

12th Man

2019 | VOLUME 24, NO. 4

FUNDING SCHOLARSHIPS, PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES
IN SUPPORT OF CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS



THE POWER OF A SCHOLARSHIP

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A
LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT ON
AGGIE STUDENT-ATHLETES





**OUR STUDENT-ATHLETES
CONTINUED TO RAISE
THE BAR IN FALL 2019**

2.977

Semester GPA (Fall Semester Record)

2.966

Cumulative GPA (Highest after Fall Semester)

325

AD Honor Roll (300 in Fall 2018)

59

4.0 GPAs (Fall Semester Record)

16

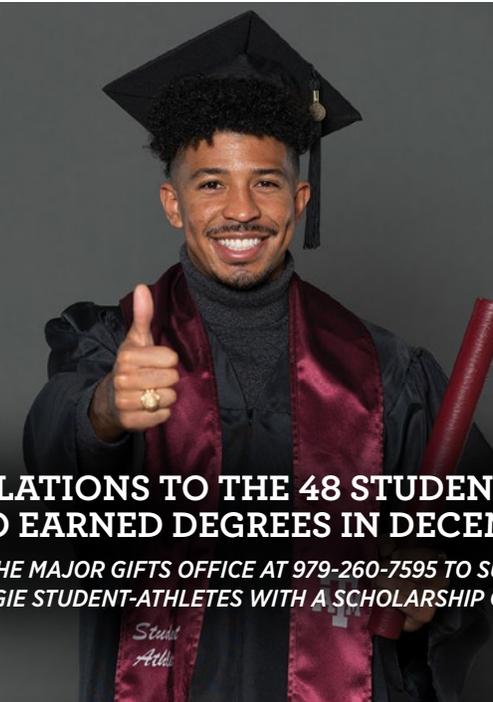
Dean's Honor Roll (7 in Fall 2018)

10

Teams with 3.0 GPAs (Fall Semester Record)

9

Graduate Degrees Earned (December 2019)



**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 48 STUDENT-ATHLETES
WHO EARNED DEGREES IN DECEMBER**

**CALL THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595 TO SUPPORT
AGGIE STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH A SCHOLARSHIP GIFT**



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Supporting one student-athlete's scholarship can make a generational impact

BY JESUS ORTIZ



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COVER PHOTO BY JOSH CHAMBERS
SENIOR JOSH NEBO (MEN'S BASKETBALL) HUGS HIS MOM AFTER GRADUATING IN DECEMBER WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN RECREATION, PARKS & TOURISM SCIENCES

12th Man

2019 | VOLUME 24, NO. 4

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Funding scholarships, programs and facilities in support of championship athletics



TO OUR DONORS,

As we reflect on not only the past year, but also the past decade, we pause to say thank you. From the bold move to the SEC, to an extraordinary investment in facilities, to multiple national and conference championships, the growth and accomplishments of Texas A&M Athletics over the past 10 years have been truly amazing. It has all been possible because of your generous support.

In this issue of *12th Man Magazine*, we highlight the multi-generational impact of a scholarship embodied by Tiki Hardeman and his oldest daughter, Kiersten, as well as the world-class facility upgrades for our football, women's basketball and swimming and diving programs which have been funded by 12th Man Foundation donors.

While we are proud of the strides Texas A&M Athletics has made to become an elite program, we recognize that in the ever-changing landscape of college athletics there is still much work to be done.

One of the ways your support directly impacts the athletics department's ability to set the highest standards on and off the field is by purchasing and renewing season tickets. Football season ticket holders can renew their seats for the 2020 season Feb. 4 through March 2. Whether you are renewing or are interested in purchasing season tickets, our dedicated staff is eager to assist you.

I wish you and your family a happy new year and I look forward to celebrating the continued success of all our teams in 2020.

Gig 'em!

Travis Dabney '96
President & CEO

STAFF UPDATES

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



Shelby Siddons '18
Manager of Events & Travel



Mike Smith
Assistant Vice President of Major Gifts

In other staff news, the 12th Man Foundation is proud to announce the following promotions:

Jacob Green '80
Vice President of Principal Gifts

Katelyn Buys '14
Assistant Vice President of Administration

Melissa Chavarria
Assistant Manager of Donor Services

RaShaun Brown
Senior Account Executive of Ticket Sales & Development

Brendan Henry
Senior Account Executive of Ticket Sales & Development

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 4 - March 2, 2020
2020 Football Season Ticket Renewals

February 21-23, 2020
Champions Council Weekend College Station, Texas

March 2, 2020
Priority Point Deadline for Football Ticket and Parking Selections

April 2020
2020 Football Seat Selection

June 2020
Basketball, Soccer and Volleyball Season Ticket Renewals

June 25-28, 2020
2020 12th Man Foundation Summer Meeting San Antonio, Texas



TRISHA & L.C. "CHAZ" NEELY '62 HONORED WITH 2019 E. KING GILL AWARD

The 12th Man Foundation honored steadfast supporters Trisha and L.C. "Chaz" Neely, Class of '62, as the 2019 recipients of the prestigious E. King Gill Award during halftime of the Texas A&M-South Carolina game at Kyle Field. Longtime season ticket holders for football, men's basketball and baseball, the Neelys have made a significant impact on Texas A&M Athletics through numerous philanthropic gifts. Visit www.12thmanfoundation.com for more information about the E. King Gill Award. The Neelys will also be featured in an upcoming issue of *12th Man Magazine*.



**I am so grateful for
Mr. and Mrs. Riggs'
generous donation.**

My relationship with them means that I can build more connections with the Aggie community and bring more attention to equestrian as an NCAA sport.

CAROLINE DANCE '21
TEXAS A&M EQUESTRIAN

CAROLINE DANCE AT A GLANCE

- » Junior Rider from West Chester, Pa.
- » Majoring in Kinesiology Motor Behavior with a Minor in Health
- » Aspiring Physician Assistant

Caroline is paired with donors Shannon & David Riggs through the 1922 Fund. Call the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595 to discover how you can be a part of the 1922 Fund and make a life-changing impact for student-athletes like Caroline.





THANK YOU TO THE 2019 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thank you to the Board of Trustees for their service to the 12th Man Foundation and Texas A&M Athletics in 2019. Outgoing trustees honored at the annual service dinner in November included Darryl Heath '84 and Ray Huffines '74 as well as Past Chair Cynthia B. "Cindy" Taylor '84, pictured above with Travis Dabney '96 and 2019 Chair Monty Davis '77.



FRIENDS, FAMILY AND DONORS CELEBRATE JACOB GREEN'S HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

The 12th Man Foundation's Jacob Green was officially inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame during the 62nd National Football Foundation Annual Awards Dinner in December. The Aggie legend was honored by friends, family and 12th Man Foundation donors in New York City prior to the induction dinner.



12TH MAN FOUNDATION HOSTS ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

The Annual Meeting of the Membership was held at the 12th Man Foundation office in November. The purpose of the meeting, which is held each fall and open to all active members, is to ratify nominees for the 12th Man Foundation Board of Trustees. Pictured above, left to right, David Coolidge '87, George "Trey" Henderson III '80 and Michelle Hickox '89 will begin serving four-year terms in 2020, while current trustee Dr. Robert Dennis '83 will serve as 2020 Chair Elect.



BRAZOS VALLEY TAILGATERS MAKE FOURTH \$25,000 GIFT TO THE 1922 FUND

12th Man Foundation President and CEO Travis Dabney and Texas A&M Director of Athletics Ross Bjork graciously accepted a \$25,000 donation from the Brazos Valley Tailgaters prior to the South Carolina football game in November. The fourth such gift since 2014 marks a total of \$100,000 that has been raised and donated by the generous group of friends and family to the 12th Man Foundation's 1922 Fund in support of student-athlete scholarship endowments.

BEN SOLOMON/NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION (GREEN HALL OF FAME); CRAIG BISACRE/TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS (FACING PAGE); BRIAN DAVIS '01 (ALL OTHERS)



▲ **AGGIE VOLLEYBALL ADVANCES TO SWEET SIXTEEN**

The No. 25 Texas A&M volleyball team advanced to the Sweet Sixteen of the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2009 winning a four-set match against the No. 21 Rice Owls at Reed Arena in December. In the final home match of her storied A&M career, senior All-American Hollann Hans equaled her career high with 34 points. The 2019 Aggies' remarkable run ended with a Sweet Sixteen loss to eventual national runner-up Wisconsin.

◀ **LOPEZ TABBED A SCHOLAR ALL-AMERICAN**

Texas A&M soccer standout Jimena Lopez was named to the United Soccer Coaches NCAA Division I Women's Scholar All-America Second Team. The junior midfielder became the fifth Aggie overall and the first since 2014 to earn the award. Lopez owns a 3.46 GPA and is majoring in Psychology. On the field in 2019, the Mexico City native ranked third in the nation and led the SEC with a single-season school record 15 assists. She tallied nine goals and 31 points, earning SEC Midfielder of the year and All-SEC First Team honors while helping A&M advance to the second round of the NCAA Tournament for the 22nd consecutive season.



STUDENT-ATHLETES SERVE OTHERS DURING DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MISSION TRIP

Aggie student-athletes representing several spring sports traveled to Santiago, Dominican Republic in December with Mission of Hope - A&M's sixth mission trip with the organization. Exemplifying A&M's core value of selfless service, the group participated in various projects including youth sport clinics, construction projects and partnering with local churches to help meet needs of families in the community.

