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# In defense of the Lone Star State

## Southern, Western blend produces unique culture, beauty

I love Texas. I love its beauty, its vastness, its people. And it stirs my ire to hear it come under attack — as it so often does — by those who visit from elsewhere, don't take the time to really know the people or our spirit, then pass some snobbish, narrow-minded, self-righteous judgment about how ignorant, prejudiced and uncultured we Texans are. To them I don't say get out; I say, come in. Come in, because though they may be within the borders of Red River and Rio Grande, they are obviously standing outside the door of reality.

TONI GARRARD CLAY

Opinion editor



outnumbering that of Texas — are embodied in the homeless population, senseless murders, and political corruption.

New York is only an example taken at random. I've personally know plenty of fine, friendly non-natives of Texas who don't find it necessary to close their eyes, stick out their bottom lips and insist this state is hell. They notice that though the Brazos river may be muddy, there are rolling green hills in East Texas of such startling beauty as to bring tears to the eye. There are pine forests so dense and untouched by modernity, the imagination needs no prompting to envision Native Americans of old running through the shadowy thickets. There are deserts in West Texas so starkly, fiercely beautiful in their barren grandeur that the openness floods about a body like running water.

Texas is an interesting blend of both Western and Southern cultures. A Texan's sense of pride and individuality is owed primarily to the Western ideal of survival through rugged determination, blood and sweat. (Tears are for pansies.)

It is our Southern heritage, however, that smoothes the rough Western edges. As a result, we Texans have a knack for story-telling (Katherine Ann Porter, Larry McMurtry, Linda Ellerbee), music (Van Cliburn, Janis Joplin, Stevie Ray

Vaughn), and drama (Tommy Lee Jones, Carol Burnett, Sissy Spacek).

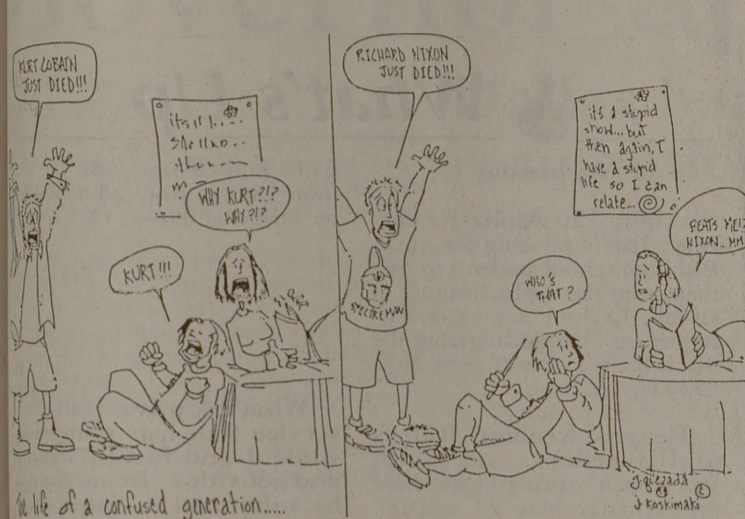
My mother grew up in the Big Thicket of East Texas, and it is from her that I was taught what is and is not Southern. Never arrive empty handed when visiting someone; always say "ma'am," "sir," "please," and "no, thank you." Look at the person to whom you are speaking; always keep room at the table for hungry friends. Work hard, and don't complain; worship and rest on Sundays. Give people the benefit of the doubt, and — most of all — honor your family.

Southerners have an amazing capacity for demonstrating affection. This is perhaps why Martin Luther King believed the South, before the North, would achieve racial harmony. The South, King said, had more black and white people in close proximity to one another and, as a result, becoming friends. Indeed, far beyond any government program, it is friendship that leads to understanding. How fitting then that Texas derives its name from the Native American word "tejas," meaning "friendship."

I said earlier that I love Texas, and I do. I find many other states to be quite wonderful as well: the mountains of Colorado, the autumn beauty of Virginia, the Cajun influence in Louisiana ... the list could go on.

But I am not Coloradan, Virginian, Louisianian or anything else but Texan — a Southern Texan at that. And while neither Texas nor the South is perfect, there is as much to be gained here in the way of beauty, intellect and the human experience as anywhere else in the world. Those who are blind to this truth deprive only themselves.

