

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Forty-Two

6 September 2021

Centennial Celebration for the 12th Man Tradition Begins



“January 2, 2022. will mark 100 years since E. King Gill stood ready to play for the team, becoming a symbol of unity, loyalty and selfless service for generations of Aggies.” By

Lesley Henton, Texas A&M

University Division of Marketing & Communications, 1 September 2021

It was Jan. 2, 1922 at Dallas' Fair Park Stadium when Earl King Gill '24, a basketball player and former football team member for Texas A&M University, took his place in school history as the original 12th Man.



As the legend goes, the Aggies were outgunned by the undefeated Praying Colonels from Centre College in the Dixie Classic which took place in a 12,000-capacity stadium near where the Cotton Bowl in Dallas is today. It wasn't looking good for the Aggies, whose reserve players were dwindling as injuries mounted. Gill was in the press box helping reporters identify players on the field when Texas A&M Head Coach Dana X. Bible signaled him to come to the sideline and suit up.

Gill, who entered the university in 1920 to study mechanical engineering, had earned letters in football, baseball and basketball, and hadn't expected to play in the Dixie Classic. He'd been home in Dallas to spend Christmas with his family, so when Coach Bible called him down, he had to put on an injured player's uniform, quickly changing under the bleachers. He remained on the sideline, ready to play, for the rest of the game, which the Aggies managed to turn into a stunning upset, winning 22-14. Although he never actually played that day, Gill's willingness to step up for the team became emblematic of the university's core values, uniting the student body which today is known collectively as "The 12th Man."

“The tradition lives just as much off the field as on, as the spirit of the 12th Man is exemplified by Aggies in countless ways, from service projects to emergency relief operations,” said Texas A&M University President M. Katherine Banks.

One can access the entire article at this URL site:

https://today.tamu.edu/2021/09/01/texas-am-begins-yearlong-celebration-for-12th-man-centennial/?utm_source=today_newsletter&utm_medium=today_email&utm_campaign=today_09-01-2021. **We thank and congratulate Lesley Henton on this fine piece of work!**

Now, for your **pop quiz!**

1. The Dixie Classic in 1922 at the venue of Dallas' Fair Park Stadium, in which the Texas Aggies played, eventually became what prominent site?
2. What team opposed the Fightin' Texas Aggies in the 1922 Dixie Classic? From where? What were they called?
3. Did the Aggie Coach actually put E. King Gill into the game? What was the Aggie coach's name?
4. What was E. King Gill's life profession? What war did he serve in?
5. When, actually, did the 12th Man Tradition - of students standing "ready" at games - take hold?
6. Where, when and who actually came up with the name "The 12th Man?"
7. Dr. David Chapman '67, retired Director and Archivist of Cushing Memorial Library, wrote _____ about E. King Gill?
8. Who wrote the "12th Man Song?" When and where?
9. What did Tyson Voelkel '96, President of the Texas A&M Foundation, say about the 12th Man Tradition regarding who Aggies really are?
10. Where was E. King Gill's larger statue placed after Kyle Field was re-designed?
11. In 1990, TAMU made its relationship with the 12th Man Tradition official by _____?
12. In the 21st Century, TAMU grabbed the Nation's attention, being named _____ in college football by ESI^{PN}, and _____ by Sports Illustrated?
13. Natalie Parks '22, Texas Aggie Student Body President, when talking about the 12th Man Tradition, said _____?
14. Who are known as "Keepers of the Spirit?"
15. Colonel Byron Stebbins, Interim Commandant of the Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets, said _____ about what the 12th Man Tradition exemplifies?