AGGIE STUDENT-ATHLETES PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL SEC CAREER TOUR

Texas A&M's Riley McQuaid and Allonte Wingate were among 28 current and former Southeastern Conference student-athletes that participated in the SEC Career Tour Dec. 3-5 in Atlanta. McQuaid, a junior on the women's tennis team, and Wingate, a senior on last season's baseball team, joined the tour which is aimed at providing exposure for SEC student-athletes who are seeking career opportunities in various fields. The three-day event kicked off at the site of the SEC Championship Game and included visits to the headquarters and meetings with executives at several corporations in the Atlanta area including Cox Communications, NCR Corporation, Winning Edge Leadership Academy, The Home Depot and UPS.



SLOCUM, AUSMUS AND MANN NAMED TO SEC COMMUNITY SERVICE TEAMS

Haley Slocum (volleyball), Olivia Ausmus (soccer) and Braden Mann (football) were named to the SEC Community Service Teams for their respective sports in 2019. A two-time SEC Fall Academic Honor Roll recipient, Slocum has participated in numerous volunteer activities throughout her collegiate career, including many educational and youth activities. Ausmus spearheaded the Aggies' Turn It Gold campaign in 2019, raising over \$10,000 towards the battle against pediatric cancer and \$50,000 in the last three years. Mann, the 2018 Ray Guy Award winner and 2019 Wuerffel Trophy semifinalist, graduated in May of 2019 with a degree in University Studies and Sports Conditioning and has been active with Twin City Mission, where he has spent many hours serving food, mentoring and cleaning the homeless shelter.

TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL WINS 2019 TEXAS BOWL

Texas A&M scored 24 straight points to overcome an early deficit and beat No. 25 Oklahoma State 24-21 in the Academy Sports + Outdoors Texas Bowl at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas. The victory over the Cowboys marked the 100th win of Jimbo Fisher's career as well as the second straight bowl win for the Aggies in their school-record 11th consecutive appearance. A&M finished 2019 with an 8-5 record and became the first program ever to face three No. 1 teams in a single season in one of the most daunting schedules in college football history.



FACILITY UPDATE

Construction on schedule for the Anne & Henry B. “Hank” Paup ’70 Aquatic Center



ANNE & HENRY B. “HANK” PAUP ’70 AQUATIC CENTER

Construction continues on the new home for the Aggie swimming and diving programs. The facility’s utility work was completed prior to Christmas with the foundation for the expansion slated to begin in early 2020. The project is on schedule for the teams to be in the facility prior to the first home meet in the 2020-21 season. “We are really excited for this facility,” said head men’s swimming coach Jay Holmes. “Much thanks to everyone who helped, but especially Anne and Hank. Their vision of it has driven this project since it began. It’s going to be a great addition for us.” Along with new locker rooms, coaches offices, an athletic training room area, dryland training space and fueling station, the project includes a highly-visible exterior lobby that will provide student-athletes, coaches and fans with a designated entrance, separate from the Student Recreation Center. The lobby will showcase A&M’s history featuring a large, built-in trophy case. “I’d like to thank the 12th Man Foundation, all of our donors and our athletics department,” head women’s swimming coach Steve Bultman added.

“
MUCH THANKS TO
EVERYONE WHO HELPED,
BUT ESPECIALLY ANNE
AND HANK. THEIR VISION
OF IT HAS DRIVEN THIS
PROJECT SINCE IT BEGAN.
IT’S GOING TO BE A GREAT
ADDITION FOR US.

— MEN’S SWIMMING COACH JAY HOLMES



Being able to pursue my athletic dreams and world-class education is something I could only dream of, and my scholarship to Texas A&M has made it happen.

The opportunity to be paired with Mr. and Mrs. Paup through the 1922 Fund has been a wonderful experience. Their support is beyond gracious and I just can't even put into words how amazing it is to have people like Mr. and Mrs. Paup supporting both the men's and women's swimming and diving teams.

CLAYTON BOBO '22
TEXAS A&M SWIMMING & DIVING

CLAYTON BOBO AT A GLANCE

- » Sophomore Swimmer from Houston, Texas
- » Majoring in Business Administration
- » Aspiring to Earn a Degree in Finance or Supply Chain Management and Work for a Top Corporation in His Field

Clayton is paired with donors Anne & Hank Paup through the 1922 Fund. Call the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595 to discover how you can be a part of the 1922 Fund and make a life-changing impact for student-athletes like Clayton.





The Hardeman family are proud Aggies. D'Andre "Tiki" Hardeman played running back for Texas A&M in the late 90s and returned to continue his education in 2014. His oldest daughter Kiersten is currently a senior at A&M and a manager for the women's basketball team.

THE POWER OF A SCHOLARSHIP

Supporting one student-athlete's scholarship can make a generational impact

BY JESUS ORTIZ



KIERSTEN HARDEMAN HAD JUST RETURNED home from a tour of Texas A&M, and had some news to share. She sat down in the living room with her father while he was watching TV and sent him a simple text message.

D'Andre "Tiki" Hardeman initially thought it was a tad odd that his daughter would send him a text message while sitting nearby. Kiersten could have easily delivered the breaking news verbally, but she wanted to be able to focus on his reaction as he read the message.

"Dad," Kiersten wrote, "I will further my education at Texas A&M."

The man who once punished Big 12 linebackers

at Kyle Field with ferocity melted like a soft teddy bear.

"I wanted to see his reaction," Kiersten said. "It was very nice. It was good to make him proud and continue the legacy."

For the record, Tiki couldn't help but cry after reading that text.

"It was a dream of mine for all my kids to go to A&M," he said. "I had tears in my eyes after reading that text. I'm tearing up just thinking about it."

It's safe to say Kiersten was destined to be an Aggie. She was born during her father's sophomore year at A&M. You could even say that Tiki took his daughter on the field with him during games.



Kiersten, pictured with Tiki outside Kyle Field (above), as a newborn (above right) and receiving her Aggie Ring (right), was born in 1996 while her father was a sophomore at A&M. When Tiki suited up to play for the Aggies, he wrote his daughter's initials - "KMH" - on the tape that wrapped his ankles believing she would follow in his footsteps to Aggieland.



“

IT WAS A DREAM OF MINE FOR ALL MY KIDS TO GO TO A&M. I HAD TEARS IN MY EYES AFTER READING THAT TEXT. I’M TEARING UP JUST THINKING ABOUT IT.

— D’ANDRE “TIKI” HARDEMAN

In fact, Kiersten tweeted a photo in September that her father had sent her from his playing days with the caption, “I always knew you were going to A&M.” Tiki then told his daughter to look at his right leg and to tell him what she saw. The Aggie running back had written her initials on the tape that wrapped his ankles.

“I’ve always been around it,” Kiersten, who goes by the nickname of “Koko,” says of A&M. “It feels like home. I’m so close to graduating, and I know it will make my dad so happy.”

Tiki arrived at A&M on a football scholarship in the fall of 1995 after a stellar career at North Shore High, where he was a *Parade Magazine* All-American and a first-team All-USA selection by *USA Today*. The *Dallas Morning News* rated him among the top 100 recruits in the class of 1995.

Tiki and his wife Ursula have been married 15 years. They were high school sweethearts at North Shore, and welcomed baby Kiersten in 1996, the same year Tiki galloped for a record-setting 95-yard touchdown against Baylor.

Tiki was so proud of Kiersten, he would even bring her to A&M Media Day as he signed autographs for fans. Kiersten does not remember those autograph sessions, but she did get a glimpse of her dad in that environment when Tiki returned to Kyle Field to serve as honorary captain for the 2011 Oklahoma State football game.

That day left a lasting impression on the Hardemans’ children.

Tiki, who returned to A&M to continue his education in 2014, is adamant that his son may ultimately be a better football player than he was. That’s saying quite a bit, considering “Touchdown Tiki” rushed for 28 touchdowns at A&M while sharing the backfield with Aggie legends like Dante Hall, Leeland McElroy and SIRR Parker.

Most children with such an accomplished father

COURTESY OF KIERSTEN HARDEMAN





Tiki's scholarship paved his way to college and helped shape his and his family's future. Today, Kiersten is following in his footsteps and on pace to earn her bachelor's degree in Sport Management in May.

might be tempted to brag. Kiersten isn't wired that way.

Few of her friends at A&M actually know her father played football for the Aggies. She wanted to make her own mark in Aggieland. That's exactly what she has done as the team manager for Gary Blair's nationally-ranked women's basketball program.

During a visit to Blair's home one day, the man who guided the Aggies to the 2011 national title asked Tiki why he never said anything to him about his time on the A&M football team. The answer was simple.

"I didn't want to take any shine off her," Tiki said. "She wanted her own identity."

Without a doubt, however, he's a tremendously

proud father. All four of his children have been identified as gifted and talented.

It was Tiki's scholarship that opened the door for him to attend A&M which helped shape his future. Now, Kiersten is following in his footsteps and on pace to earn her bachelor's degree in Sport Management in May. She received her Aggie Ring on Sept. 27.

"I know it meant a lot to my dad to see me get my ring," she said. "He had the honor of putting it on my finger. I'm so close to graduating, and I know it will make my dad proud."

"Football opened so many doors for him. It meant a lot for my grandma, and it made my mom proud too."

