

# Joey keeps getting better

MARK PATTERSON  
Battalion Staff

"Starting at guard, six-foot-five-inch junior from Tulsa, Okla., Joey Robinson."

This has become a familiar sound heard before every A&M basketball game. In his third year at A&M, Robinson has established himself as a mainstay on the Aggie basketball team. And he feels confident of his position.

"I feel as if I'm one of the leaders on this team," said Robinson about his role as a team member. "In practice I try to set an example for the other players on the team, especially the younger guys. And when someone makes a mistake, I try to back them up and help them correct the problem."

After becoming a high school all-American at Tulsa's Memorial High School, Robinson was highly recruited by colleges across the country, including seven of the nine Southwest Conference Schools.

"Kansas, Kansas St. and Minnesota were just a few of the schools that wanted me to come and play for them," said Robinson. "And everybody in the conference except Texas and Houston offered me a scholarship. But I chose A&M because of the people down here."

"But it was a hard choice for me. My high school coach, Terry West, really pushed me toward Tulsa University. But I later found out why. It was rumored that if he could get me to go to Tulsa, he would be offered an assistant coaching position there."

"But I didn't want to stay at home so I left Tulsa and chose A&M. And he didn't get the job."

But coach Shelby Metcalf was put into an uneasy position with recruiting Robinson. Metcalf went to school with Robinson's mother so he sent his two assistants, Norman Reuther and Bob Gobin, up to Tulsa to scout Robinson.

"I guess the coach (Metcalf) didn't want his personal views to get in the way of his recruiting me," said Robinson. "But I guess Gobin and Reuther liked what they saw."

And as the season progresses they're seeing a more productive Robinson. After putting in 14 points against Tech, Robinson added a season high 23 points against Texas. His scoring success is due to the adjustments he's made as the season has progressed.

"I've become more confident with my shooting the last few games," said Robinson. "At the first of the year I was passing the ball off instead of taking my shots. But now, if I'm open, I'll put the ball up."

"Even if I don't shoot I've begun driving to the basket more. That way, when the defense collapses on me, I can pass the ball off inside and create new situations on offense."

The Aggie offense has sputtered on a few occasions this season but Robinson feels the team is now on track.

"Earlier we were forcing a lot of our shots. We felt as if each one of us had to shoot if the team was to score. Due to that, we had a lot of individual play. We weren't playing as a unit until now."

"Coach Metcalf has found a starting five that he can put his confidence into. The pressure that we felt as the beginning of the season to prove ourselves is off of us. Now we can relax and play our game."

Some athletes have nusual superstitions that they follow to insure good fortune and Robinson is no exception. Not only does he carry a silver dollar in his wallet at all times, he carries a superstition with him into each basketball game.

"Ever since high school I've always had to be the last man out of the locker room onto the court, both at the beginning of the game and after the halftime. And I have been without fail. It's just something I

have to do to feel confident."

Robinson, a junior two year letterman, hopes to continue his basketball career beyond college ball.

"Even if I don't get drafted by a team, I think I owe it to myself to try out for a professional team. I've been playing basketball since the second grade and I think I ought to try to keep on playing."

"I'd really like to play for Phoenix if I had my choice, but I'd play anywhere a team would have me."

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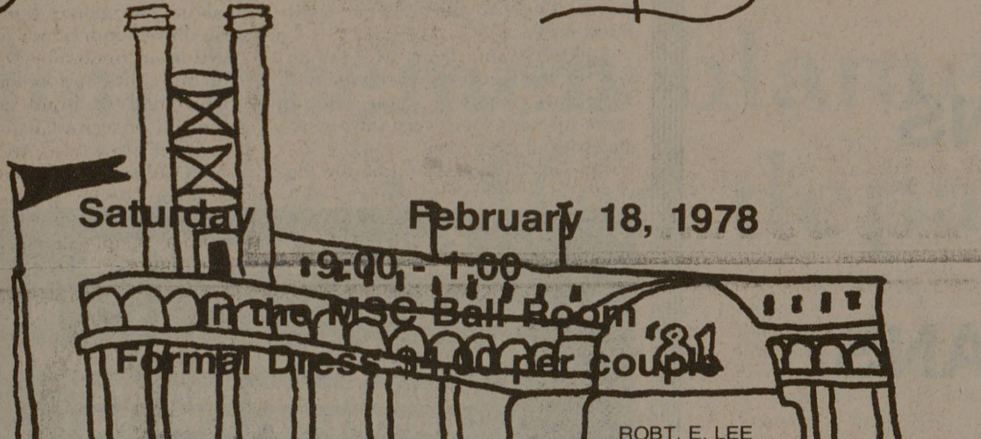
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## The Search of an Engineer

On July 5, 1951, I was born into a small, middle-class Italian family in South Orange, New Jersey. I was the oldest of the children with two brothers and a sister and naturally I was called upon to lead the exemplary life of the eldest son. My dad was a fireman and my grandfather was a contractor and altogether there were twenty grandchildren in our family—quite an army.

I was really a nobody in high school—very introverted—hiding the shame of zero social esteem under hours of study. My parents had given me one goal then—to get good grades. So, I was able to graduate Columbia High in the top 10% of my class. The South Orange Businessmen's Association, the Village Club, and the Columbia Home and School Association awarded me scholarships; which, for the first time in my life, boosted my self-confidence.

