

State and Local

New Aggie Parents of the Year capture honor with generosity

By Jennifer Friend
Reporter

Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Abbott Sr., the new 1987-88 Aggie Parents of the Year, are "timegivers, not moneygivers."

This is one of the main reasons the Abbotts won the title, said Renee Dix, chairman of the Student Government Parents of the Year Selection Committee.

The committee's decision was announced at the Parents' Weekend awards ceremony last Sunday with 2,920 in attendance at Rudder Auditorium.

The Abbotts were surprised when they won the title.

"We were at the ceremony, but we had no idea of what was about to happen," Joanie Abbott said. "We were videotaping the ceremony because we are making a tape of our son Frank's senior year."

Frank, the Abbotts' youngest son, is a fifth-year civil engineering major.

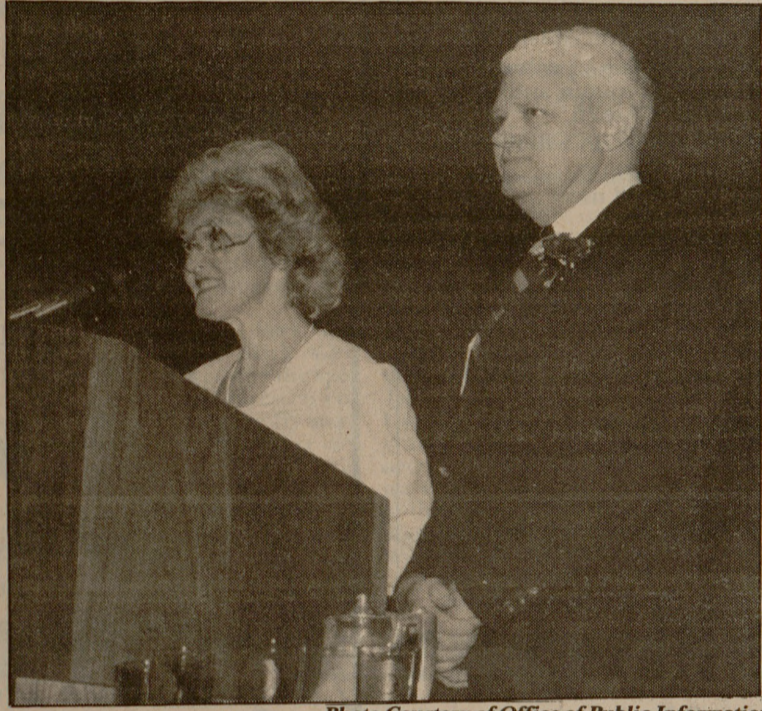
"When they announced our names, Mr. Abbott just kind of put the camera down," she said. "One of our boys said later, 'Dad, you kind of dropped the camera!'"

The Abbotts have lived in Longview for 24 years.

Neither attended Texas A&M, nor did their eldest son, David, who went to Trinity University in San Antonio.

The Abbotts' two younger sons did attend A&M. Preston was the Corps commander in 1984, and Frank was the Corps operations officer in 1986.

Frank nominated his parents for Aggie Parents of the Year by submitting an explanation of why he thought his parents were worthy of the title, and 10 letters of recom-



Frank G. Abbott Sr. and Joan Abbott of Longview accept the honor of being named Aggie Parents of the Year for 1987.

mendation from people who know the Abbotts.

"What they lack in the ability to give large sums of money, they more than make up for in both time and spirit," he said in his four-page essay. "They have come to love this University as much as you and I, and their support for the Corps of Cadets is never-ending."

One letter was from John J. Koldus, vice president for student serv-

"Over the years, they have carted a portable barbecue pit back and forth between Longview and College Station to all of the major events happening on campus," Koldus said in his letter. "They've provided many fine meals to many people, but most important, they've shared their love with all whom they have come in contact."

Each year, the Abbotts host a barbecue for high-school students from the Longview area who have chosen to go to A&M, Joanie Abbott said.

"The kids are able to meet people that they will recognize when they go to A&M, and they can get all their questions about the school answered," she said. "For the past three years we've had the head yell leader at the barbecue."

"We only cook occasionally — either for five or 300 people!"

Another letter of recommendation was from Denis Lee Davis, the 1985-86 MSC president.

"An encouraging statement and a well-intended piece of advice are a guaranteed part of any conversation with Mr. & Mrs. Abbott," she said. "Even though we are collegiate young adults — cooking our own meals in our own hotpots — we still need some parenting."

Renee Dix said the Abbotts are very involved in the University.

"If there's something happening on campus, they want to know all about it," she said.

The Abbotts' four-page list of activities greatly influenced the Parents of the Year Selection Committee, she said.

