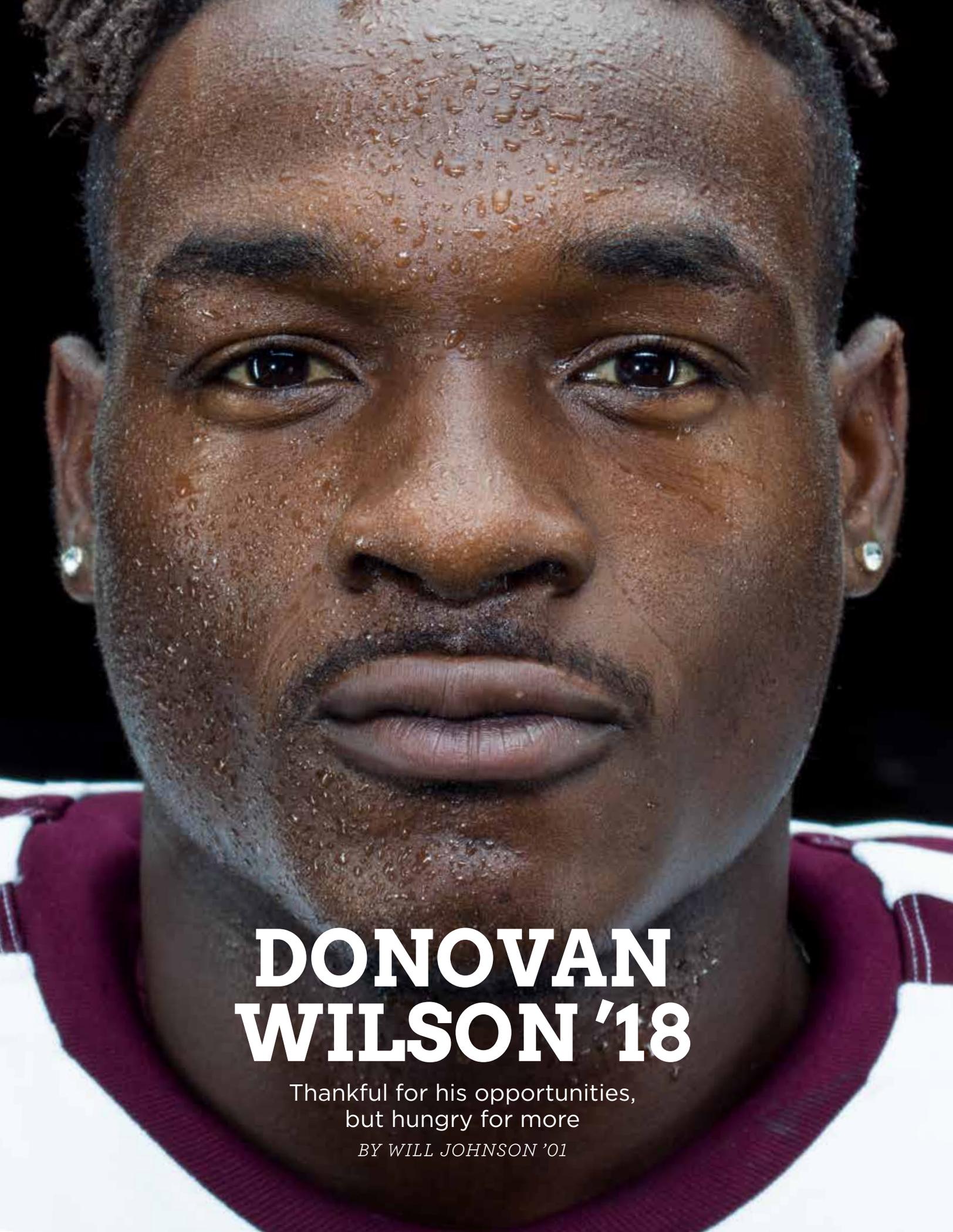
With a yearly philanthropic contribution to the 12th Man Foundation Annual Fund, Donald '56 and Judith Robbins go above and beyond to support Texas A&M Athletics and student-athletes.

Join Donald and Judith as MVP Donors in support of championship athletics.

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Donald and Judith are longtime supporters of Texas A&M Athletics and try to attend as many Aggie sporting events as they can.