Now Tiki is the proud one. ■

FUNDING SCHOLARSHIPS

The annual costs to fund a scholarship for a student-athlete

\$42,171

AVERAGE ANNUAL COST
PER IN-STATE SCHOLARSHIP
STUDENT-ATHLETE

\$28,960

IN-STATE TUITION,
ROOM, BOARD,
BOOKS, FEES

\$2,248

EQUIPMENT, GEAR, UNIFORMS

\$3,309

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

\$68,045

AVERAGE ANNUAL COST
PER OUT-OF-STATE SCHOLARSHIP
STUDENT-ATHLETE

\$54,834

OUT-OF-STATE
TUITION, ROOM,
BOARD, BOOKS, FEES

\$2,100

SPORTS MEDICINE

\$5,554

ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE
AND NUTRITION

Texas A&M Athletics' annual scholarship costs increased to a record high \$11.3 million in 2018-19, which represents a 41 percent increase in the past five years.

Call the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595 to find out how you can help endow scholarships for all Aggie student-athletes.

LINDA & DENNIS CLARK '68

BY SAMANTHA ATCHLEY '17

THROUGH THE PAGES OF A 1958 EDITION of *Aggieland*, Dennis Clark '68 was drawn to Texas A&M for the first time.

Stumbling across the yearbook while in his high school counselor's office, Dennis was introduced to the rich tradition, history and heritage of what it means to be an Aggie. He left that office knowing exactly where he was going for college.

"It was just the right place," Dennis said of A&M. "Once I got there, there was no question in my mind that it was where I needed to be."

After graduating from A&M in 1968 and again in 1971 with a master's degree in Business, Dennis' experience and education took him far and wide. Having a commission in the Corps of Cadets, he was set to be on active duty in the Army following graduation. However, with six months to spare before that was to take place, Dennis found what he thought would be a "temporary" job in the restaurant business.

"I figured it would just be a short-term thing, but ended up discovering that I like the restaurant business," Dennis said. "After I got off active duty, I came back to the restaurant business and have been involved in it ever since. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work as an executive for a variety of public companies and to develop my own businesses. My decision to stay in the restaurant business was very fortunate for me both from a financial and a personal perspective."

Very fortunate, indeed. Upon his return, Dennis met the love of his life, Linda, whom he has built an impressive career alongside. Through extensive experience in the restaurant industry and beyond, Dennis and Linda found great success in the Sonic business – now owning 37 Drive-Ins throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth area. In addition to their successful restaurant business, the Clarks developed and continue to operate a very successful real estate development business that builds and owns shopping centers and office professional properties as

well as the Sonic restaurant properties they operate.

"I just enjoy the interaction of working with people, and I enjoy the energy and the pace of the business," Dennis said. "The restaurant industry and the development business have been very kind to Linda and I both, and it's given us a lot of opportunities to do things that we probably never imagined that we were going to be doing."

When the opportunities come to support Texas A&M Athletics, the Clarks never miss a beat. Avid Aggie fans and dedicated donors to the 12th Man Foundation, Dennis and Linda answered the call in true 12th Man fashion when they made a generous contribution to the Kyle Field Redevelopment campaign in 2015. Since then, it has been a rare occasion to find their seats left empty on an Aggie game day.

"We rarely miss a home game and we also travel to most out of town games," Dennis said. "We just love Aggie football."

"Kyle Field and Aggie football ignite the same spirit in me that I had when I was at school. There is a sense of roots associated with it, whether you're class of '68 or '98 or '18 – there's this commonality of experience that exists there that permeates the entire university, for both current and former

The beautiful new Linda & Dennis Clark '68 Football Performance Nutrition addition to the Davis Player Development Center was named for the Clarks in recognition of their generous gift in support of the project.

“

WE ALWAYS LOOKED AT THE FOOTBALL PROGRAM AS BEING SOMETHING THAT WAS VERY SPECIAL AND BROUGHT EVERYBODY TOGETHER. WE THOUGHT THERE WAS A LOT OF VALUE TO THE WHOLE ATHLETIC PROGRAM AND IT JUST SEEMED LIKE THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

– DENNIS CLARK '68



students. It's something that is recognizable, and people outside our community recognize it, see it and envy it."

As season ticket holders, the Clarks thoroughly enjoy and add to the electric spirit of Kyle Field. Yelling from the East sideline, Dennis and Linda always stand ready to support the Aggies.

"We're 20 yards from the band and we have 30,000 students on the two decks above us," Dennis said. "The energy just rolls off those decks. You come away feeling 20 years younger. I love standing for the game. I'm over there with all the kids

and that's really where I want to be and Linda's very much the same way."

Along with their support through season tickets, the pair also recently helped fund the impressive new Linda & Dennis Clark '68 Football Performance Nutrition addition to the Davis Player Development Center – an expansion that gives the team nutritionist added space to provide pre- and post-workout fuel for student-athletes.

"We always looked at the football program as being something that was very special and brought everybody together," Dennis said. "We thought

In addition to their commitment to the 12th Man Foundation, Linda and Dennis are loyal supporters of Texas A&M through other affiliated organizations including the Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets Association.



there was a lot of value to the whole athletic program and it just seemed like the right thing to do.”

Valuing the importance of the student-athlete experience and life after competition, the Clarks’ contribution has allowed Aggie Athletics to improve team nutrition not only for sports performance, but also for educational purposes. As a former student-athlete, Lauren Hickey knows firsthand that success on the field often begins off the field in spaces like these.

“This is a space where you can see science, technology and athletic performance in full collaboration,” said Hickey, who serves the 12th Man Foundation Major Gifts department as the Manager of Donor Relations. “Our football student-athletes are able to finish lifting and immediately replace and replenish nutrients they lost during the workout.

“This provides an excellent teaching space as well. Our nutritionist, Tiffany Ilten, works in conjunction with the strength and conditioning staff to develop individual plans for each football student-athlete to help them gain muscle and work towards endurance goals. This new modern space also provides an opportunity for nutrition staff to facilitate cooking demos and have students learn how to cook and meal prep.”

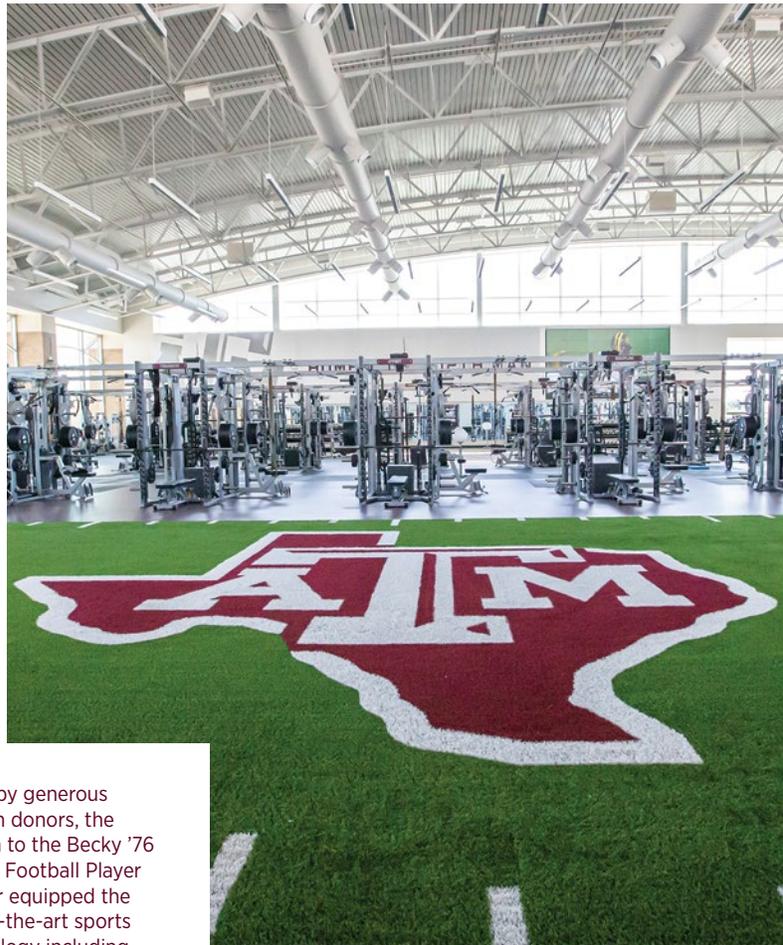
To the Clarks, the ability to make substantial contributions that both enhance the image of the

university and help A&M’s athletic programs succeed is a huge benefit of being 12th Man Foundation donors. Seeing the direct impact of their support through every resource, facility, scholarship and opportunity given to Aggie student-athletes is one of the greatest rewards of their efforts.