Joanie Abbott is the seventh vice president of the Federation of Aggie Mother's club, and has been the president of the Deep East Texas Aggie Mother's club.

Frank Abbott is an Aggie Club member and a board member of the East Texas Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Abbotts are active in the local, regional and national levels of the Presbyterian Church, and recently have started their own brokerage service.

"Our boys got us involved in A&M," Joanie Abbott said. "The school is kind of an extended family."

"So many people have touched our lives — it's fun to be able to give to others."

Activist says censorship hinders right to learn

By Frank Smith
Senior Staff Writer

The leader of a self-proclaimed constitutional liberties group Thursday night at Texas A&M said that although leaders of the "religious right" are entitled to participate in the political process, they are wrong in stimulating censorship activities in public education and bringing religious intolerance to the political arena.

John Buchanan, chairman of People for the American Way, spoke to an audience of about 60 in a program sponsored by the Memorial Student Center's Political Forum committee.

People for the American Way is a privately funded group boasting a membership of some 260,000. It espouses the pluralism and diversity it says is a fundamental part of American society. Buchanan, a former Alabama congressman, is an ordained Baptist minister.

He spent a part of his presentation criticizing recent court rulings on textbook cases in Alabama and Tennessee. In Alabama, textbooks said by a federal judge to teach "secular humanism" at the expense of Christianity were removed from classrooms. In Tennessee, parents were given approval to remove their children from classes in which material offended them on religious grounds.

Buchanan said the rulings interfere with the freedom to learn.

"We believe that the 89 percent of the young people who rely upon the public schools for their chance in life are important to our country," he said. "What public schools need to do is teach science as science and teach history as history."

"What parents and churches and synagogues must do is to train up children in religious faith."

Buchanan also spoke against the "scorecards" of congressional voting records distributed by some conservative religious groups to illustrate politicians' stands on "Christian" issues.

In 1980, while still in Congress, Buchanan scored a 29 out of 100 on one such scorecard. Yet that was higher than the rating given to any other clergyman in Congress, he said, and was good enough to outscore the entire black caucus.

"This is a political agenda," he said, waving a copy of a scorecard. "One of the first things I learned when I got to Washington is that those who are people of devout faith and are truly fine Christian people cover the (political) spectrum."

In addition, Buchanan said People for the American Way has taken particular interest in the textbook selection process for Texas' public schools. He praised the work of Mike Hudson,

who works as both the group's legal counsel and its Texas coordinator.

Hudson formed a coalition of citizens — including scientists, science teachers and religious leaders — that Buchanan said has had a positive influence on the textbook selection guidelines used by the state's textbook committee and school board.

Buchanan emphasized that because of Texas' size, its textbook guidelines play a large part in helping determine the content of textbooks in public school districts throughout the nation.

He said that three years ago, when testifying to the state school board on evolution guidelines, he told legislators he was reminded of how God can reveal his truth through science as well as through biblical revelation. At that time, Buchanan said, most biology textbooks in the nation contained few references to evolution.

One book, he said, contained a disclaimer inside the cover saying all subsequent references to evolution would present it only as a theory. In fact, that disclaimer was the only reference the book made to evolution.

"You don't have to tell the kids in the public schools they have to choose between creationism and evolution," he said. "Kids don't have to make that choice unless we insist they do."



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WANTED:

Video Aggieland Editor applicants

Application forms: Available 8 a.m. 5 p.m. Journalism Department office, Room 230, Reed McDonald Building.

Deadline: Return to Room 230 by 5 p.m. Monday, April 27.

Job Interviews: At Student Publications Board meeting starting 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 28, in Room 215 Reed McDonald Building.

Requirements: Must have strong interest in video and be currently enrolled student at Texas A&M University, and continue enrollment throughout job tenure from June 1, 1987, through end of Spring Semester 1988. Current GPR of 2.0 both overall and in major, and necessity of maintaining that average throughout job tenure. Willingness to devote time and effort necessary to plan, staff, and produce a master videotape of a year's campus life at Texas A&M University, which can be used to reproduce saleable tapes for students and others.

Suggested strengths: Widespread and up-to-date interest in campus life and all activities at the University; experience and/or training in management/administration; experience and/or training in planning; experience and/or training in video production work, both field and post; experience and/or training in video editing.

Responsibilities: Will include but not be restricted to selecting and hiring student staff; planning year's shooting schedule; setting budget (within pre-set limits) for staff and other activities; overseeing shooting of all film necessary for a tape of 60-90 minutes; overseeing editing of raw tape and adding necessary background sound and technical devices for finished film.

Technical assistance: As available, Journalism Department faculty and staff and Student Publications staff will assist in all management and technical operations as requested.