Answers:

1. Cotton Bowl
2. Center College, Danville, KY, "Praying Colonels"
3. No. Dana X. Bible
4. Doctor, WWII
5. 1939
6. General Rudder – when introducing E. King Gill as Muster speaker in 1964, when he said: *"He is the 12th Man to which we all aspire."*
7. *"A no more visible tradition exists at Texas A&M than the 12th Man Tradition. It's more than students standing at a game.....the very embodiment of the Aggie Spirit and loyalty to Texas A&M."*
8. Lil Munnerlyn, College station, TX in 1941
9. *"Every moment I choose to "suit up" in the face of adversity and uncertainty, is a moment I'm genially proud of, regardless of the outcome. To me, The 12th Man Tradition speaks to the very core of who Aggies are – we show up!"*
10. After the re-design of Kyle Field, in the NE corner of Kyle Field Plaza

11. Trademarking the term
12. Best Student Section, and #1Game Day Experience
13. *"The Big Event" embodies the 12th Man Tradition as the largest, one-day student-run service project in the Nation!"*
14. The Fightin' Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets
15. *"The willingness to stand and be ready, to not only support the team, but a classmate, or someone who needs a helping hand. We (Texas Aggies) are ready to serve and don't have to wait to be asked!"*

Congrats to Our 2021-22 12th Man!



As reported by 12thMan.com on 28 August, Junior Fightin' Texas Aggie deep snapper **Connor Choate** has been named the Aggies' new 12th Man by head coach Fisher. Coach Fisher made the announcement in a team meeting on Saturday morning.

Connor has been the football team's primary deep snapper in both of his two seasons in Aggieland. He earned the team's Special Teams MVP honor following the Aggies' 9-1 campaign. Choate also played in all 13 games of the 2019 season as a freshman, earning the Special Teams' Newcomer award at the annual team banquet. He is replacing Braden White as 12th Man. Choate becomes the third 12th Man of the Jimbo Fisher era behind Cullen Gillaspia and White.

The 2021-22 athletic calendar at Texas A&M is being celebrated as the '12th Man Centennial' as the university and athletic department honor the 100th anniversary of the birth of the 12th Man tradition, dating back to E. King Gill's willingness to stand ready for his team on Jan. 2, 1922.

Patches – on Aggie Athletic Uniforms....

In the previous Bulletin 41, we asked some questions about the "unified" patch that the Athletic Department has included on all Texas Aggie athletic uniforms this fall season. Here is what we asked:

- *"We believe that Texas Aggies are "unified" as The 12th Man" which is a well-established TAMU tradition – so why do we need a patch at all?"*
- *If one does not agree with the 12th Man Tradition rationale above, then what is the reason for a "unified" patch specifically, and "unified" with (or against) whom?"*
- *Did the TAMU President approve this uniform "unified" patch?"*



Dr. Banks was kind to meet with us to discuss this issue, and we thank her for her support in doing so. We had a good discussion about it with our rationale and solutions. She and the Athletic Director, Ross Bjork, are reviewing and working this. We posted this great 12th Man Centennial patch for you above in this Bulletin. We recommend, as a solution, that it replace the

planned “unified” patch since “We are the Aggies” have been unified for 144 years - further codified in our great 12th Man Tradition in 1922. And we are about to celebrate its 100th Centennial!

And oh, by the way, most other SEC teams do not wear a social justice patch on their uniforms



TAMU Large and Getting Larger with 2021-22 Enrollment

	All Students	Freshmen Only
Main Campus*	66,871	11,464
Galveston Campus	2,162	860
Health Science Center	3,318	7
Qatar Campus	631	128
Total	72,982	12,459

*Includes 254 students reported to the state with the main campus that are located at the McAllen Higher Education Center, of which 140 are incoming freshmen

As reported by Jasmine Johnson, Division of Enrollment and Academic Services in Campus Life on 31 August 2021, enrollment for fall 2021 at Texas A&M University on the first day of classes totaled 72,982, including an entering freshman class of 12,459 of which 11,464 are part of the main campus.

The freshman class on the main campus represents 44 states — including Texas and 192 Texas counties — as well as 1,281 United States high schools. This cohort also accumulated an average number of 196 service hours per applicant. The incoming freshmen include over 3,300 underrepresented students and more than 2,400 first-generation college students. The class also includes 249 National Merit Finalists who represent an increase of nearly 30 percent from the previous year.



