

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY
June 19, 1996

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As the Crow Flies

"He is the best back I've ever coached," the legendary football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant once said.



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

John David Crow showcases one of his pieces of Heisman Trophy memorabilia — a photograph of the four SWC Heisman trophy winners. Also pictured are UH's Andre Ware, SMU's Doak Walker and UT's Earl Campbell.

sports GLANCE

Allen's bat smoking for USA Baseball

Texas A&M centerfielder Chad Allen has been on fire at the plate since joining the USA Baseball Team.

In 28 at-bats against international competition, the fourth-round draft choice of the Minnesota Twins is hitting a team-leading .571 with four doubles, 10 RBI and a .714 slugging percentage.



ALLEN

With a two-game sweep of Australia in San Antonio on Monday and Tuesday the USA Baseball Team extended its undefeated streak to 10-0 this summer. Allen, who did not make the national team last summer, made the final team cut and will play in the Olympic summer games in Atlanta.

• "A&M's Favorite Son" •

When one steps back and surveys the legendary playing career of Crow and the eventful life he has led, it is easy to see why he has been called "A&M's favorite son."

Raised in the Piney Woods of northern Louisiana, Crow graduated from Springhill High School in 1954 with an All-American football award already under his belt. Besides leading his team to the state championship in football, Crow also lettered in basketball and track.

He came to A&M in the fall of 1954, only to accomplish more in the next four years than most athletes accomplish in their lifetimes.

Yet the qualities and characteristics that made him one of the most respected men in sports become evident as one takes a seat in his office.

Although he sits at a rich, burgundy oak desk that seems as massive as Kyle Field to a freshman running back on opening day, Crow does not seem too distant. In fact, the longer you talk to him, the harder it becomes not to picture him down at the local general store on Main Street, shooting the breeze with the old-timers while the radio wails Willie and Waylon in the background.

• "All-business" •

This image, however, does not take anything away from the "all-business" side of Crow, the one he assumes in the athletic department as Director of Development. With his storied background in athletics and business, Crow can raise \$150,000 in a five-minute phone call as easily as he can talk about his playing years under Bryant.

Crow's determination springs from a family background of work in the paper mills of Springhill.

"I was born right in the middle of the Depression," Crow said. "But because of the paper mill and the hard work of my dad, we were able to make a decent living."

Much of Crow's business these days concerns working with wealthy Aggies who are looking to contribute to the Athletic Department. While many think these people simply want to see their name in the spotlight, Crow

finds this is not always true.

"When these donors give to the University, they don't really receive anything of monetary value in return," Crow said. "They might get their name on an endowed plaque or something, but this man who just gave us \$100,000 doesn't even want his name on the 12th Man Plaza wall."

"Really, genuinely inside, these people just want to make a difference."

In Crow's college days, money was not an issue. Recruited by every major college in the country, Crow came to A&M at the beckoning of his brother's college coach.

Elmer Smith was head coach at Magnolia A&M in Arkansas, a college only 25 miles across the Louisiana-Arkansas border from Springhill.

"When I went to visit Magnolia, Coach Smith told me that he didn't think that I belonged there," Crow said. "He told me that I should go and play at A&M, a big school where I would get a lot of exposure. The only reason he brought me there was because of their boosters."

In the end, both Smith and Crow ended up at A&M under Bryant — Smith as an assistant coach, Crow as a player.

• "The Bear" •

Crow's deep respect for Bryant came from a 40 year relationship that began his freshman year at A&M, also Bryant's first year in Aggieland. The 1954 team won just one game under Bryant, a team Crow did not play on because freshmen were not allowed to play at that time.

Over the next three years, Bryant guided All-Americans Jack Pardee, Denny Goehring and Crow, along with All-Southwest Conference selections Roddy Osborne, John Tracey and Bobby

Marks, to 18 straight wins and an SWC title.

In four years at A&M, Bryant and Crow began to form a father-and-son-like bond, carrying Crow

through some of the most difficult times of his life.

"In my athletic career, the fact that Coach Bryant said that I was the 'best back he ever coached' — well, that means more to me than all the awards I've been given, especially

than she was back in high school when we were dating."

• "Soft-hearted" •

Crow said.

The past few years have been tough for Crow's family, especially John David Jr.'s wife and two daughters.

"It's a tragedy that, unless you have been through, you can't really understand the pain that is caused," Crow said. "It's been a long road, and I don't think I'll ever get over it, but it is easier. The only way to get through it is to talk about it. That's where my wife has been so great. Something like this a lot of times tears up a family, but she's really helped keep us together."

One might not expect such soft-hearted sentiment from one of the toughest half-backs to ever play the sport of football, but spending time with Crow reveals he is not the stereotypical hard-nosed athlete.

• "The Future" •

In fact, his eyes grow large at the mention of the future of A&M athletics and the program's future in the Big 12.