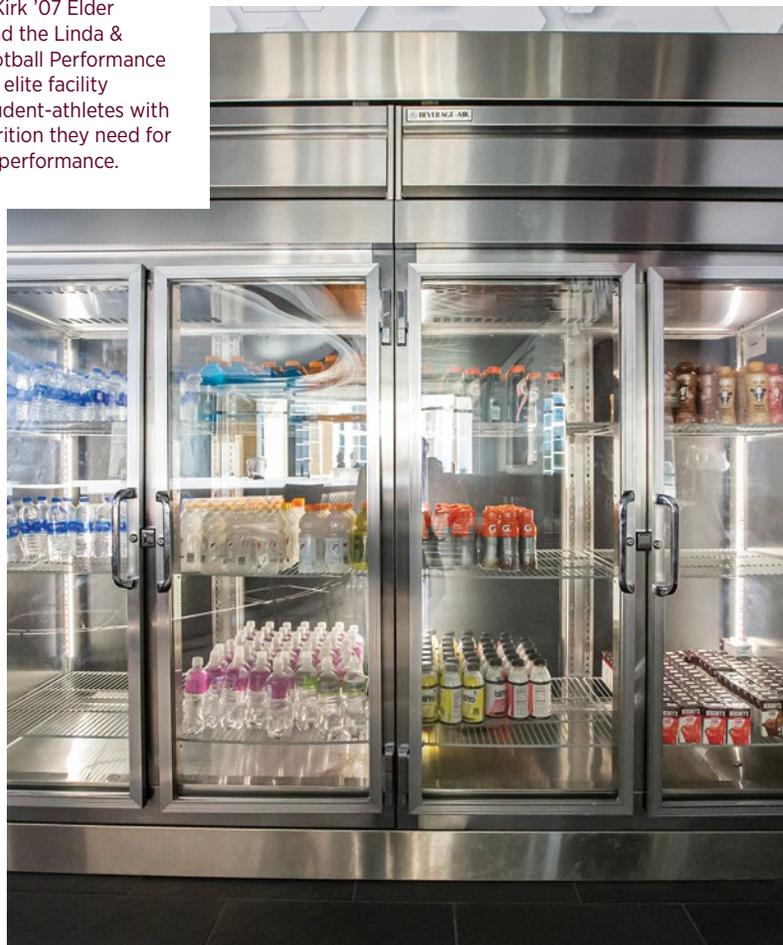
“When you see these kids come in the athletic programs and succeed not only in their sport,” Linda says, “but succeed in their academics and then go on – whether to play professionally, or they go out into the world – is just very rewarding.”

Without a doubt, the Clarks hold a sincere passion for A&M and all that it represents. Their devotion to preserving and adding to the aspects of what makes the university and its athletic programs so special is an inspiration that, according to Dennis, all starts with the Spirit of Aggieland and knowing what it means to be an Aggie.

“Certainly A&M was probably one of the most formative things that ever occurred to me in my entire life,” he said. “There’s this camaraderie, the sense of togetherness, and the sense of community that exists at A&M and among Aggies. It is what Aggies mean when they talk about the Spirit of Aggieland. It’s something that everybody that has gone to our university or has been closely associated with our university understands. It is truly a spirit that can never be told.” ■



Completely funded by generous 12th Man Foundation donors, the \$7 million expansion to the Becky '76 and Monty '77 Davis Football Player Development Center equipped the facility with state-of-the-art sports performance technology including the Charlie '76 and Kirk '07 Elder Performance Turf and the Linda & Dennis Clark '68 Football Performance Nutrition space. The elite facility provides football student-athletes with the training and nutrition they need for championship-level performance.



TIFFANY ILTEN

A conversation with A&M football's Sports Performance Dietitian

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01



- » JOINED THE TEXAS A&M PERFORMANCE NUTRITION STAFF IN AUGUST 2019
- » COMPLETED HER UNDERGRAD DEGREE IN NUTRITION, EXERCISE AND HEALTH SCIENCE & DIETETICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN
- » ATTENDED GRADUATE SCHOOL AT FLORIDA STATE AND SERVED AS A GRAD ASSISTANT AND A NUTRITION INTERN WITH FSU ATHLETICS
- » COLLEGE ATHLETICS NUTRITION EXPERIENCE ALSO INCLUDES STINTS AT FLORIDA AND MICHIGAN
- » GREW UP IN NEBRASKA SURROUNDED BY FOOTBALL

How has performance nutrition evolved in collegiate athletics in recent years?

Texas A&M has been fortunate in that it was one of the first schools to employ two full-time dietitians whereas a lot of schools started out with a consultant or maybe one dietitian for their entire athletics department. Most schools have grown to where they have at least one now. At A&M, we're fortunate to have four full-time dietitians as well as a culinary intern. What that does is it allows us to provide a higher level of care and meet the needs of all our student-athletes.

So, one way it's evolved is the amount of resources that have been dedicated to it. The R.C. Slocum Nutrition Center is a testament to that and is one of the biggest reasons I wanted to work here. When you have a school that has dedicated the resources to providing a facility like this, you know you are going to be supported and be able to really make an impact.

How does proper nutrition impact the team's success on the field?

It can really span a variety of different areas. In terms of the impact it can have on their performance, obviously if they aren't eating because they don't have time in their schedule, that's going to catch up with them eventually and they're not going to have the energy they need. They're not going to be able to train to their optimal level if they're undernourished. We try to instill in them little habits that become very

repeatable and second nature to them so that they don't even have to think about it anymore.

I tell the players that nutrition can involve something as simple as hydration and it can have a huge ripple effect. If you aren't hydrated – especially in Texas – you run the risk of cramping. If you're cramping, you're losing reps during practice. If you're losing reps during practice, you're not improving yourself or your teammates. At the end of the day, you're not helping anyone at all because you didn't hydrate. It can be the little things like drinking enough water or having a recovery shake to help their body recover from training that impact their performance.

What does a day in the life of a football student-athlete look like from a nutritional standpoint?

Their needs may be anywhere between 5,000-7,000 calories per day, although that may change based off training loads and individual goals. An offensive lineman has a very different body type than a cornerback and they do completely different things on the field, so we have an individualized approach based off of that. We have quick-digesting foods for energy for their early morning lift at the Davis Player Development Center. As soon as lift is over, we have shakes immediately available for them in the Clark Football Performance Nutrition area, and then we want them going to the R.C. Slocum Nutrition Center for breakfast.

It makes it so nice to have it all right here for them. They don't have to give it much thought. During team meetings, they have foods available to boost their energy level before going into practice. After practice, we have recovery available for them as soon as they come off the field.

If you're trying to get 5,000-7,000 calories, that means you're eating more than three times a day and a lot of their day is consumed with eating. During fall camp they wake up, eat, have meetings, eat, nap, eat, practice and eat again because

“
OUR DONORS HAVE PLAYED A HUGE ROLE IN CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT TO PROVIDE THE RESOURCES TO BE SUCCESSFUL FOR OUR STUDENT-ATHLETES.

— TIFFANY ILTEN



their needs are even higher during that training period.

How do you ensure consistent performance nutrition when the team travels?

We try to make it as similar on the road as it is at home. We travel with our Performance Chef Intern, Shannon Knapp, and she's in close communication with the hotels to ensure consistent preparation methods. We bring a lot of products that they snack on at home. It's a full operation where we are trying to transplant what they have in College Station into the hotel we are in. Access to familiar foods is the biggest key.

How has the Clark Football Performance Nutrition space benefited the program and in what ways will it make a difference going forward?

Obviously, when you walk in, it's beautiful and aesthetically pleasing and being right next to the weight room is ideal. It's convenient – they come

from the weight room, walk right in and they can get what they need when they need it. In the off-season, we are hoping to utilize the space and do some cooking demonstrations with the guys and give them some hands-on learning experience. They can learn a new skill in a non-threatening situation like that and have fun doing it because they're with teammates and it's not as much of a chore. Along with teaching new skills, the space provides our staff with a great opportunity to talk to them and answer their questions. It's been a great addition.

What does the space mean for you and your team, and what's your message to the donors who make it and other facilities at A&M possible?

It enables us to do a lot more efficiently and effectively when we have those tools and resources. It's creating the environment for them to succeed. Our donors have played a huge role in creating an environment to provide the resources to be successful for our student-athletes. ▀

Tiffany provided 12th Man Foundation donors with some insight into the football program's performance nutrition during the Linda & Dennis Clark '68 Football Performance Nutrition dedication in November.

EMBODYING THE 12TH MAN

Season ticket holders are the heart and soul of Aggie Athletics and vital to the program's success

BY CHAREAN WILLIAMS '86

JIM PETERSON DRANK THE MAROON KOOL-AID at an early age. He was 6 when he witnessed his first Aggie game.

Peterson traveled with his father to Austin to watch Texas A&M beat Texas 34-21 in 1956. That day, he became an Aggie fan for life.

"I do remember it," Peterson, Class of 1972, said. "It was a real sunny, pretty day, and we had John David Crow. Mostly, I remember how happy my dad was because we won in Austin, so that was big for me. I knew it was a big deal."

Peterson, like many Aggies, is a diehard fan who plans every fall around Aggie football. Texas A&M, in fact, has more than 50,000 Jim Petersons.

Nearly half of Kyle Field was filled with season-ticket holders during the 2019 season – 50,182

in all. They are the heartbeat of the school's athletics department, supporting A&M through both their gifts and their presence.

"Season ticket revenue makes up about 78 percent of our football ticket sales to the general public, not including students," Jeff Toole, Senior Associate Athletics Director and Chief Financial Officer, said. "Not only is it ticket revenue, but there's also the seat donation that goes along with that, which is a huge amount of money for Texas A&M Athletics. If you look at the percentage of our total revenue, then the other 22 percent of our revenue takes an awful lot of work to go out and try to sell and bring that in. So the cost benefit analysis on it is huge."

If you build it, they will come, and Aggies have since the renovation of Kyle Field. A&M drew





711,258 at home in 2019, an average of 101,608 per game. That again will rank the Aggies near the top of the country in total attendance.

In College Station, it's about more than the football.

A&M's goal is to provide a "superior game-day experience," which prompted the athletics department and the 12th Man Foundation to form a Game Day Experience Task Force (GDETF) two years ago. Kyle Field now has "something for everyone" and is the place to be on game day.

