

Texas A&M The Battalion

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Ex-A&M quarterback pulls baby from Delta crash

By Tim Stanfield

Reporter

A former Texas A&M quarterback has been called a hero for helping save three lives in the aftermath of the jetliner crash at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport Wednesday.

Joe Mac King and two of his friends helped pull two elderly women and a baby girl from the burning jetliner in the moments after the crash.

Contacted Thursday night at his home in Farmer's Branch, King said that there wasn't time to think about anything other than getting everyone out of harm's way.

"It's just one of those things that you do because you were there," King said. "We — Troy Prater, Dan Walker and myself — were on our way to Montana to do some trout fishing.

"After the plane stopped moving, everybody lined up to get out the hole in the fuselage. The pilot was telling us to be calm but hurry."

King, who has a son, Ryan, 6, and daughter, Rachael, 3, said that a

young woman with the baby was right behind him in line.

"She was extremely anxious to get the baby off the plane," he said. "Originally they had been seated across the aisle from us. Troy and I helped one of the elderly ladies get out, then we got the baby.

"Troy had remained in the plane and I was actually outside it when he handed the baby to me.

"We were just glad to be able to get those people out and ourselves, too. The three of us talked about it looking back at the plane, which was covered with black smoke and fire.

"Somebody obviously was looking out for all of us."

King, his two friends, the mother and baby were among the 94 people who survived the crash.

Thursday King met the grandmother of the baby he helped save. The grandmother said it was a miracle her granddaughter was saved and that King is a hero.

King said that he knew something was wrong almost immediately after the pilot began the takeoff.

"As we took off, there was a bump



Joe Mac King

— not like the usual one — a loud one," he said. "The strange thing was that after we were airborne the plane didn't pick up any more altitude.

"Instead of the nose going up, it stayed level at about 30 feet off the ground. It tilted to one side, then the other, causing us all to wonder what happened."

King said he had hoped the plane would right itself, but it hit the ground just off the end of the runway.

"It was a long time after the plane hit the ground before it came to a complete stop," he said. "We were seated in row 12 — about three rows back of first class.

"The first folks were getting out of the hole in the front, but it was hard due to the smoke. We had to get on our knees in order to crawl to the opening."

Because of the smoke and fire, King said he felt that everyone seated beyond about row 15 was not going to escape the wreckage.

"I couldn't really see much because of the smoke," he said. "Later I found out that several of those people were badly burned either in the plane itself or when they jumped on the wings."

Delta officials saw to the needs of

the injured who needed to be immediately taken to hospital, then the others were taken to a special room in the airport.

King was taken to a hospital shortly thereafter, which caused some concern for his wife, Louise.

"I hadn't been able to call her because all the phone lines were busy," he said. "She had heard about the crash on the radio and came to the airport at once.

"We didn't see each other at the airport, but some friends were there and told her that I was OK. I didn't see her until she reached the hospital."

King's only injury was a severely cut index finger sustained while pulling the baby from the plane.

In a telephone interview, former A&M Head Football Coach Gene Stallings said he was concerned when told of King's plight, but Stallings said he was proud of King's actions.

"You tell him that I am super proud of him," the coach of the Phoenix Cardinals said. "What he did doesn't surprise me at all be-

cause that's the kind of person Joe Mac is.

"He was enrolled in Vet School as an undergraduate at A&M and didn't see much playing time, but Joe Mac's biggest quality was his leadership."

Former teammate Mike Park, who is an attorney in Huntsville and one of King's closest friends, reiterated Stallings' statements concerning King.

"He's a terrific guy — just one of the best," Park said. "Joe Mac had a wonderful mother who raised him in Mineola after his father died when Joe was a child.

"After being a super quarterback in high school, he was a great leader in the huddle at A&M and got the most out of his ability.

"He won the Aggie Heart Award after the 1971 season. (King's actions) make me proud of him."

King, who played at A&M from 1969 until 1971, said, "At a time like this, football doesn't seem all that important."

Computer glitch ends astronauts' simulated flight

SPACE CENTER, Houston (AP) — A real-life computer crash halted a mock shuttle mission in its final hours Thursday just before the five Discovery astronauts prepared for a simulated landing on a flat tire.

Officials said Discovery commander Rick Hauck, pilot Richard Covey and mission specialists David Hilmers, Mike Lounge and George "Pinky" Nelson handled all the problems tossed their way during what was to have been a 56-hour dress rehearsal.

But computer glitches prompted NASA officials at the Johnson Space Center to cut short the mission before the simulated flight returned to earth.

NASA spokesman James Hartsfield said, "I'm sure they'll be looking at it to see why it went down, but nobody here considers it to be a big problem that the simulation ended early."

"The problems that the crew worked through were good training and they exercised just about every flight condition. The fact that it ended early was really a minor point

for everyone involved," he said.

"They had worked through all the problems and everything was proceeding toward the landing when the problem occurred."

NASA officials stressed that there was no problem with any kind of computer used in actual flight control.

But other glitches faced by the Discovery crew were intentional, as the astronauts were placed in situations designed to test their ability to solve a multitude of problems that could occur on an actual mission.

The flight crew and mission operations staff were scheduled to spend most of Friday discussing the simulation and studying performance.

About 300 people took part in the final long-term rehearsal before Discovery's four-day mission.

The mission will be the first shuttle flight since the Challenger explosion 2½ years ago.

The launch is slated for late September or early October if sluggish oxygen valves and a hydrogen leak are repaired in time.



Photo by Kathy Haveman

Reflection

In the MSC Gallery on Thursday afternoon, Manisha Shah, a sophomore biochemistry from Richardson, gives a questioning yet appreciative

look at "Hide and Seek," a huge oil on canvas by Lynn Ann Gurney, the featured artist.