Dr. Mark Weichold, interim provost and executive vice president, said, *“It is exciting to once again be able to meet our students in the traditional instructional settings and even more exciting to welcome the university’s largest freshman class. Texas A&M University has a long history of attracting the very best students and this class continues that tradition. Welcome!”*

(Photo in Kyle Field, Class of '25)

First class day (Monday, 30 August) numbers for the fall enrollment increased by 2.6 percent from the official numbers last year. The increase in enrollment included planned growth of freshmen in the College of Engineering and the Mays Business School, while the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Education & Human Development, and Liberal Arts all saw growth. **Congrats and welcome to the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of '25!**

Dealing with the Pandemic – Interview with TAMU COO Greg Hartman

As reported by Megan Rodriguez of The Eagle on 30 August 2021, TAMU returned to fully in-person learning Monday, 30 August to begin the fall 2021 semester. TAMU's Chief Operation Officer (COO), Greg Hartman, said that the university is prepared to switch very quickly to virtual training, but added that there is not a particular piece of data he could point to that would necessitate such a shift. Hartman also said that the COVID-19 positivity rate for the TAMU community looks good so far but noted, it could change.

The university is requiring all students, faculty and staff to participate in a mandatory COVID testing program regardless of vaccination status. He said that he's happy with the compliance so far. In addition to mandatory testing, employees and students must report if they have or have been exposed to someone who has the virus. Hartman went on to say that *"Our plan and hope is that we stay in-person the entire semester. That's clearly our strategy and sort of the light on the hill we [are] searching for. Obviously, we have to be prepared to make changes."*

Classrooms, as one would expect, are at full capacity this year. Also, there are fewer empty rooms available, in the on-campus dorms and the apartments, for those who may need to isolate themselves.

Coach Fisher's Contract Extension

As reported by Billy Liucci and Richard Zane of TexAgs on 31 August, The Bryan Eagle staff on 1 September, and other news outlets, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents will meet to discuss head football Coach Fisher's contract. A raise and extension are expected. The overall estimate for Coach Fisher's new deal is to extend him for another ten years at \$9 million per year.

Coach's current annual salary of \$7.5M now ranks fifth in college football behind Alabama's Saban (\$9.1 M), LSU's Orgeron (\$8.9 M), Clemson's Swinney (\$8.3M), and Michigan's Harbaugh (\$8.1M). Coach Fisher is entering year four in Aggieland with high expectations as the Fightin' Texas Aggies open the 2021 campaign ranked number 6 in both the AP and Coaches Polls.



On 1 September, reported by Brad Marquardt of TAMUS Athletics Communications. The TAMUS Board of Regents voted to extend the contract for coach Fisher an additional four years through the 2031 season. The Board authorized Texas A&M President Katherine Banks to execute the coach's employment contract in conjunction with Director of Athletics Ross Bjork. *"I have great respect for Coach Fisher and his success with our student athletes. His ability to bring out the best in each of them is inspirational. I am confident that he will continue to raise Texas A&M University's football program to new heights,"* President Banks said.

Coach's contact was extended by four (4) years through December 31, 2031. The terms of the new contract include an annual salary of \$9,000,000 starting on January 1, 2022, and will increase to \$9,150,000 on January 1, 2023. In each of the following years, the base salary increases by \$100,000 on January 1. All other terms relative to performance incentives and other elements remain the same.

"The investment Texas A&M University is making in our program, coaching staff, and facilities speaks to the vision of our leadership and their commitment to long-term success," Fisher stated. "I am thankful for the unwavering support of the administration, the faculty and staff, our 12th Man Foundation donors, the Aggie Network, and the 12th Man - the largest and loudest student section in the country. It is an honor to be the Head Football Coach at Texas A&M, and although I am proud of the strides we've made, we ain't done yet!"

Per the 2 September issue of Texas Monthly, "Coach Fisher is Worth Every Penny of his Contract Extension. The coach has overseen the rise of Aggies football into a national powerhouse, and the rest of the university stands to benefit."