"Because of Texas A&M's culture and because of the location of the stadium right in the middle of campus, the experience in person versus the experience watching on TV is so vastly different that it can't even come close to being replicated with the comfort and technological advances that have been made," Sam Torn, the chair of the GDETF, said. "There is a smorgasbord of options for every price range, and coming to the game has never been easier in terms of ingress and egress, to and from your seat and in terms of the amenities that are provided, and you still get to experience the uniqueness of the 12th Man, of Texas A&M and game day

in College Station. At other places, the difference between watching a game on TV versus in person may not be as pronounced. I think at Texas A&M with everything we have going, including the ever-improving product on the field, it's not even the same experience. It's more homogenized and unemotional experience if you're sitting there watching on TV."

Aggies come for the football but also for the chance to socialize with family and friends – all 100,000-plus of them – several weekends every fall. The game-day experience brings them back year after year after year no matter how the Aggies do on the field.

A Loge Box ticket holder, Peterson has purchased football season tickets at Kyle Field since 1975 and estimates he has missed fewer than 30 games since.

"I think the number of games I've seen live, home and away, is around 500," said Peterson, who lives in Fort Worth.

Wayne Adamik, Class of 1958, was going to so many sporting events in College Station that he finally moved to Bryan from Plano seven years ago. He now has season tickets to several sports,

The 12th Man Foundation sold 50,182 season tickets for the 2019 season – up from 49,464 in 2018 – and averaged 101,608 per game at Kyle Field.

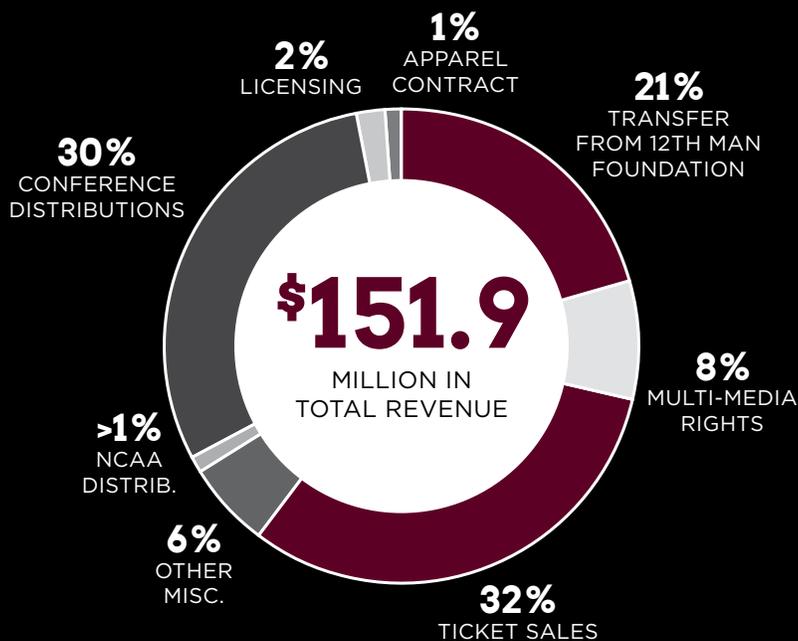
“

AGGIE FOOTBALL SEASON TICKET HOLDERS ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF WHAT MAKES KYLE FIELD THE BEST STADIUM AND ATMOSPHERE IN COLLEGE FOOTBALL. THEIR SUPPORT, THROUGH THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION, ALLOWS OUR PROGRAM TO PROVIDE THE BEST EXPERIENCE FOR OUR PLAYERS AND GIVES OUR COACHES A PLATFORM TO RECRUIT AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

—ROSS BJORK

SEASON TICKET SALES HELP FUND CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS

Nearly a third of Texas A&M Athletics' annual revenue comes from ticket sales which primarily consists of purchases by season ticket holders. When combined with the funds transferred by the 12th Man Foundation, donors and ticket buyers provide more than half of Aggie Athletics' revenue.



FY2018-19 figures (adjusted)

including football as an All-American Club ticket holder.

He had a streak of 35 years of missing only one road game and one home game before medical issues snapped that.

“We’re pretty good fans,” Adamik said in an understatement.

Adamik has given his heart to Aggie Athletics.

In 1998, he underwent heart surgery. Adamik was scheduled to have more stents inserted later in the week when he asked his doctor if he could delay surgery until the following Monday so he could attend the Aggies’ game in Austin.

“I thought the doctor was a little crazy,” Adamik said. “I didn’t think he’d let me do it.”

A&M lost to the Longhorns 26-24, but beat Kansas State in the Big 12 Championship the following week. The wins are far more memorable than the losses, of course.

Every fan in Kyle Field on game day is a win for the Aggies. A&M counts every season ticket holder as a blessing.

“Aggie football season ticket holders are the lifeblood of what makes Kyle Field the best stadium and atmosphere in college football,” Athletics Director Ross Bjork said. “Their support, through the 12th Man Foundation, allows our program to provide the best experience for our players and gives our coaches a platform to recruit at the highest level. Season ticket holders are typically there through thick and thin, and their support gives us the foundation to provide a world-class experience around Aggie football.”

THANK YOU

THANK YOU TO EVERY SEASON TICKET HOLDER FOR SUPPORTING TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL IN 2019

2020 SEASON TICKET RENEWALS

You will be able to renew your season tickets for the 2020 season beginning Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2020. The deadline to renew is Monday, March 2, 2020.

PRIORITY POINT DEADLINE

The Priority Point deadline that will impact all ticket and parking assignments made for the 2020 season will be Monday, March 2, 2020.

NEW PARKING TERM

The 2019 season was the third and final year of the previous parking term that began with the 2017 season. The 2020 season will begin a new three-year parking term that will span the 2020, 2021 and 2022 seasons. The allocation of parking for this new three-year term will be based on:

- Your Priority Point rank as of March 2, 2020
- Your ranked parking preferences
- Availability of spaces in each lot



WORLD-CLASS HOME

The new Barbara C. Barnett Women's Basketball Student-Athlete Center sets the standard for college basketball facilities

BY ADAM QUISENBERRY

THE DUST HAD HARDLY SETTLED in early November when members of the United States Women's National Basketball Team toured the freshly completed Barbara C. Barnett Women's Basketball Student-Athlete Center prior to their meeting with the Aggies at Reed Arena.

The national team's athletes, who have experienced more than their fair share of outstanding facilities representing the Red, White and Blue across the world, were more than impressed.

"This is how women should be treated," said one U.S. player as the most-recognized stars in women's basketball shared images and videos of the world-class space with friends and social media followers.

While the Texas A&M squad is still settling into its new home after the complete overhaul, Hall of Fame coach Gary Blair already has high praise.

"I think it's the best locker room in the country," he said. "Period."

As quick as Blair is to recognize the quality of the new facility, he is just as swift to show his appreciation for the incredible support his Aggie women's basketball program has enjoyed over the years. In particular, Blair credits 12th Man Foundation donors for doing their part to keep the program at the top in the hyper-competitive world of high-profile collegiate athletics.

"The keeping up with Joneses, I think everybody is going to want to visit this locker room because I think we've maxed out this project," Blair said. "We really have to thank the 12th Man Foundation donors who made it all possible."

Among the many donors who stepped up to make the vision of the project a reality was a former high school athlete and longtime Texas A&M Athletics supporter, Barbara Barnett.

"Barbara's passion and love of Aggie Athletics is second to none, particularly her support of our

women's programs," said Brady Bullard, 12th Man Foundation's Senior Vice President of Major Giving Programs. "She truly loves our student-athletes and has gone above and beyond to make sure they have everything they need to compete at the highest level. This project doesn't get off the ground if she doesn't step up as the lead donor."

As well as praising the leadership of Texas A&M Athletics and the 12th Man Foundation for their part in stewarding the project to reality, Blair is quick to point out members of his staff who played key roles in the concept development of the project.

"Kelly Bond-White has done a tremendous job seeing the vision for this project," he said. "I can't think of what 18-22 year olds get excited about, but she can. Between Kelly and Erich Birch, they've done a tremendous job of developing a vision for our new locker room."

Blair echoes the sentiments of fellow Aggie coaches who understand the importance of a team's facility when it comes to offering an outstanding student-athlete experience and building team chemistry by providing a space where players enjoy spending time around one another.

Named in recognition of one of the 12th Man Foundation's most loyal supporters, the Barbara C. Barnett Women's Basketball Student-Athlete Center features a state-of-the-art locker room, sleep pods, a salon, nutrition area, players lounge and a team meeting room.

“**THE KEEPING UP WITH JONESES, I THINK EVERYBODY IS GOING TO WANT TO VISIT THIS LOCKER ROOM BECAUSE I THINK WE’VE MAXED OUT THIS PROJECT. WE REALLY HAVE TO THANK THE 12TH MAN FOUNDATION DONORS WHO MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE.**”

— GARY BLAIR





Gary Blair, who earned his 800th career victory in December, enjoyed sharing A&M's new facility with the U.S. Women's National Basketball Team and knows it will pay huge dividends for current and future Aggies.

"This project has really made our team areas a home away from home for our kids and they're spending more and more time here before and after practice," he said. "They don't just get dressed and work out, they're staying and spending time with their friends and teammates."

Among the many features of the new student-athlete center is a state-of-the-art locker room with increased storage and space for each player including individual computers at every locker.

Some new concepts that were implemented into the facility are sleep pods, which are extremely popular with players who need to "take a few plays off" during their busy schedule of balancing academic and athletic obligations.