A close-up portrait of Donovan Wilson, a young Black man with short dreadlocks, looking directly at the camera. His face is covered in sweat droplets, and he is wearing a maroon and white striped shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

DONOVAN WILSON '18

Thankful for his opportunities,
but hungry for more

BY WILL JOHNSON '01

“

MY SCHOLARSHIP MEANS A LOT. TO KNOW ALL YOUR HARD WORK FINALLY PAID OFF IS SPECIAL.

— DONOVAN WILSON '18

DONOVAN WILSON IS WORKING his way back. The Aggie defensive back is preparing for his second shot at a senior season after an injury cost him the first go-round last fall. An uphill climb is nothing new to the Shreveport, La. native.

Heading into the final game of his sophomore year at Woodlawn High School, Wilson only had one interception and was not on the college football recruiting radar.

But Wilson is opportunistic, and that trait helped set the course for his future. It all began with one special quarter of high school football.

In the second quarter of Woodlawn's game against district rival Huntington, Wilson intercepted four passes and returned three of them for touchdowns, although one was ultimately called back. Later in the game, he nabbed a fifth pick for good measure.

"It was a crazy game," Wilson recalled. "I couldn't believe it. It just kept on coming over and over. I remember wondering, 'When are they going to stop throwing me the ball?'"

"Two days later, they told me I broke a national record for interceptions in a quarter."

College programs started looking at Wilson following his record setting performance, and he ultimately accepted a scholarship to Texas A&M.

"My scholarship means a lot," Wilson said. "To know all your hard work finally paid off is special."

In his first career start as a freshman, Wilson led the team with nine tackles in A&M's 2014 Liberty Bowl win over West Virginia.

As a sophomore, he topped the squad with five interceptions and returned one 60 yards for a touchdown against South Carolina. The Aggies needed it, as they won the game by only one score, 35-28.

In 2016, Wilson posted 59 tackles including 5.5

for lost yardage and established a reputation as a playmaker for the A&M defense.

Although he had already made a mark on the program, Wilson entered his would-be senior season with a chip on his shoulder.

"I want to prove a lot of people wrong," he said prior to the 2017 season. "There's a lot of people who slept on me. I want to make my point that I'm a great player. I want to be a leader on this team."

Unfortunately, his season ended in the first half of the opener against UCLA.

"It was tough on me early," he recalled, "but I know everything happens for a reason. I'm just excited about this journey I'm about to take, going in to my fifth year."

He rose to the occasion in high school. He'll do it again with this opportunity in college.

For Wilson's second finale, he and his Aggie teammates are embracing new head coach Jimbo Fisher.

"We're just jumping on [Coach Fisher's] plan," Wilson said. "We're ready to get things done out here. There's a lot of good vibes out here."

As for those teammates, they are ready to see him back on the field.

"Donovan, he's strong. He's a great player," running back Trayveon Williams said. "He has a great IQ for the game. It helps everybody out when you go against a guy like him."

Wilson remains thankful for the opportunity, but hungry for more. Humility combined with an ambitious appetite can take a person a long way. And for Donovan Wilson, this will take him even further than he has already gone. ■

A STUDENT-ATHLETE'S EDUCATION IS PRICELESS

Donovan Wilson works hard to exude excellence both on and off the football field.

By giving to the 12th Man Foundation's 1922 Fund, you are supporting Aggie student-athletes athletically and academically.

CONTACT THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595

Wilson was expected to be a leader on the A&M defense last fall until he suffered a season-ending injury in the season opener.



CHRISTINA '97 & MARK '92 MORREALE

BY MATT SIMON '98

"I NEVER APPLIED ANYWHERE ELSE."

For Christina Morreale '97, there was no discussion when it came to college choice. Her father, Shelby Benbow, was a member of the Class of '74, and Christina was born in Bryan.

"My dad went to A&M, so I was going to A&M," she said. "That's where I wanted to go."

Her husband Mark, Class of '92, also had a strong family pull to Aggieland.

"A&M was the place for me," he said. "My sister, Theresa, and her husband, Rob O'Donnell, are both Class of '90. My younger brother, Chad, is Class of '97."

Christina and Mark began supporting A&M Athletics during the redevelopment of Kyle Field.