Mobley readies to face issues at A&M with positive outlook for future events

(Editor's note: The following is the second in a two-part series which gives Texas A&M President William H. Mobley's views on issues, problems and challenges facing A&M during his presidency and beyond. The interviews for this story were conducted on Aug. 18 and Aug. 31.)

By Stephen Masters
Senior Staff Writer

After former Texas A&M President Frank E. Vandiver's announcement that he would step down, the Board of Regents began a search for the next president.

The search was officially closed July 18 when former Senior Fulbright Scholar William H. Mobley was named the 20th president of A&M.

Mobley took office on Aug. 1.

Q: Athletic programs all over the country have come under fire for recruitment violations. What role should athletics play in a university environment?

I think intercollegiate athletics are a positive part of the college experience. They are a source of great involvement and pride for the student body in general, former students and the community. I think they can play a big, positive role. They are an opportunity to showcase the university around the country with half-time and pregame shows, so we have an opportunity to tell the A&M story with respect to our students, our traditions and our research programs, so it's positive in that respect.

The NCAA (National Collegiate Athletics Association) has been looking at A&M for several years now and I think all of us think it's time to get it over with and behind us. If we've got problems, then let's address them; let's strengthen



William H. Mobley

Battalion File Photo

wherever we've got weaknesses; let's take whatever actions are necessary to rectify wrongs of the past, if they exist. Let's get on with having excellence in our academic and athletic programs and impeccable standards we have for everything we do. I'm looking forward to the NCAA hearing and to getting on with it.

Q: How important are winning sports programs to A&M?

A: I think anything we do we ought to do well. Athletics are not my number one priority, but we are

a major university. We have a major athletic program and we need to see that we run it well and do it with integrity and we abide by NCAA rules and regulations.

I think there's nothing incompatible with having first-rate academics and top-quality athletics. It's not my number one priority, though.

Q: How important do you think the core curriculum is?

A: I think that's important. I was talking earlier about the "global village" and I think there is a core disci-

pline that ensures breadth, no matter what one's chosen field or discipline. I think that breadth is essential.

You're not going to learn a set of facts, skills or techniques that are going to last forever. We can't be about the business of training for a specific entry career position. What we have to be about is the job of really developing lifelong learners.

You ought to leave A&M with enough breadth, with a real ability to analyze, to communicate. You should have a real critical thinking so that you can be a lifelong problem solver and lifelong learner because the facts as we know them today are going to change and the tools as we know them today are going to change. What you need is a core education that provides you with the analytical skills. You need to read broadly with comprehension an interesting variety because we're all going to face an increasing rate of change. Students need to be lifelong learners who recognize the quality of individual specialties but be sure that they don't become overspecialize and miss the broad base that is necessary, so I'm in strong support of it.

Q: What are the disadvantages of the core curriculum?

A: Its disadvantages are that we have X number of credit hours, usually between 120 and 140, and if you have breadth, then you reduce the opportunity for more specialization. There's a constant tension between breadth and specialization. I think that's particularly true in engineering and business and those curricula that are more focused in on specific areas.

Students and some faculty may argue that specialization makes stu-

Polish strikes end, discussions begin

GDANSK, Poland (AP) — Shipyard and steel workers ended strikes Thursday, and Lech Walesa urged other workers to stop the worst labor turmoil in seven years now that the government has agreed to discuss Solidarity's future.

Walesa met with ranking officials Wednesday for the first time in six years and the government agreed to discuss the outlawed union and other issues.

Restoring Solidarity's legal status was the main demand of the strikers.

Workers at the Stalowa Wola steel mill in southern Poland began leaving the plant at 7 p.m. after receiving a telephone appeal from Walesa and a message from the Roman Catholic episcopate, a strike committee spokesman said.

At least 3,000 strikers were in the Lenin shipyard, where Walesa works as an electrician, including workers from other yards in this Baltic port. They hoisted Solidarity banners as members of their strike committee led them out.

About 2,000 onlookers chanted, "Thank you, thank you!" and "There is no freedom without Solidarity!"

Strikers and the crowd outside joined in singing the national anthem just before the shipyard gates swung open.

Other people lined the route to St. Brygida's Church, a headquarters of sorts for the men of the shipyard where Walesa led a strike eight years ago that gave birth to Solidarity.

Poland's communist authorities recognized Solidarity in an agreement signed Aug. 31, 1980, but declared martial law in December 1981 to suppress the first independent union in the Soviet bloc and outlawed it the following year.

In the packed church, the Rev.

"We appreciate any positive and reasonable step. The appeal to stop the strike is such a step. It should be especially valued when it comes from a participant in the strikes."

— U.S. statement

Henryk Jankowski declared: "In your wisdom which you showed today you decided about suspending the protest, but it is only the end of the physical protest. The strike goes on through dialogue."

Shipyard workers gave up their strike after an appeal by Walesa, who said an end to the labor turmoil would open the way for talks the government promised.

The strikes began Aug. 16 and at their height idled 20 sites throughout Poland that employed over 100,000 people.

One group of Gdansk port workers complained of bad faith by authorities. They said they were told not to return to their jobs because they had been fired for striking, said Antoni Grabarczyk, a member of the Gdansk port strike committee.

He said the men would continue rallying outside the port Friday to protest the action.

A statement from government spokesman Jerzy Urban said of Walesa's efforts to end the strikes:

"We appreciate any positive and reasonable step. The appeal to stop the strike is such a step. It should be especially valued when it comes from a participant in the strikes."

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