"I had no idea what a sleep pod was until Kelly showed me," Blair admitted. "Only a handful of schools across the country have this feature, but I think it will be the next thing that everyone has to have in a facility."

The team's film room and nutrition areas were also enhanced with Blair noting the ironic naming of the space dedicated to healthy eating of highly-conditioned student-athletes.

"The funny part about this is that Dorothy McFerrin donated the money and asked to name the nutrition area the Gary Blair Nutrition Center," he said. "I think they should have named the video room or the sleep pods after me before they named the nutrition area after the person with the worst nutrition in the program."

While the facility has a multitude of everyday offerings for the busy lives of current Aggie student-athletes, coaches and staff, it was built with another purpose in mind – as a showcase and platform to recruit top talent to Aggieland.

"There's an area that's like a living room that I call the closing room," Blair added. "When we have recruits in with their family, we can bring them there instead of a more formal setting like my office. It's comfortable for them and they really get a sense of how they would live in our program."

As the Aggie women's basketball team continues their impressive and consistent run of success, off the court the program stands at the forefront of Texas A&M Athletics' commitment to building and maintaining elite facilities and offering the best student-athlete experience in the country. 🏀

It's difficult to put into words how grateful I am to have a scholarship to Texas A&M.

I'm very thankful and fortunate to have Mr. and Mrs. Carter give back to the 12th Man Foundation. Donors like them provide student-athletes the opportunity to come to school and play for free. The Carters are such great people and mean a lot to me.

CIERA JOHNSON '19
TEXAS A&M WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

CEIRA JOHNSON AT A GLANCE

- » Junior Center from Duncanville, Texas
- » Graduated with a BBA in Finance in December 2019
- » Pursuing a Master's in Human Resource Development at Texas A&M

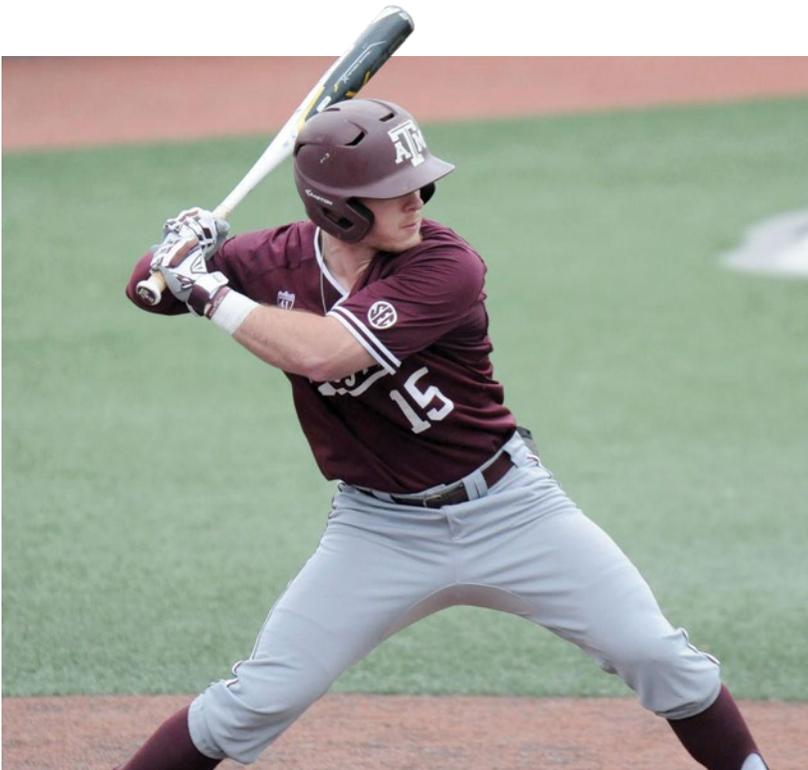
Ciera is paired with donors Fran and Bill Carter through the 1922 Fund. Call the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595 to discover how you can be a part of the 1922 Fund and make a life-changing impact for student-athletes like Ciera.



MIND, BODY AND SPORT

Texas A&M Athletics invests in resources to help with the pressures and demands on student-athletes

BY WILL JOHNSON '01



In a pressure-packed moment, junior Bryce Blaum hit a walk-off grand slam to lift the Aggie baseball team to victory in last season's NCAA Tournament.

THE BASES WERE LOADED WITH TWO OUTS in the bottom of the ninth inning, and the Aggie baseball team was trailing West Virginia by three in an elimination game in the 2019 NCAA Morgantown Regional. The season was on the line as junior Bryce Blaum stepped up to the plate.

What must have gone through Blaum's mind in that moment?

That's where Dr. Ryan Pittsinger comes in. As Texas A&M's Director of Counseling and Sports Psychology, Pittsinger helps Aggie student-athletes succeed with the mental aspect of the game.

"That pressure is there," he said. "It's not going anywhere."

The magnitude of the situation could have easily swirled through Blaum's head. However, that likely would have made it more difficult to be successful. Pittsinger offers a different mindset.

"Slow it down," he said. "Get into your routine. See the ball. Hit the ball. That's all the moment is."

Simplicity wins, and Blaum won big. With a 3-2 count against the Mountaineers' closer, Blaum belted a walk-off grand slam over the left-center field wall giving A&M a miraculous 11-10 victory.

If an athlete wants to be a hero, keep doing ordinary things well.

This is a phrase Jimbo Fisher orates to A&M football players on a regular basis. He often uses the "psychological disposition" expression, too. Pittsinger knows he's working with someone different in the Aggies' head football coach.

"He is so far ahead of his time," said Pittsinger, who has a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Iowa. "I learn from him. He is so good about staying in the moment. If you make a mistake, process it and move on. If you make a great play, process it and move on."

This season, the Aggie football team relied heavily on youth. That included significant contributions on offense from true freshmen Isaiah Spiller at running back and Jalen Wydermyer at tight end. The talented newcomers were asked to compete at a high level in front of more than 100,000 at Kyle Field, and millions on television.

"Then it's the thousands of keyboard coaches out there," added Pittsinger. "The pressure is amazing."

No matter the sport, it's the newcomer to A&M who typically goes through the most significant transition, therefore bringing with them the biggest potential for stress and frustration.

"What we do is talk about it and then walk out

there, together, with no one in there,” Pittsinger said.

He knows fear of failure can be a young student-athlete’s greatest downfall.

“What are you afraid of?” he might ask a freshman football player inside an empty Kyle Field.

Their fears come pouring out. It’s a rare opportunity for them to feel that. Pittsinger isn’t trying to rid them of the nervousness. He’s trying to teach them excellence can live in the same space by making sure preparation and technique are placed above pressure and tension.

“Go out there and notice what you’re nervous about,” Pittsinger reminds student-athletes. “Take a couple deep breaths, and focus on the one technical thing you need to focus on to do your job. You have to plant your foot? Perfect. That’s the job.

“You’re nervous about dropping the ball? Okay, I’m going to hold that right here (Pittsinger clutches his left hand as if to hold those nerves in place). Acknowledge it, and then bring the mind right back to seeing the ball, and my hands.”

The pressure doesn’t leave, but the mind finds a better way to be successful. Thinking of the

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WE’VE BEEN VERY INTENTIONAL ABOUT LOWERING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH. THE COACHES WANT THEIR STUDENT-ATHLETES COMING TO TALK TO US.

— DR. RYAN PITTSINGER

magnitude of the moment rarely wins, but relying on training and the process often does.

Sports psychology walks hand and hand with the mental health aspect of collegiate athletics. Student-athletes must adjust to strenuous schedules to better prepare themselves to compete in pressure-packed situations. Then there’s the academic demands of one of the most prestigious universities in the country.

In most cases, the term “mental health” has a stigma attached to it. It suggests a problem exists with an individual.

Pittsinger says that couldn’t be further from the truth. He is at A&M for the betterment of the Aggie

Texas A&M Athletics has made the commitment to supporting sports psychology and mental health to help student-athletes succeed in competition and in their lives outside of sports.



The Aggie football team relied heavily on youth this season from true freshmen like running back Isaiah Spiller and tight end Jalen Wydermyer. No matter the sport, newcomers typically face the most challenges as they transition to life as a student-athlete competing at the highest level.



If you are interested in making a gift to support the mental health resources for Aggie student-athletes, contact the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595.

student-athletes. Most of what he sees are good, young adults, trying to find a better way to reach their dreams, and represent A&M well at the same time.

“We’ve been very intentional about lowering the stigma of mental health,” Pittsinger said. “The coaches want their student-athletes coming to talk to us.”

Pittsinger feels today’s student-athlete can get caught up in being “perfect.” It’s part of their drive

and determination. It’s not a “problem,” but Pittsinger wants them to be careful about what they are striving for.

“We talk a lot about perfection,” he said. “It doesn’t exist, but excellence does.”

That’s why Pittsinger and fellow psychologist Dr. Lauren Craig are at A&M, and why Aggie Athletics has made the commitment to supporting sports psychology and mental health.

“I would never be able to do my job if it wasn’t for their support,” Pittsinger said. “It’s from the top down. Ross Bjork and the administration have supported us from a financial standpoint. The message has been very loud and clear that mental health and sports psychology are a priority.”

Pittsinger is here to teach student-athletes that there’s a better way. While at A&M and beyond, sports and life will bring pressure. They’ll face these moments in their futures, and they’ll be wise to remember Pittsinger’s words when they do.

