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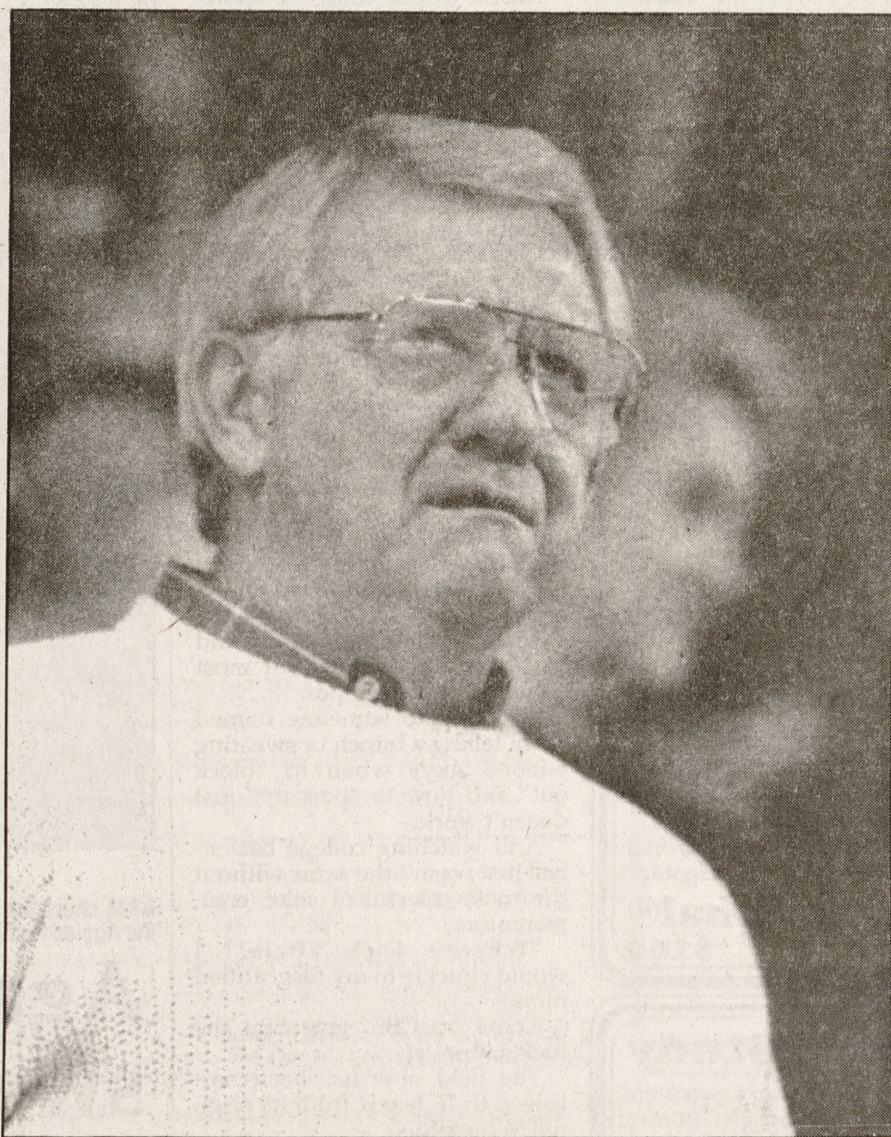
The Battalion

Crow weathers basketball storm



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The Battalion



M. MULVEY/The Battalion

A&M Athletic Director John David Crow is ready to put past difficulties in the basketball program in the past and finally stabilize the situation that has plagued his two-year tenure.