LEGENDARY MOMENTS

To hear Mark talk of some of the legendary moments he witnessed – or almost witnessed – would make most any Aggie jealous.

"The 1987 Texas game..." he said. "I'm on the third deck with Theresa, and everyone's throwing cotton. It was just an amazing event. It was cold. It was Thanksgiving night. It was awesome."

As a freshman at A&M, Mark was oh-so-close to one of the most famous athletic moments in school history.

In fact, he was only a few blocks away from Olsen Field on April 16, 1989. The day that John Byington became a household name to Aggie sports fans with two walk-off home runs in a doubleheader against Texas.

"I lived in Treehouse Apartments," he recalled. "We listened to it on the radio, on our balcony. We could hear the crowd yelling. It was nuts."

However, it will be difficult for Mark to top the 2009 Oklahoma State game at Kyle Field. That's when he proposed to Christina.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

The couple, who live in Seabrook, are the proud parents of 4-year-old Jake, and Teagan, who is about to turn two. Mark is also the proud father of his oldest daughter, Marina, who is 23.

Mark and Christina jumped in to supporting the program during the redevelopment of Kyle Field, which was around the time Jake was born.

"We wanted to raise our kids around A&M and A&M athletics," Christina said. "We got season tickets for football and then soon after that we got baseball season tickets."

Oh...and one more thing.



Christina and Mark purchased football and baseball season tickets – and a motor home – to make sure their children were raised around A&M and A&M Athletics.

YOUR ANNUAL GIFT TRULY MATTERS

Christina '97 & Mark '92 Morreale devote their time and resources to Texas A&M Athletics as football and baseball season ticket holders and as donors to the 12th Man Foundation Annual Fund.

Make a difference and support championship athletics with an annual gift.

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redevelopment started. He still serves as advisor, and the sale allowed Christina to leave her career in the oil and gas industry and raise the family.

“We’re very fortunate in that regard and are excited to be able to give back to Texas A&M,” Mark said.

But why athletics?

“Athletics really are the tip of the sword of one of the greatest places on earth, in my opinion,” he said. “They help facilitate a student-athlete’s success and performance on the field into winning and show the world what A&M is about. Most people see the sports on television and, unless you’re from Texas, you don’t really know A&M like we know A&M.

“Whatever we can do in our little way to help that success, in the SEC and beyond, that’s what we’re after.”

And for Mark and Christina, their favorite thing about being Aggies are Aggies themselves.

“I think it’s the people you meet after you leave and how it’s such a big family,” Christina said. “It could be on an elevator at work. Both of us worked in the oil and gas industry, and there were so many people we met. The last company I worked with was full of Aggies. It’s just such a common bond.”

“We got a motor home,” Christina added.

Now Aggie football games are a weekend affair, and a family one at that. You can find the Morreales at the Hildebrand Equine Complex with Theresa, Rob and their Aggie daughters, Katelyn '17 and Lauren '20.

And true to the plan, Jake and Teagan are already falling in love with the place their parents care about so much.

“Jake loves to go to the games,” Christina said. “He’s in love with the Aggie Band. He always makes sure he’s there for halftime. And we love baseball season, too...the bubbles are a big hit. Jake has a bubble maker. A&M does a really good job of making it fun for the kids.”

GIVING BACK

Mark sold his cryogenic equipment repair and manufacturing company about the same time the Aggies moved to the SEC and the Kyle Field

“**WHATEVER WE CAN DO IN OUR LITTLE WAY TO HELP FACILITATE A STUDENT-ATHLETE’S SUCCESS, IN THE SEC AND BEYOND, THAT’S WHAT WE’RE AFTER.**”

— MARK MORREALE '92

MICHAEL MONTGOMERY '12

Former football player, heart disease survivor, motivational speaker, actor and aspiring producer

BY CHAREAN WILLIAMS '86

MICHAEL MONTGOMERY IS A Texas A&M graduate. He is an Aggie Heart Award winner. He is a former NFL player for the Green Bay Packers. He is a heart disease survivor. He is an actor. He is a motivational speaker. He is a writer. He is an aspiring producer.

“Even though I’m a middle-aged man, I feel like I’ve lived a lot,” Montgomery, 34, said.