Slow it down. Get into your routine. That’s all the moment is. ■

“
ROSS BJORK AND THE ADMINISTRATION HAS SUPPORTED US FROM A FINANCIAL STANDPOINT. THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN VERY LOUD AND CLEAR THAT MENTAL HEALTH AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY ARE A PRIORITY.

— DR. RYAN PITTSINGER

ENHANCE YOUR CONNECTION

Elevate your membership as an MVP or MVP Gold donor and enjoy exclusive benefits that offer unique insight into Aggie Athletics

AS A 12TH MAN FOUNDATION DONOR, your generosity provides student-athletes with a first-class education and championship-caliber facilities while ensuring Texas A&M Athletics has the financial support needed to operate at the highest level.

By making an additional philanthropic donation to the 12th Man Foundation's Annual Fund – a gift not tied to a ticket purchase – you can increase your impact on the success of student-athletes while strengthening your connection to Aggie Athletics with a variety of unique benefits.

A gift of at least \$750 helps provide the resources for the athletics department to be successful while elevating your membership to the MVP level, which includes valuable benefits like 10 additional priority points. MVP donors are invited to exclusive events such as the popular Coaches Speaker Series featuring incredible insight into A&M Athletics straight from the coaches.



An MVP gift also includes an invitation to the 12th Man Foundation Summer Meeting – one of the organization's premier events of Aggie fellowship with information on all aspects of the organization. The annual gathering provides a great opportunity to engage with fellow donors, A&M coaches, student-athletes and leaders in the athletics department. The 2020 Summer Meeting will be held June 25-28 at the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa in San Antonio.

Going above and beyond with a gift of \$2,500 or more to the Annual Fund elevates your membership to the MVP Gold level and significantly impacts A&M's ability to compete with the premier programs in college athletics. MVP Gold donors enjoy the same benefits as MVP donors as well as invitations to several exclusive events including luncheons with A&M's Director of Athletics. These intimate events provide MVP Gold donors with the unique opportunity to gain insight into many facets of the athletics department.

For more information on ways to increase your impact on Aggie Athletics, or to refer a friend or neighbor to the 12th Man Foundation, please contact Samantha Milroy at 979-260-2397. 🍷

MVP and MVP Gold donors have exclusive opportunities to engage with Texas A&M Athletics through events like the annual 12th Man Foundation Summer Meeting (above) and hear directly from A&M coaches like Buzz Williams in the Coaches Speaker Series (left). MVP Gold donors may also participate in Director of Athletics Luncheons (bottom left) to gain unique insight into Aggie Athletics.



SAVE THE DATE - JUNE 25-28, 2020

The 2020 Summer Meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hill Country in San Antonio!

AMY '00 & SEAN BAUGHMAN '95

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

TRANSFORMATIVE.

That's how Amy and Sean Baughman define their experience at Texas A&M. Their world-class education helped shape who they are today. Now, the Baughmans are paying it forward to current and future Aggies with their generous commitment to the 12th Man Foundation.

A Houston native, Amy graduated from Alief Elsik High School in 1996 and earned her bachelor's degree from A&M in Info and Operations Management in 2000.

Sean grew up in Central Texas, graduated from Midway High School in 1991 and earned a bachelor's (1996) and master's (1998) degree in English while at A&M.

After graduation, Sean began a career in the booming technology industry that has taken him from Houston – where he and Amy met – to Seattle to Austin working for a variety of well-known organizations including Deloitte, NASA, Microsoft and PayPal as well as a four-year stint at a young 1,800-employee company at the time called Facebook. He left the social media giant in 2015 after it had grown to around 20,000 employees.

Today, the Baughmans live in Austin where Sean is the Head of IT Platform and Enterprise Architecture for Atlassian – a global software company based in Australia – and Amy is a full-time mom to their 12-year-old son, Dylan, and 7-year-old daughter, Avery.

As football season ticket holders, the Aggie couple enjoys returning to campus as much as possible and exposing Dylan and Avery to the school they both hold so near and dear to their hearts.

“Every single time we go back we get that feeling again of why it's such a special place,” Sean said.

The Baughmans consider themselves fortunate for the opportunities they have had and in turn have made a conscious effort to give back. The 1922 Fund – the 12th Man Foundation's effort to endow

scholarships for every student-athlete at A&M – was a perfect avenue for the couple's support.

“We looked at what made a difference for us that could make a difference for someone else,” Sean said. “Through the 1922 Fund, we can give a student-athlete the experience of attending Texas A&M, and at the same time, our family is able to have a relationship with the student-athlete we are helping. It's a special opportunity to support a scholarship and attach it to a real person.”

The Baughmans, who were recently paired with freshman kicker Caden Davis as part of their 1922 Fund donation, joined Champions Council earlier this year and attended their first Champions Council Weekend in the spring.

“We met a lot of like-minded Aggies who are motivated to participate and help carry A&M Athletics forward,” Sean said. “As a typical fan in the stands, you have very limited interaction with coaches and student-athletes. During that event, we sat at a table and had dinner with coaches, and we were able to visit with them while watching spring practice from the sideline the next day.”

The Baughmans also attended the 12th Man Foundation Summer Meeting in San Antonio – which Sean calls a wonderful family experience – and a Champions Council luncheon featuring Buzz Williams in Austin. Sean says hearing directly from the coaches about what's going on makes a real difference.

“It's just a whole new level of learning about the program and how you can help,” he said.

Beyond the benefits, Amy and Sean are proud to be paying it forward and making an enduring impact on Aggie Athletics.

“Supporting a student-athlete's scholarship through the 1922 Fund is an amazing opportunity that can last generations for them,” Sean said. “I encourage anyone considering making a gift to think about that.”

YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT MATTERS

Join the Baughmans as Champions Council members and increase your impact with an investment in Aggie Athletics.

CALL THE MAJOR GIFTS OFFICE AT 979-260-7595

Whether at a game at Kyle Field or an event on campus, Amy and Sean Baughman are taking advantage of every opportunity to expose their children, Dylan and Avery, to everything they love about Texas A&M.



“
**SUPPORTING A STUDENT-ATHLETE’S SCHOLARSHIP THROUGH THE 1922 FUND
IS AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY THAT CAN LAST GENERATIONS FOR THEM.
I ENCOURAGE ANYONE CONSIDERING MAKING A GIFT TO THINK ABOUT THAT.**

— SEAN BAUGHMAN '95

PREMIER PARTNERSHIP

A mutually beneficial relationship with Adidas has Texas A&M's brand entrenched among the top programs in the nation

BY WILL JOHNSON '01

WHEN TEXAS A&M BECAME AN ADIDAS outfitted school in 2007, it launched a partnership that's now spanned two conferences and a dozen years.

Putting the Aggies and Adidas together was a no-brainer for both entities.

"The thing about Adidas is they like to go after premier properties, and go on the high end," said Director of Athletics Ross Bjork. "That's where we are at A&M. We're a premier property."

The Aggies are valued, and in high demand.

"We have this unbelievable footprint, being in Texas," Bjork added. "We have the SEC footprint. We have a global footprint. So Adidas views Texas A&M as premier."

Jimbo Fisher echoes those same sentiments.

"When you're the premier school you're getting the best of everything," A&M's head football coach said. "The top-notch line of gear they're putting out."

With A&M being so valued, Adidas takes steps above and beyond to assist the Aggies.

"They've been a great partner," said Associate Athletics Director Justin Moore. "They've helped look for additional ways to highlight Texas A&M and reach a broader audience."

Moore adds that the assistance works both ways.

"We've helped them do national product launches," he said. "They've helped us brand some of our facilities, and some things around campus. So, again, it's been a really good partnership."

Teaming with a multinational corporation has multiple benefits that make an impact on the department's bottom line.

When the current agreement became official in February 2015, A&M signed the richest apparel contract in the SEC and ranked third among public universities in the nation according to the *Business Journal*.

"We get cash that helps our budget," Moore said. "In addition, we get a large allotment of product for our teams, and we don't have to spend any outside money on that. We also have an amount of co-marketing dollars towards projects that mutually benefit us and Adidas."

Adidas outfits almost every Aggie sport, which is quite the undertaking and requires a collaborative effort. On the A&M side, Assistant Athletics Director for Equipment and Apparel Matt Watson is influential in the relationship. With football being the biggest task to tackle, Watson works with Adidas long before a season starts.

"Football is done 12 to 14 months, even sometimes 18 months out," said Watson, who followed in the legendary Billy Pickard's footsteps in the A&M equipment room. "It's kind of a long, sometimes exhaustive process. But you really have to dive into it, and pay attention to every detail."

It's a back and forth of constant communication and collaboration. A&M has the image it wants to portray and Adidas has its ideas. The two talk often about where it goes.

"We're arguably one of their top three programs," Watson said.

That helps keep the Aggies on the cutting edge.

In addition to outfitting nearly every A&M team since 2007, Adidas provides special alternate uniforms like the "'98 Aggies" (bottom left), which the football team wore in the Kentucky game last season to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Aggies' 1998 Big 12 Championship.

“

THE THING ABOUT ADIDAS IS THEY LIKE TO GO AFTER PREMIER PROPERTIES, AND GO ON THE HIGH END. THAT'S WHERE WE ARE AT A&M. WE'RE A PREMIER PROPERTY.

— ROSS BJORK





Adidas also equips A&M teams with unique footwear such as the Aggie Ring-themed cleat that the football program unveiled on Senior Day in November.