"Right now, the room that A&M has to grow is amazing," Crow said. "With the growth of the school and R.C.'s (Slocum) success, everyone sees the potential."

"Back in the early '80s when we weren't winning, no one wanted to spend money on the program, especially the donors. Now, everyone is seeing the potential that we have and I'm excited to be in the middle of all of it. I just hope I'm around in 10 more years to see it all."

Crow comes across as the typical hard-working, small-town Texas boy who had a lucky break, a phenomenal athletic career and is living the American dream by helping develop the department that gave him his start.

His accomplishments have helped him put things into perspective about his family, business and a school he loves as much as the game of football itself.

"I know I'll never be able to give back all that this school has given me, opportunity-wise," Crow said. "This isn't going to be something I dwell on, though."

"I have a wonderful family. I love the job that I work at, the people I get to work with, and I love this school. What more could I ask for?"

The Crow Chronology

- July 8, 1935: Born in Marion, La.
- 1954: Graduated from Springhill H.S. as an All-American halfback.
- 1954: Entered Texas A&M under new coach Paul "Bear" Bryant.
- July 2, 1954: Married Carolyn Gilliam.
- Nov. 13, 1957: Named Heisman Trophy winner.
- 1958: First-round draft choice of the Chicago Cardinals of the NFL.
- 1968: Retires as player.
- 1969: Named assistant to Coach Bryant at Alabama.
- 1974: Named offensive coordinator for the San Diego Chargers.
- 1976: Named Athletic Dir. and Head Coach at Northeast Louisiana University.
- 1983: Named Associate Athletic Director at Texas A&M.
- 1988: Named Athletic Director.
- 1992: Named Director of Athletic Development.

Interviews set for tennis coach finalists

Hoping to name a successor to longtime men's tennis coach David Kent by the end of the week, Texas A&M officials will interview Tim Cass and Texas Tech coach Tim Siegal.

Siegal, who will be in College Station today, played at Arkansas and served as the women's coach at SMU before taking over the men's program at Texas Tech in 1993.

Cass will be interviewed on Thursday. In eight years as head coach at New Mexico he has won five WAC titles and has taken the Lobos to the NCAA playoffs six times.

Martinez Bros. net success on pro circuit

Former Texas A&M tennis players Bernardo and Eduardo Martinez took 4th place at the USA 2 ATP Professional Satellite Circuit Championships in Florida on June 16.

The Mexico City natives fell in the semifinals in a third-set tiebreaker to Tommy Schemadia of the US and Dreshimo Tshino of Japan, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5); the duo received an invitation to the elite 16-team Masters tournament in Tallahassee, Fla., however.

Eduardo, who just completed his senior season at A&M, teamed with fellow senior Eric Horan to win the SWC No. 2 doubles title.

Belle's suspension reduced to three games

CLEVELAND (AP) — Major league home run leader Albert Belle and Cleveland teammate Julian Tavarez, both of whom appealed their five-game suspensions, each had the penalties cut to three games Tuesday by AL president Gene Budig.

Belle, who flattened Milwaukee second baseman Fernando Vina with a forearm, and Tavarez, who flipped umpire Joe Brinkman, contested the rulings that resulted from a brawl between the Indians and Milwaukee Brewers on May 31.

Belle, whose 25 homers are on a pace to challenge Roger Maris' record of 61, will begin his suspension Friday during a doubleheader against New York. Tavarez, a key member of Cleveland's bullpen, was to start serving his penalty immediately with Tuesday night's game against Boston.

Davis, Branson key Reds' win over Astros

HOUSTON (AP) — Eric Davis homered leading off the 10th inning and Jeff Branson brought in another run with a squeeze bunt Tuesday night as the Cincinnati Reds beat the Houston Astros 6-4.

Davis hit an 0-1 pitch from Xavier Hernandez (0-3) over the left-field scoreboard for his 14th homer this season. Hal Morris followed with a single, was sacrificed to second and went to third on a wild pitch. Branson then bunted toward the right side of the mound to easily score Morris.