Toni Garrard Clay is a senior speech communication major



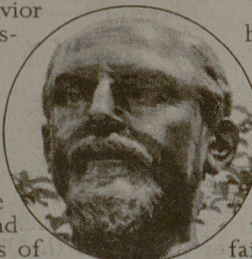
## EDITORIAL

# Unsullied truth

## Remember man, not myth

The 75th anniversary of the unveiling of the Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue has sparked debate over how much students know about the former University president's history. The life of the man whose epitaph reads "soldier, statesman, and knightly gentleman" is characterized by events no longer considered acceptable behavior for any soldiers, statesmen or gentlemen.

who as a general in the Confederate army and refused to recognize "Negroes" as soldiers. More importantly, Ross embodies the days when A&M prohibited two-thirds of the state's people from enrolling as students on the basis of society's prejudice and bigotry.

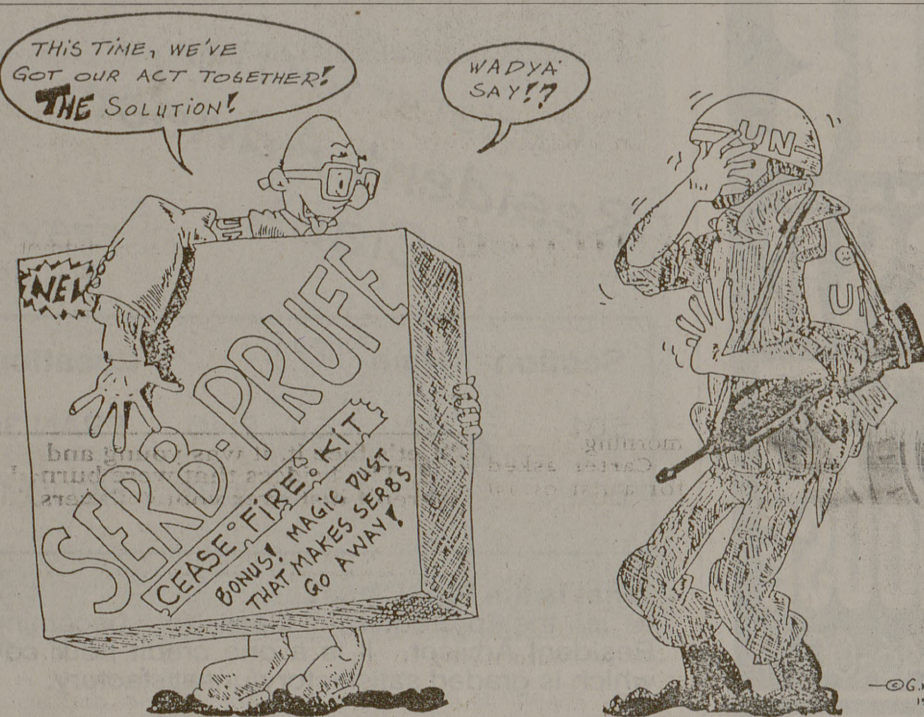


No one disputes the contributions Ross made to Texas A&M. Aggies everywhere recognize him as the symbolic father of the University. Ross' life and legend include stories of the many positive things he did to establish and develop the foundations for a modern Texas A&M University. The fact that A&M is still here to remember this anniversary is a testament to his determination and effort.

Sul Ross is not the only historic leader with a less than sparkling record on civil rights. Looking at the positive contributions Ross made without considering his negative actions as well would be unrealistic. It would also be unfair to those people who have to overcome the history of slavery and discrimination of which Ross was a part.

Nevertheless, some of Ross' personal beliefs were less than exemplary. Slavery, apparently was not an ethical dilemma for Ross,

Sul Ross' contribution to Texas A&M University will always be appreciated, but this is a multicultural community, and the feelings of all of the students must be recognized. We shouldn't take down the statue, but we should dismantle the myth.



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Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors. The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

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# Old acquaintances won't be forgotten after graduation

In springtime, nostalgia is thicker than pollen in Aggieland. Many seniors, after spending four, five, six or more years, are getting ready to leave Aggieland as students forever. With them they will take their memories of late-night study sessions, countless social activities, random road trips, football games and the friends they are leaving behind.

JENNY MAGEE

Columnist



Yes, that's right, many of us will be left behind. For us our journey as students is still in progress. But, in the fall, when the campus is abuzz with a new bright-eyed freshman class, we will miss the familiar faces. We feel the void and realize that while life moves on and things change, memories remain. Lately, I have been listening to my senior friends talk about graduating. Sometimes they say they want to get out of school as soon as possible, and other times they say they never want to leave. Some days they are excited about their futures, but most of the time they are wondering if they will ever get a job.