“There’s a lot of innovation we get to take part in,” Watson said. “There’s a lot of testing we get to take part in. Occasionally, fans might see a strange pair of cleats on the footwear side. That usually means we’re testing something. That helps Adidas.”

“We’ll test stuff during practice. Anything from uniform fabrics to shirts to game pants to game jerseys. There’s been a lot of that innovation, and a lot of growth in that area. I think we’ve come a long way with Adidas.”

“
**TO BE THE SCHOOL THAT’S OUT IN FRONT
 OF THEIR CAMPAIGN IS AWESOME FOR US.
 IT’S A TREMENDOUS RELATIONSHIP.**

— JIMBO FISHER

The entities obviously provide a boost to each other. And both see the benefits of the partnership.

Adidas is always looking for a closer connection with A&M. That’s why Zion Armstrong was in attendance when the Aggies hosted Alabama at Kyle Field on October 12. Armstrong was named president of Adidas in the spring of 2018. He came to Aggieland with the company’s sports marketing leadership and the group took in game day in order to learn more about A&M. The lessons were loud and clear, as the 12th Man was out in full force with more than 106,000 in attendance.

“They’re all in with A&M,” Watson said. “They’re trying to establish a long-term partnership that would make us the lead property of their cache of programs.”

All in is a good place to start. Armstrong and his team have certainly seen what the 12th Man is all about.

“To be the school that’s out in front of their campaign is awesome for us,” added Fisher. “It’s a tremendous relationship.”

My scholarship has given me the opportunity to attend one of the best universities in the country.

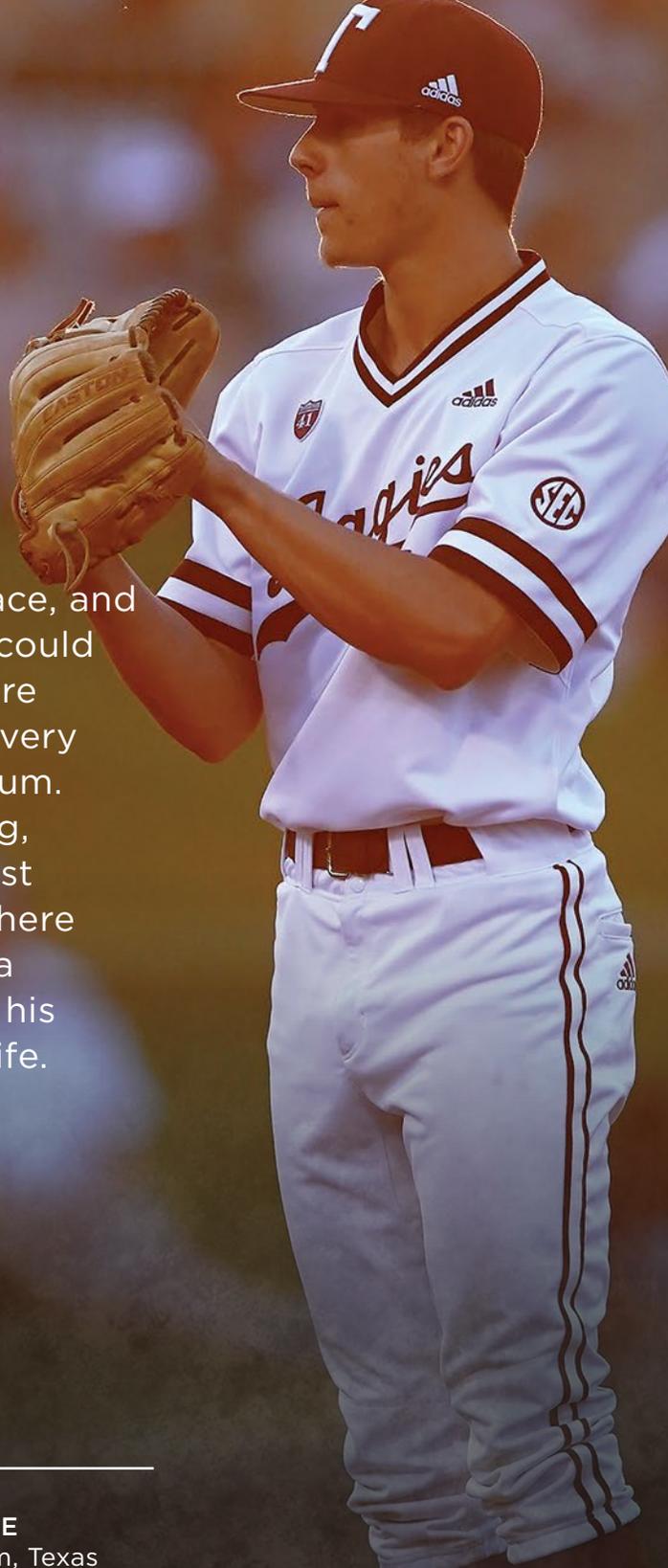
Texas A&M is a special place, and I honestly don't know if I could have afforded to come here without that support. I'm very thankful for Mr. Vordenbaum. If I ever needed something, he would be one of my first calls and I know he'd be there for me. I hope I can have a relationship with him and his family for the rest of my life.

CHANDLER JOZWIAK '21
TEXAS A&M BASEBALL

CHANDLER JOZWIAK AT A GLANCE

- » Sophomore Pitcher from Brenham, Texas
- » Majoring in Sport Management
- » Aspiring Sports Agent or College Baseball Head Coach (Preferably at Texas A&M)

Chandler is paired with donor Max Vordenbaum through the 1922 Fund. Call the Major Gifts office at 979-260-7595 to discover how you can be a part of the 1922 Fund and make a life-changing impact for student-athletes like Chandler.



MIKE SMITH

Assistant Vice President of Major Gifts

BY SAMANTHA ATCHLEY '17



ABOUT MIKE

- » BORN IN TUSCALOOSA, ALA.
- » 8+ YEARS OF FUNDRAISING EXPERIENCE
- » GRADUATED FROM AUBURN UNIVERSITY IN 2010 AND 2012
- » ENJOYS PLAYING GOLF, HUNTING AND FISHING
- » FAVORITE WEEKEND OF THE YEAR IS THE FIRST AND SECOND ROUNDS OF THE NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Mike is pictured below with his brother-in-law Patrick Walton, nephew Patrick Walton, Jr., sister Shanleigh Walton, niece Ann Roane Walton, father Mike Smith and mother Roslyn Smith.

MIKE SMITH IS QUICKLY GROWING FOND OF Aggie tradition and all who help keep it alive. One of the newest additions to the 12th Man Foundation staff, Mike comes from an impressive background in collegiate athletics, with experience in fundraising at Auburn, Penn State, the University of Dayton and the University of North Texas.

Becoming quite comfortable in maroon since joining the staff in November, the Auburn graduate from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, is more than eager to concentrate his efforts on enhancing Texas A&M's athletic success in the Major Gifts department. With a warm welcome to the team and new opportunities ahead, Mike says the move to Aggieland was an easy decision given the reputation of the 12th Man Foundation.

"I've always viewed the 12th Man Foundation as the best athletics fundraising organization in the country," Mike said. "For as long as I can remember, I've been enamored with the culture, rich history and traditions of Texas A&M. When I was presented with this opportunity, it was the easiest decision of my professional career."

In his new position as Assistant Vice President of Major Gifts, Mike spends a great deal of his time in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex area building relationships with current and potential donors, and when in College Station, he works diligently to research new opportunities to

visit with anyone who may be interested in supporting Aggie Athletics through the 12th Man Foundation.

"So far, it has been better than I ever could have imagined," Mike said of his time in Aggieland. "Between the staff, former students and donors, everyone has been so welcoming and helpful. My favorite part of the job is meeting new people and hearing about their love for all things A&M."

Coincidentally, Mike's favorite part of the job is also the one he takes most seriously. When it comes to building relationships with donors and potential donors in his current role, Mike confidently believes communication is key to success.

"Communication and honesty are everything to me," Mike explained. "If you're not consistently communicating with people, your relationships will never grow. Spinning off communication, I believe you must be honest and transparent with everything you do in order to build trust to grow relationships. I love this quote I heard recently, and it made a lot of sense to me: 'Trust is earned in nickels and dimes and spent in hundred-dollar bills.'"

Brady Bullard, Senior Vice President of Major Giving Programs, says the Major Gifts department is thrilled to have Mike on the team.

"Mike has experience from several prominent athletics programs as well as an educational background in the SEC that will serve him well as he builds relationships with new and existing donors."

For Mike, the gratitude is overflowing for the opportunity to work in Aggieland and help the 12th Man Foundation achieve its mission of funding scholarships, programs and facilities in support of championship athletics.

"I'm incredibly thankful for the opportunity to work with the 12th Man Foundation," Mike said. "I will work tirelessly to help the 12th Man Foundation and Texas A&M Athletics provide the best experience possible for all of our student-athletes." ▀





Know a current Texas A&M student?

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www.12thmanfoundation.com/12thmanstudent



FUNDING SCHOLARSHIPS, PROGRAMS
AND FACILITIES IN SUPPORT OF
CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS

A wide-angle photograph of the Nolan Ryan Field stadium at Texas A&M University. The stadium is a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent steel truss roof structure. The words 'NOLAN FIELD' are visible on the front facade. The stadium is surrounded by a parking lot and some landscaping.

TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL SEASON TICKET RENEWALS

FEB. 4 - MARCH 2, 2020

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