I enjoyed math and sciences so I decided to go to Newark College of Engineering in Sept. of '69. "At last," I thought "I'll discover what life is all about." "These are the best years of your life" all my relatives told me as they longed for their pasts. Being hungry for friends I pledged Sigma Pi fraternity and inherited 80 "brothers". I quickly learned to suspend my anxieties with marijuana and drown my loneliness in mugs of beer.

I won second prize in the school art contest for an abstract woodburning which only portrayed my inward confusion. I found some comfort and acceptance as a disc-jockey for WNCN and prided myself in the underground music I played. I ran bus rides, dances, ski trips, and trips to the Bahamas; and my social esteem was growing stronger every day—but I was still the same empty person. I launched a successful campaign for Student Senate President my junior year and discovered, much to my disillusionment, that I was the first president who didn't embezzle student money. I showed no partiality toward any of the student groups and the school newspaper showed no partiality toward me.

During that year, Dick Gregory spoke something on our campus that shook me up. He said "School can teach you how to earn a living, but it can't teach you how to LIVE!" I was outraged. THEY NEVER TAUGHT ME HOW TO LIVE! What should I do? How should I live? Sure, school and work kept me sufficiently numb to my real need—how to really live. I went bananas. I went to heads of various departments, to the students demanding courses on how to live—courses on marriage relations, speed reading, and all kinds of things. I was angry to discover that after four years of education no one could teach me how to live. I began to see all the plastic relationships, all the masks people hid behind, and all the hardened shells they defended themselves with. Even the true measure of my own condition always surfaced when I was alone. I was alone!

By midsemester of my junior year I had ten job offers and, not knowing what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, I accepted a position with Borg-Warner in the York Air Conditioning Division as a sales engineer. Still clutching at the future, I had only one goal—to bank \$50,000 by age thirty. Within two years I was a prospering territory sales manager in sunny Florida. I purchased a pearly white XKE Jaguar and just delighted in stepping out of it in front of people.

I purchased a duplex in Tampa, Florida where I lived virtually rent free on a 1/2 acre lot in a ritzy area looking to some future date when I might build a nice home and retire. I also bought \$900.00 worth of stereo equipment and for kicks I would spend \$100 on records during a weekend just to see how many of them I could play! I haunted bars looking for real people—real friends—only to find myself disgusted with the phoney flattery people used in hopes of gratifying themselves.

I dabbled in Buddhism at the suggestion of a friend and read an interesting book by Suzuki Roshi. I found the goals of this religion very admirable but the effort required on my part was beyond my strength. How could I purge myself from all my selfish desires? I didn't even want to. The right body position was too painful, and to maintain the proper state of mind and attitude was too tiring.

I joined the Rosicrucian mystic society and spent hours alternately staring at lighted candles in my bedroom and reading "ancient secrets" only to find myself being plunged into deeper degradation. One night I stayed up until 1:00 o'clock so that I could pray at the same time as thousands of others. (At least they had me believing in God again.) I prayed to receive the spirit of Jesus. Nothing happened—that night.

That week, however, plenty happened to me. One of my customers gave me a Bible after two hours of speaking to me concerning Jesus. I couldn't believe that someone would give me a \$5 item for free. The next day my neighbor's child sat in my lap and began singing a song. He had a speech impediment so I didn't understand what he was singing. His sister told me—he was singing "I'm in the Lord's army". I was shocked! I couldn't help thinking, "Little kid, what are you doing in my lap singing this song this week?"

I flew home to see the President of my College retire at the Founders' Day banquet. I arrived at the Founders' Day banquet not knowing what to expect next. President Hazel was School President when I was student president and we had a lot of good times together. He had poured himself out for the school, starting as a student, then as a professor, then as a department head and ultimately as President of the College. He had taken the school from being a rinky-dink technical school to being a nationally respected college of engineering. I shuddered as the teachers retiring that night were hustled off amid mockingly happy claps, after each received a silver bowl as his only reward for years of labor! And what of my friend the President—the one whom I loved and cared for? Surely he deserved more than the others. He received an oil painting of himself and a golden bowl. He wept. As he wept, my insides wrenched. Was this what the world had to offer him after he poured out his whole life? — an empty bowl? — EMPTY! I saw my past. I flashed forward to my future. Emptiness!

On November 11, 1975, I was visiting a Christian friend. She showed me that Christ was a real person whom I could receive into me. He had poured out His life to set me free. The room was charged with His presence. I wanted to believe, but what would my friends think. I wanted to be born again—have a new start—but what would I have to give up? I decided to jump in. I prayed "Lord, forgive me for my past. Lord Jesus come into me." He flooded me with joy and with peace. Tears came to my eyes as He spoke to me of how He loved me and died for me. My eyes were opened! Everything was new! The grass, the trees, the birds—all the creation testified of God's glory! That night I cleared out all my past and realized all my future in the very present, living Person of Jesus Christ!

In the two years that have followed, this Person Jesus has become my very Person. He has filled all my loneliness, all my emptiness, all my anxiety, and all my search for happiness with Himself. This very God is living in me. All my goals are fully realized in Christ who is my Life. My Jaguar got rusty. My political victories were forgotten. My records got old. The beer and the grass got boring! But this living Person Jesus Christ has never ceased to satisfy me because I was made, like every man, incomplete—until He made me whole. Now God is living in me, teaching me how to live.

Thomas C. Mercadante  
Paid for by Christian students on campus. (846-9708)