And all the while I sit listening like the little sister who is about to be left at home on the night of the big party. Then I think about what it will be like when these people who have become part of my school surrogate family are gone. I cringe to think that sometime in the near future, my everyday routine will change. Not only because it will be a new semester with new classes and new experiences, but also because people I care about will no longer be a part of my everyday life. Sure they will visit, and there are always letters and the telephone. But, when it comes right down to it, things will never be the same again.

Graduation is the last page for a graduating senior, but it also closes a chapter for the students who remain.

One of the beautiful things about the human race is that we are all unique. Each of us leaves a distinctive mark on the lives of the people that we interact with on a daily basis. However, because people are unique, that means no one can exactly fill the place of a person who must go away.

When I was in high school, I was involved in theater; and my director, Mr. Miller, had a present that he gave to every member of our theater department when they graduated. He gave them each a brick.

**While the graduating seniors will be missed and remembered by the friends they are leaving behind, we wouldn't and couldn't expect them to stay. Time moves on.**

The walls of Mr. Miller's office were brick, and every graduating senior wrote a message on their brick as a way to leave their mark and say goodbye.

I remember that my friends and I spent hours after rehearsals and during theater class, sitting in that office reading the words of the past graduated seniors. Some had been our friends, and

some were mere proof that the people in Mr. Miller's stories had actually existed. It always gave me an eerie feeling to sit in that office surrounded by the words of people who used to be part of my everyday life.

I remember the day that I graduated and I went to sign my brick. It felt so weird to willing sign my self into the past — to become a part of history.

But, I remember what I wrote on my brick, and it makes a lot more sense now than it did then. I wrote, "I proudly take my place in the rafters with the other theater ghosts."

I know, now that I am back in the lowerclassman's position, what I lost sight of as a high school senior — leaving isn't being forgotten.

I am pretty sure that I am speaking for a good many Aggies when I say to the graduating seniors — Thank you for the memories ... You are gone, but never forgotten.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore English and journalism major

# Mail Call



## Chalk drawings fit freedom of expression

This letter is in response to Thomas Goerdel's letter about the chalk drawings around campus. I understand how he feels about them marring the beauty of our campus, but I feel the drawings weren't meant to be offensive like he said they were. There is a thing called "Freedom of Expression" in America and I feel the persons that did the drawings were expressing their faith. I could agree with Goerdel about them marring the beauty of the campus if

they were done with spray paint or something else that would take a little time to remove them. I am also in agreement with his saying that the group could have expressed themselves by writing a letter in the Batt, but what I think he fails to realize is the fact that groups here on campus in the past have used the sidewalks to notify students on campus of upcoming events. I have also seen other students send messages to their fellow Ags in chalk and yet these messages, just like the drawing, mar our campus as well. So I ask the question, how can you say that the group that did these drawings are wrong when the appearance of chalk writing comes and goes on our

campus all of the time? In closing, yes the chalk drawings, in more way than one, do tend to mar our campus, but why come down on one group of people when he should also call it to the attention of all the others that were already doing it before the drawings appeared on campus?

The least the janitorial staff could do is be respectful to us and show us the common courtesy of holding to their promises and sticking to a schedule.

Susie Weirether  
 Class of '97

## Custodial staff should use cleanup schedule

Texas A&M is a university of wonderful traditions. However, the residents of Mosher Hall are experiencing a new tradition. This tradition is poor bathroom maintenance in Mosher Hall. This new disease is running rampant all the way from the basement to the fourth floor.

I'm not asking that the custodial staff actually do more than swirl around the dirt on the bathroom floor, or run hot water in our shower for twenty minutes. I do ask, however, that they set up a cleaning schedule. If we knew that at 1:30 every Thursday the staff would begin to clean our floor, we would be prepared. It would be efficient for both parties.

I am tired of complaining to everyone I meet about the state of our bathroom. I am equally sure that the janitorial staff is tired of hearing complaints. These discrepancies have gone on too long to ignore. The things we are asked to do in order to get our bathroom cleaned, albeit necessary, are time consuming and inconvenient for us.

## Pay up or play, Hill

Now that Greg Hill has hit the big time, perhaps he should consider remunerating this university for his damages incurred. Not only did he bring the wrath of the NCAA down on our fine football team, but he skipped town at the first sight of a lucrative contract. I feel justified, therefore in my conclusion that Greg Hill at the very least owes us the remaining year on his scholarship, or should pay up in lieu of his returning to play.

Rob Malvern  
 Class of '95