One can access the entire article here, and we encourage you to read it: https://www.texasmonthly.com/arts-entertainment/jimbo-fisher-contract-extension/?utm_source=Texas+Monthly&utm_campaign=8ef064bc68-TM+Today+9-3-21&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_92f99d7313-8ef064bc68-53322371

"Standing for America" (Red, White and Blue Game) Home Opener at Kyle Field, Saturday Night, 4 September



This photo was taken at the tribute game 20 years ago. As reported by The Eagle on 6 August 2021 and numerous other news outlets, the Fightin' Texas Aggies' opening football game on Kyle Field Saturday night, 4 September 2021, was a tribute to the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks by wearing red, white and blue shirts. Following 9/11, five A&M students came together to organize fans at Kyle Field wearing red, white and blue in the three decks during the Aggies' home game against Oklahoma State on Sept. 22, 2001.

This student-led effort and tribute was to re-create the 2001 "Red, White and Blue" game in remembrance of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. A&M's Student Government, Maroon Out and Traditions Council have partnered with the A&M athletic department and CC Creations Inc. to accomplish this again in a larger capacity Kyle Field.



This left photo is Kyle Field 2021



Coach Slocum recognition

It was certainly fitting that Aggie Coach RC Slocum, who was there twenty years ago, was honored again at the tribute game! We still have him in our prayers as he continues his battle against cancer. He appeared to be as tough as ever and doing well.

Best Bang for the Buck Rankings, South – Texas A&M University #2!

The Washington Monthly ranked their 2021 "America's Best Bang for the Buck - Colleges." It's an exclusive list of schools ranked according to how well they help non-wealthy students attain marketable degrees at affordable prices. The sips in Austin are 14th.

One can access the entire article with the data here:

<https://washingtonmonthly.com/2021college-guide/best-bang-for-the-buck-rankings-south/>

The Association's Former Students Program Team

On 2 September 2021, The Association of Former Students announced the appointment of Mary Miller '87 as the new Director of Former Student Programs, (979) 845-7514, mmiller87@aggienetwork.com.



She previously was a volunteer on the Board of Aggie Women, an Association Constituent Network, and serves on the Association's Leadership Council as a Representative at Large. She also serves on the College of Liberal Arts Advisory Council, and was a member of the TAMU President's Diversity and Climate Council. Mary recently retired from Nielson Company, a marketing and research firm, and has been a long-time volunteer to The Association of Former Students.

NOTES

REMINDER - SRG March '22 Reunion Information!!

March 2-4, 2022

College Station, TX

<https://www.aggienetwork.com/events/2022/sulross.aspx>.

SRG Bulletin Sign-Up Reminder: Anyone (Ags and non Ags, SRG Ags and all other Ags too) can “opt in” and sign up by going to: <https://www.aggienetwork.com/theassociation/sulrossgroup.aspx> and simply putting in your name and email address, and then clicking on “submit.” You will then automatically receive all the SRG Bulletins.

If you wish comment to those who decide:

Chancellor Sharp: chancellor@tamus.edu

The Board of Regents: vickie@tamus.edu or jbell@tamus.edu

President Banks: president@tamu.edu

Interim Provost Weichold: m-weichold@tamu.edu

Athletic Director Bjork: rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu

You can reach us at: SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com. The Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoD) are responsible for producing and editing these SRG Bulletins, with transparency to and advice from The Association of Former Students, under whose auspices we operate. We do so in keeping with one of our four charged SRG Constitution’s Purposes, which is keeping our represented SRG Membership informed in a timely manner. To access information about us as the elected SRG Board of Directors, and our Constitution, please refer to our new “**SRG Tab**” (Under “**Programs**”) on The Association’s website, at: aggienetwork.com. One can access information about us, including the current 2021-2022 SRG Board of Directors, The SRG’s Constitution and By-Laws, and the SRG’s history and what we’re about.