Montgomery arrived at A&M in 2003 by way of Center High School and Navarro College. He made quite the entrance, passing out in his first practice with the Aggies and leaving in an ambulance. Doctors diagnosed Montgomery with a congenital heart defect, Wolff Parkinson White Syndrome.

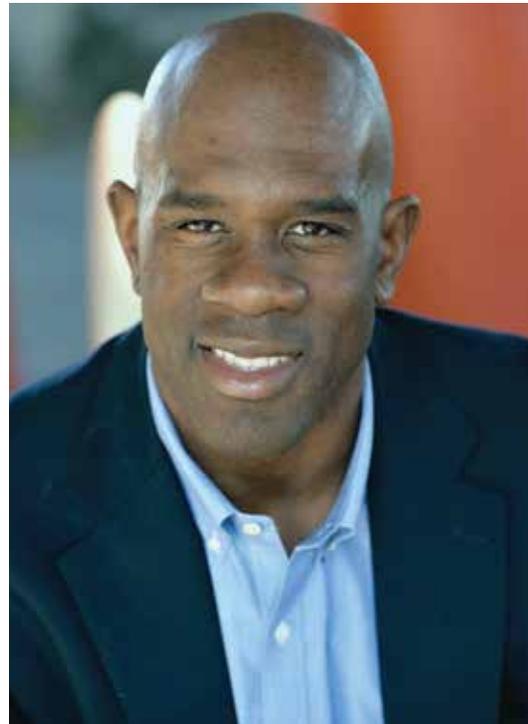
“I was 18, 19 years old and in my prime,” Montgomery said. “I was shocked. They told me to stop playing football. I was so mad, I said, ‘I’d rather die than not play football.’”

Surgery removed the extra blood vessels he was born with in his heart, allowing him to resume his career. Montgomery, who still undergoes regular checkups but calls his heart “100 percent” now, started a non-profit – Heartbeat Away from Destiny Foundation – to raise awareness of congenital heart disease and the importance of early detection screening.

“Football saved my life,” he said. “A lot of kids die without even knowing they had it. I was lucky. I survived, and it made me a better person and provided me with a new outlook on life.”

Montgomery missed much of his junior season while recovering after heart surgery. As a senior in 2004, the defensive lineman was voted a team captain, defensive MVP and first-team All-Big 12 as the Aggies reached the Cotton Bowl.

Montgomery was perhaps the most deserving Aggie Heart Award winner in team history.



A sixth-round draft choice of the Green Bay Packers in 2005, Montgomery played 58 games in six NFL seasons, making 122 tackles and five sacks. He wanted to keep playing after the Packers won the Super Bowl in his final season of 2010.

“I was in free agency, and I couldn’t pass a physical because of my knees,” Montgomery said. “I had a couple of knee surgeries, and they said I couldn’t play because I had bad knees. I always knew I was going to go back and finish my degree, so that’s what I did.”

He worked as a student coach on Kevin Sumlin’s first staff while finishing his agriculture business



degree. Montgomery wanted to pursue coaching, but refused to coach anywhere except A&M. Unfortunately, the Aggies did not have an opening.

“I moved back to Houston and was doing real estate for a while,” he said. “I was trying to transition from the NFL life, and I started calling everybody I knew trying to network.”

A former teammate suggested he apply to be an extra in a football scene in a Will Smith movie. Montgomery won a small role and found it “really, really healthy.”

“I decided to explore the film world,” he said. “I took classes and went out for acting gigs here and there. I decided to just go for it. I was young and didn’t have a family, so I moved to California.”

Montgomery, who has made his home in the Los Angeles area since 2014, has appeared in 10 movies, including the lead role in *Nothing at All*, and two television shows. He also substitute teaches on the side while seeking to become a producer, and to that end, is taking night classes at UCLA.

He also is writing his memoir with hopes of having it published next year. His story is one of an “improbable comeback” and “beating all odds.”

During his rookie training camp with Green Bay, Montgomery made a tackle for loss on a goal-line stand. He stood up celebrating, prompting then-Packers coach Mike Sherman to yell, “What’s wrong with you, Michael? Act like you’ve been here

Although he lives a busy life in Los Angeles, Montgomery continues to be an active member of the Texas A&M Lettermen’s Association.

A degree from A&M changed Michael Montgomery’s life.

