

Texas A&M claims a long list of distinguished alumni as its own, including many minority former students. On this page we take a look at two successful Old Ags.



stories by Staci Finch

Henry Cisneros

His list of accomplishments goes on and on. At 23, he was the youngest man ever to be selected to a White House Fellowship. He has served on the San Antonio City Council, was a member of the Kissinger Panel on Central America in 1983, and was interviewed for the vice presidential position as Walter Mondale's running mate in 1984. He has served on such national boards as the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, the National League of Cities and the Council on Urban Economic Development. He also served on the Texas A&M Board of Regents from June 1985 to February 1986.

Aside from these positions, he has probably garnered the most attention as the mayor of San Antonio, a position he has held since 1981. He is one of the best known Former

Students around. He is Henry Cisneros.

As a Hispanic mayor, Cisneros has received much attention since his election as mayor of San Antonio. However, Cisneros told U.S. News and World Report that the minority aspect faded from the spotlight after elections were over.

"There's a point where you stop being a curiosity, an interesting novelty," he said in the article, "and you are a person who has true power and resources to deliver."

Cisneros said issues facing a mayor go beyond ethnicity.

"The minority community never stops seeing you as a minority mayor," he said.

"But once you get elected your concerns suddenly are a lot larger than the minority community. For instance, you're very much concerned

with economic development, which is not in any way a strictly Hispanic issue."

While Cisneros' minority heritage may be no problem in San Antonio, he told Texas Monthly it was a different story in the late 60s when he attended A&M.

"The worst place I could have selected to go to college as a Hispanic in the sixties was A&M," he said in the Texas Monthly article. "Sometimes I got angry, but I had friends who went to other schools who came away worse than angry — having been put in their place. At A&M there is no place for you except the one you make for yourself."

Cisneros is certainly making a place for himself in San Antonio. In the 1983 election he received more than 94 percent of the vote, and he is constantly pushing to get new industry for the area. He succeeded in getting Sea World to come to San Antonio, and that organization alone should bring two thousand jobs and three million tourists to the area each year, according to the Texas Monthly article.

Cisneros' efforts to improve the city of San Antonio follow what he told Texas Monthly was his "fundamental objective."

"I want to raise incomes and help reduce the poverty percentage," he said, "to help the overall economy grow so that there'll be enough resources to deal with the ethnic unfairness of the past."

Of course, mayors never please everybody, and Cisneros is no exception. The Texas Monthly article said his last-minute dissent on the construction site of a new mall angered some developers in San Antonio, and some residents think Cisneros is too concerned with tourist attractions and has lost touch with the real needs of the city, like good public libraries.

But all dissent aside, the city of San Antonio wants to keep its mayor. One city official told Texas Monthly that "people have their problems with Henry, but if you said you could wave a magic wand and make him go away, nobody would take you up on it."

Fred McClure

When some students graduate from college, they end up in careers that are hardly connected to their degree. But not Fred McClure. Since his college days at Texas A&M, McClure has been involved in government.

When he was elected student body president for the 1977-78 term, McClure became the first and only black man ever to serve in that capacity at A&M. He was also a member of the Pre Law Society, and was speaker of the student senate for the 1975-76 term.

Since graduating from A&M in 1977, McClure has stayed in government service. He served as legislative director and legal counsel to U.S. Senator John Tower, and also as associate deputy attorney general for the Justice Department. He was a

member of the Real Estate Research Advisory Committee for the State of Texas, and worked for two years as special assistant for legislative affairs to President Ronald Reagan. McClure is now staff vice president of government affairs for the Texas Air Corp.

McClure has also stayed in touch with A&M. He is serving his third term as international vice president for the Association of Former Students, and is closely involved with minority recruitment.

Although there were few minorities at Texas A&M in the seventies, McClure said he didn't think there was too much discrimination.

"Now there is a greater desire on the part of minority students to come to A&M," he said. "When I was at A&M,

minority students came because of geographical advantage, or a particular academic curriculum they wanted. Also many parents who had been in the military sent their children to A&M because of the Corps of Cadets program, and of course there were athletes who came because of scholarships."

But these options didn't draw many minority students.

"There were about 100 of us there (at A&M) when I was elected student body president, out of about 28,000 students," McClure said.

However, the small number of minority students didn't deter McClure from running for student body president.

"I never felt like there was any discrimination when I was running for office, and I didn't have any problem running for president as a minority," he said.

McClure said the changes in minority recruitment have not been in the level of difficulty of getting into A&M, but in the increased efforts by the Association of Former Students.

"We don't set any quotas about how many minorities should be in A&M," he said, "but we have really been concerned with increased minority recruitment."

"We basically fund the office of School Relations. A portion of that funding goes to minority recruitment, and we have greatly increased that funding over the years."

"Now we have more people who can get out and recruit in high schools, and they try to explain to students what opportunities are available at A&M. The more minority students are aware of what A&M has to offer, the better our minority enrollment will be."