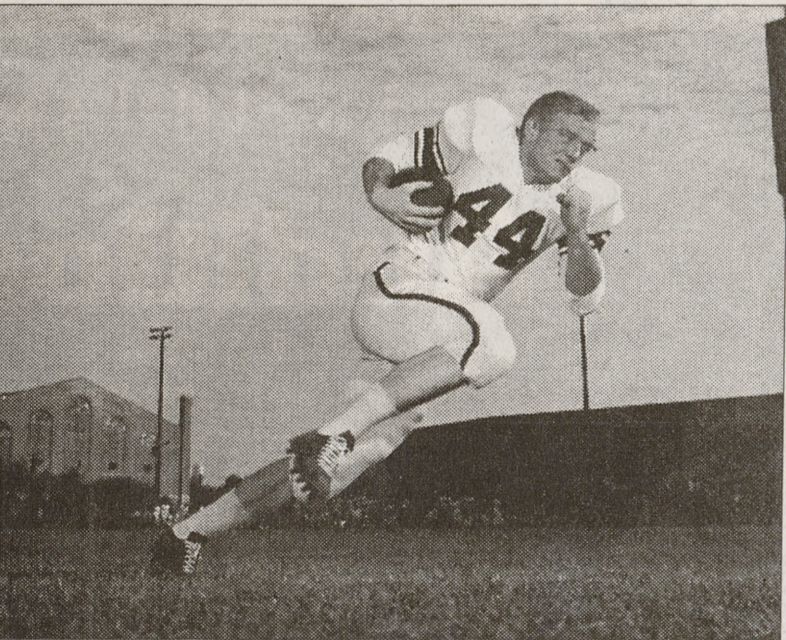
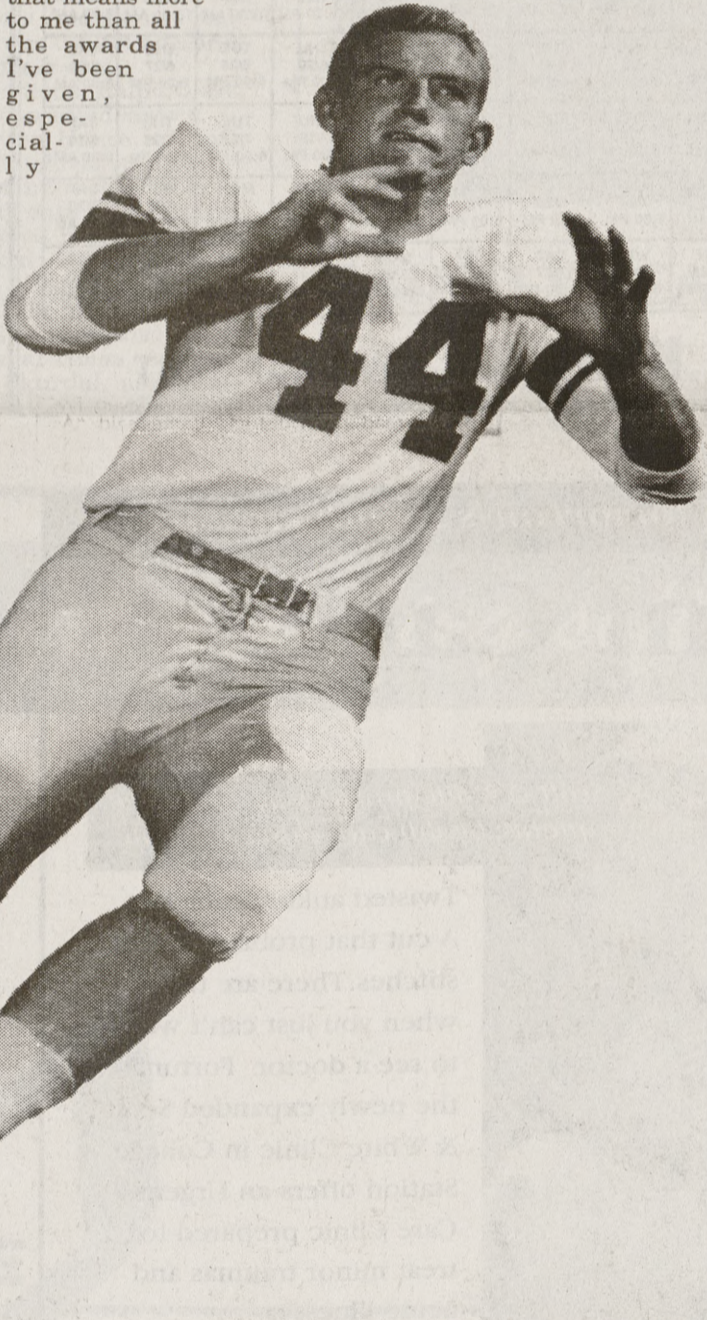


Photo Courtesy of Texas A&M Athletic Department

A&M all-time great John David Crow won the Heisman Trophy in 1957 by rushing for 562 yards and grabbing five interceptions on defense.



now, 40 years later," Crow said. "A&M is going to have plenty more Heisman winners come through, but the fact that I was Coach Bryant's only one — well, now that's the real honor."

Crow says he and Bryant's relationship was much closer because of their lack of communication while he was a player.

"I think our relationship was a lot closer and more meaningful, probably because we did not correspond a great deal, and we did not talk to each other a whole lot," Crow said. "You don't always have to talk a lot or talk to someone a great deal to have their respect."

Although Bryant's spirit remains with Crow, the most important figure in his life is Carolyn, his wife of 42 years. Crow said she is the glue that has held their family together, especially in the rough times.

"We're like all couples," Crow said. "We have our arguments and fights, and there's been times that I've stormed out of the house. After a few minutes though, I'd always realize that I didn't have anywhere else to go, so I'd just head back inside so we could fix everything."

"She's even prettier today