Tournament time interrupts Mom's routine

March Madness is driving mom mad. Poor woman, for the last 30 years she has been an able-bodied housewife who went through her daily routine and never gave it a second thought. She would vacuum in between episodes of "The Young and the Restless" and dust before "As the World Turns" came on. But last Thursday was the beginning of the end for her. At 11 a.m. sharp, CBS pre-empted regular programming in order to bring coverage of the NCAA Basketball Tournament. Mom was not happy. Her soap operas were taken away by the network gods. She was fuming over the sport which before she had so admired because her son, the baby of the family, had such a love for it. Only daytime Presidential news conferences had brought out this kind of rage in her before. At first the broadcasts were a basketball fanatic's dream — more than ten hours of college basketball on not one, but four days. But a few hours into Thursday's telecast the young were growing restless. Unfortunately some of us had time to waste during our less than sporting adventure through Spring Break. Time wore on with each passing game. Mom would ask an endless list of questions to find out who was to blame for this gross injustice. No answer would suffice her want for information. Friday came, and with it the same

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John David Crow can look out of the window of his ninth floor office in Rudder Tower and see almost the entire Texas A&M campus.

Off in the distance he can see the field that one day will be the site of the multi-million dollar Special Events Center.

Today the sky is virtually clear, but many times Crow's million-dollar view has been clouded with turmoil.

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Crow has had to weather many storms since he replaced Jackie Sherrill as A&M's athletic director in December of 1988.

His first task, hire a new head football coach that would stabilize a program on shaky ground.

Trouble thundered again when Shelby Metcalf cried wolf and was subsequently reassigned.

Last December more problems with the A&M basketball program rained on Crow's parade.

Now Crow is ready to put those problems behind him and move towards the goals he set more than two years ago.

"I don't want to digress into the past because that won't solve any problems," Crow said. "It has been a very trying two years as far as the basketball program is concerned."

The athletic director, who walks by the Heisman Trophy statue he earned in 1957 everyday as he comes and goes to work, would rather have avoided the limelight of flashbulbs and assertive reporters who want to know what his next move will be.

"I wanted to be back in the scenes, back in the crowds and trying to help where I could," he explained. "I don't need this, I don't need my name in the paper. I've had my paces before."

Crow said his first priority when taking the job was to reestablish the football program.

Crow hired R.C. Slocum. "He had been here for 17 years and was as much an Aggie as anyone," he said. "He was very well qualified."

With the football problems solved, Crow was ready to move on to the objective that had been in the back of his mind since he took the job — increasing

enthusiasm for a fledgling basketball program.

But things happened faster than he would have liked.

"It happened a little sooner than I had anticipated," Crow said. "This latest setback is really a devastating thing."

Crow was forced to make the decisions that went along with his job — hiring and firing.

After reassigning Metcalf, the athletic director replaced interim coach John Thornton with promising young coach Kermit Davis Jr.

Crow said he didn't expect things to happen overnight with the basketball program. He maintained the philosophy that progress is made year by year, not with immediate success.

"You can't hire a person and say you've got three years," he explained. "You have to look at every year and see if they are progressing toward the goal. I don't think you set a specific time, it's somewhere out there."

Crow was a major proponent of a special events center that would shout support at those who doubted A&M's

ability to house a winning basketball team.

Those plans still exist at A&M, but Davis no longer does.

Crow can be asked about his feelings concerning the subject of the first-year coach's dismissal, but he would rather not talk about the past.

"I think we should talk about what is happening now," he said. "The other things have been hashed and rehashed."

Oklahoma State coach Eddie Sutton said A&M is the last remaining place a

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—John David Crow
A&M Athletic Director

coach can come in and build a great program.

"Eddie Sutton is right," Crow began to explain. "This is a sleeping giant. If we can do it in football, we can do it in basketball."

Despite the favoritism for football in Texas, Crow believes there are enough good basketball players in the state to support a University that goes after them.

"This is a great time, right now, to do it," he said. "We're going to recruit Texas!"

But still Crow cannot avoid the subject of the latest upheaval in the coaching position.

"It's a very unfortunate situation," he admitted. "It didn't help anyone. It hurt the coaches involved, and it hurt the University, and it obviously hurt me."

Crow said it is impossible to leave those problems behind him when he leaves his office. Those problems find their way to members of his family who have to live with every good and bad decision that is made.

"I've been in the business long enough to know how to accept it," he explained.

But Crow will continue to go about his business tomorrow and for years to come, hoping a prosperous future for A&M athletic programs is in the forecast.

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