Support student-athletes by endowing a scholarship.

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before.” Montgomery responded, “Coach, I’m a rookie; I haven’t been here before.

“You’ve always got to show people,” Montgomery said. “I never was the fastest. I never was the strongest. I wasn’t in Texas Football. I wasn’t even in the media guide. But I knew effort was going to change my life. I knew effort was going to buy my mother a house. I knew effort was going to put my nephew in a better position to get an education.”

Of everything Montgomery has accomplished, nothing ranks ahead of his degree. He is a proud member of the Class of 2012.

“That place was truly magical,” Montgomery said. “I was out of college seven years and went back, and it felt like I never left. The love and the connections grounded me and helped me get back to what I wanted to do. Getting my degree is what I’m most proud of in my life.”

“**TEXAS A&M WAS TRULY MAGICAL. GETTING MY DEGREE IS WHAT I’M MOST PROUD OF IN MY LIFE.**

— MICHAEL MONTGOMERY '12

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TONI MCDOWELL

Director of Gifts Processing

BY CASEY PACE '18



FIVE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT TONI MCDOWELL

- » HAS TWO DOGS, LOLA AND TOBY, AND A CAT NAMED SCAT
- » LOVES ATTENDING AGGIE SPORTING EVENTS
- » COMMUTES 40 MILES EVERY DAY FROM FRANKLIN
- » FAVORITE BAND IS THE MAVERICKS (HAS TICKETS TO THREE SHOWS THIS YEAR)
- » HAS PROCESSED MORE THAN \$1 BILLION IN HER ROLE AT THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION

Toni, pictured with her nephew, Ryan '10, (below left), and former 12th Man Foundation Executive Director Frank Shannon '77 and current Senior Vice President of Finance Randy Howard '79 (below right), is the Foundation's longest tenured employee.

TO SAY THAT TONI MCDOWELL IS an expert at going with the flow would be an understatement. As the 12th Man Foundation's director of gifts processing and longest tenured employee for going-on 28 years, Toni has experienced more changes than anyone else in the organization. Her time with the Foundation has even become tangible through a sizable collection of turtle figurines that current and former coworkers have gifted her over the years. From her sixth and most favorite office yet, the Bryan, Texas native humbly reflects on her career, the relationships she has built and her excitement for the future.

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN WORKING AT THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION?

"I started in 1990 in the same position I'm in now. It has changed quite a bit through the years though. When I started, there were only six of us in the building and a lot fewer donors. We had one ticket staff member, Randy Howard, a receptionist, an assistant, one development officer and me. We worked in a little-bitty standing building, and there were three of us in one office. It was really small! Then, we moved to the Koldus Building before we moved to our current location in the north end of Kyle Field."

HOW DOES YOUR POSITION SERVE DONORS AND WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT IT?

"For a long time I talked a lot on the phone with donors to make address changes, take donations, ask questions, give tax receipts... whatever they needed. Now, our donor service center is able to take most of those calls. Mainly, I receive the money when it comes in, and I put it where it needs to go. What I enjoy most is helping donors and building and maintaining relationships with them."

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT DONORS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR TIME WITH THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION?

"I think the 12th Man Foundation is going in the right direction. I see good changes happening, and I see leadership. I'm going on 28 years, and I have enjoyed it here. There are some really good people, donors and employees. I've seen a lot of changes, most of them for the better. But you know, go with the flow. It's been a great experience and I hope to be here a little bit longer!"

Clearly, Toni's coworkers are grateful of her intentions to stick around, too. "She is a hard worker, very dedicated and is great with our donors," says Randy Howard '79, who took a position at the 12th Man Foundation shortly after Toni. "She would do anything for anybody, without taking the credit she deserves," adds Shelly Nemecek '89, director of events and travel.

Toni's commitment to the organization and humorous ability to brighten the day makes her a valued employee and friend. She is said to exude humility and loyalty, and is known as one of the best representatives of the 12th Man Foundation. "I think of relationships when I think of Toni," says Chris Carson '90, manager of ticket events and internal sales. "Customer service and taking care of people is what she is all about." ■





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This information is not intended as tax, legal or financial advice. Gift results may vary. Consult your personal financial advisor for information specific to your situation.

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