

## BONFIRE

Students used burning Bonfire as a pep rally where speeches were made and yells were led, often outlasting the actual burning of the fire. The first Bonfires in 1909 were built with trash and other scraps around campus.

Ninety-two years after bonfire first began, almost to the hour, on November 18, 1999 at 2:42am the Bonfire stack collapsed and took with it the lives of twelve of our fellow Aggies and injured twenty-seven others. The Bonfire collapse was quite possibly the most trying event in the history of Texas A&M, but it also allowed us to better understand the true meaning of the Aggie Spirit. Many of us believe that Bonfire did burn that year when 90,000 Aggies, friends, and families gathered at the Polo Fields on the night Bonfire was to burn to silently hold candles together. Even though Bonfire may never be the same as it was prior to 1999, the burning desire that every Aggie holds in his/her heart for the Aggie Family can never be extinguished.



## MUSTER

Muster represents the Aggie Spirit that binds Aggies to their school and to one another. It is more than a ceremony; it is a responsibility that is handed down from one generation to the next. Muster is a way for Aggies to renew their loyalty to their school and their friends. Aggie Muster is a special time set aside to honor members of the Aggie Family.

The most important and moving part of the Muster ceremony is Roll Call for the Absent. The Roll Call lists the names of every local Aggie who has passed during the year, as well as missing members of the 50 year reunion class. As each name is read, a candle is lit, and the family and friends answer, "Here," to symbolize that while that Aggie has fallen, they are still with us in spirit.

## AGGIE RING

The Aggie Ring is a unique representation of achievement by an Aggie. Aggies take pride in earning their little piece of gold from the greatest University in the world. The Aggie Ring is unlike any other because at most other students cannot design their own class ring or order it at any time. The Aggie Ring can only be ordered when an Aggie completes 90 hours, 45 of the hours being from Texas A&M University, and is sure to be recognized by Aggies around the world.

Traditions Council is a committee of Texas A&M Student Government Association. For more, visit [sga.tamu.edu](http://sga.tamu.edu) and [traditions.tamu.edu](http://traditions.tamu.edu)

# Traditions of Texas A&M University



"...to preserve and promote the  
Traditions of Texas A&M..."



## Howdy!

Howdy is the official greeting of Texas A&M University. Greeting each other with a “Howdy!” separates us as the friendliest University in the world.

## Gig'em

Gig 'Em is the universal sign of approval for Aggies. Coined by P.L. "Pinkie" Downs, Class of 1906, when at a Yell Practice before the 1930 TCU football game Downs asked, "What are we going to do with those Horned Frogs?" In reference to frog hunting, he said, “Gig 'em, Aggies!” and made a fist with his thumb extended up as one would when using a gig. It was the first hand sign of the Southwest Conference for 25 years until t.u. copied the idea from the Aggies and created their Hook'em Horns. Now Aggies give each other this sign to encourage and motivate each other.

## THE 12TH MAN

On January 2, 1922, the Aggies from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas played the National Champion Prayin' Colonels of Centre College, Kentucky, in the Dixie Classic. After the tough 1921 football season, the Aggies were “completely exhausted, both physically and mentally,” according to Red Thompson, a yell leader at the time. At half time, Coach Dana X. Bible's Southwest Conference Champion Aggies were winning, but every player on the Aggie team except for the 11 on the field was injured. Coach Bible requested that a former player who was in the press box, E. (Earl) King Gill '24, come down to the field and suit up. E. King Gill then stood next to Coach Bible for the rest of the game, ready to play, but was never asked to. Texas A&M went on to beat Centre College 22-14.

Today, Aggies stand at all football and basketball games, from the opening kickoff “till the final gun is sounded,” symbolizing our readiness to go into the game whenever we are needed. This selfless attitude extends to every aspect of Aggie life, as Aggies are always able to step in and be there when needed.

## REVEILLE

Reveille is the mascot and First Lady of Aggieland, and has been since 1931 when some cadets found her by the side of the road in Navasota. After the death of Reveille I in 1944 there were some interim mascots before Reveille II. She leads the football team onto the field at every game and is attended by a sophomore cadet in Company E-2.

## SILVER TAPS

Silver Taps is one of the most sacred and significant traditions at A&M. Silver Taps is one of the final tributes held for any current graduate or undergraduate student who has passed during the year.

Silver Taps is held the first Tuesday of the month following a student's death. Throughout the day, students can write letters to the families of the fallen Aggies. That night at 10:15, all the lights on campus are extinguished. Hymns are then played on the Albritton Bell Tower. Around this time, students gather silently in the Academic Plaza. The families of the fallen Aggies are also led into the plaza. At 10:30, the Ross Volunteer Firing Squad marches into the Academic Plaza at a slow cadence. Once they arrive, they fire a three volley salute in honor of the fallen Aggies. After the last round is fired, buglers atop the Academic Building begin to play a special rendition of “Taps” called “Silver Taps” which is unique to A&M. They play it 3 times, once to the North, once to the South, and once to the West, but never to the East, because it said the sun will never rise on that Aggie again. After the last note is played, the one thing you can hear is the shuffling of feet as students return silently to their lives.

