

Going the distance



Rogge Heflin, THE BATTALION

Freshman shortstop **Jamie Smith** goes for the ball against the Iowa State Cyclones March 29.

Freshman **Jamie Smith** has the distinguished role of replacing an All-American.

BY NICKI SMITH
THE BATTALION

Filling the shoes left open by Kendall Richards last year, an All-American shortstop and Big 12 Co-Player of the Year on the Texas A&M Softball Team, was a job nobody wanted.

But freshman **Jamie Smith** did not have much choice. Chosen to carry on A&M's tradition of having one of the top shortstops in the nation, **Smith** has proven she is more than ready to handle the job despite her inexperience at the

collegiate level.

Assistant Head Coach **Joy Jackson** said **Smith** has exceeded the team's expectations.

"She is a very gifted and all-around athlete who has improved since Day One," **Jackson** said. "She has taken tremendous strides in taking over the shortstop position and plays it just as well as any shortstop who has more experience at the collegiate level."

The 5-foot-7 California native graduated from **Johansen High School**, where she played every inning of every game in her four-year career.

During her tenure in high school, she was a three-time first-team all-conference selection and a two-time Outstanding Defensive Player, and was named to the 1996 all-district first team.

In addition, she managed to earn all-conference and all-district MVP honors on the volleyball team

and was a two-time Outstanding Defensive Player, in basketball.

Smith said she has big goals for her career and knows she has little room for error.

"I knew I had big shoes to fill and that I couldn't just play average," **Smith** said. "The team had a big hole that needed to be filled and it is my job to fill that hole as best I can."

"Of course, down the road I would like to be an All-American or something, but the team has to come first because if the team is doing well, then that means individuals are doing well."

Smith has started in all 41 games for the Lady Aggies this season, and despite a slow start at the plate, she now leads the team with a .314 batting average and 38 total hits.

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Johnson balances science classes with softball

BY COURTNEY LYONS
THE BATTALION

Kamie Johnson loves the outdoors. So when her dad signed her up for Little League softball at age 7, **Johnson** was hooked.

"I liked softball because it was outside," **Johnson** said. "It wasn't like basketball and volleyball, where you were stuck in the gym."

The sophomore third baseman from Temple came to the Lady Aggie Softball Team not only because the team was competitive and highly ranked, but also because **Johnson** emphasizes academics in her life and felt Texas A&M could give her the education she wanted.

"Academics is my first priority," **Johnson** said. "A&M was definitely the place for me to better my education."

Johnson, a biomedical science major, has done just that, balancing softball with biology and chemistry classes well enough to be named a GTE Scholar the last two years. **Johnson's** grades also are high enough for her to participate in two honors societies — Phi Eta Sigma and Order of Omega.

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Rogge Heflin, THE BATTALION

Sophomore third baseman **Kamie Johnson** scoops up the ball during practice at the Lady Aggie Field.

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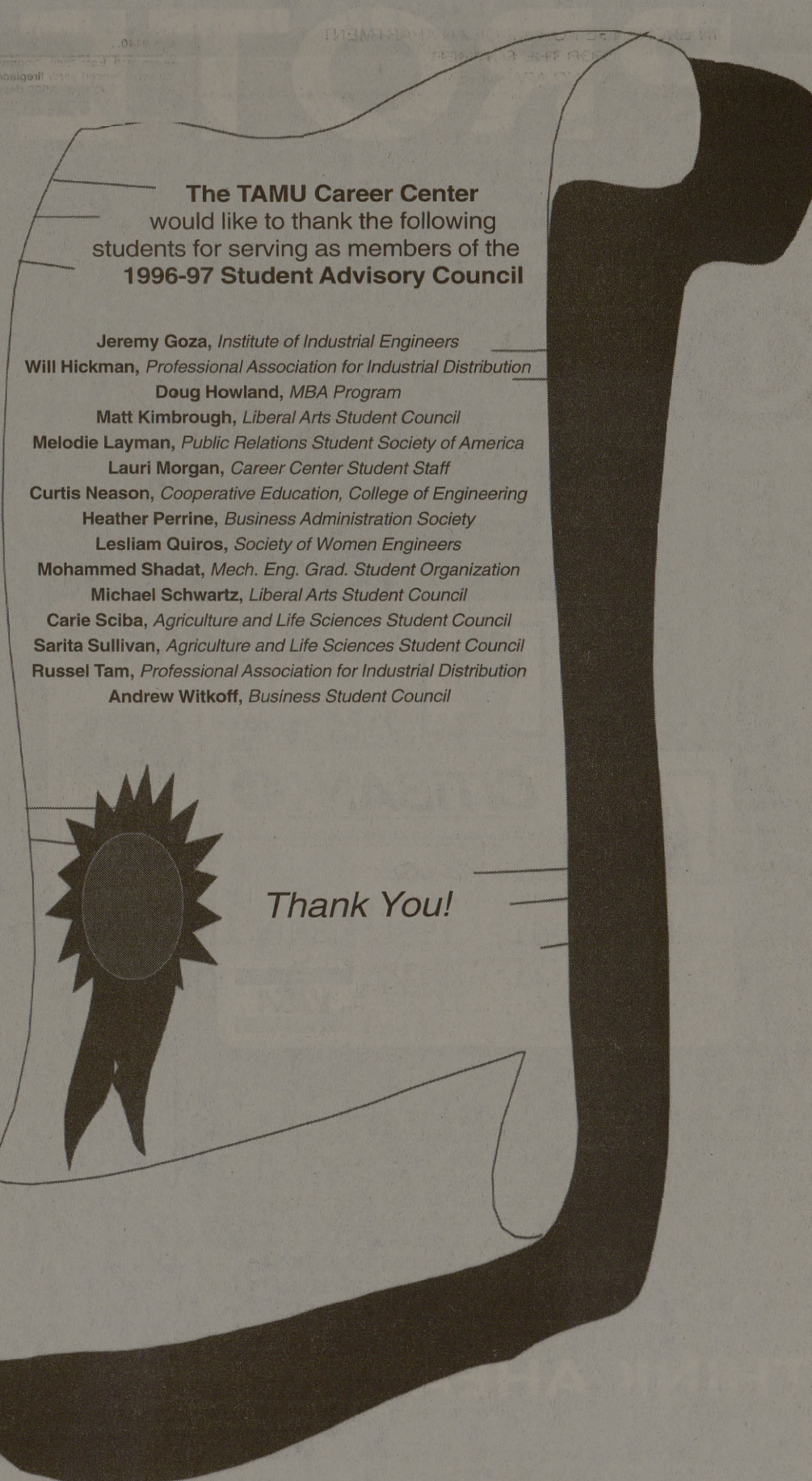
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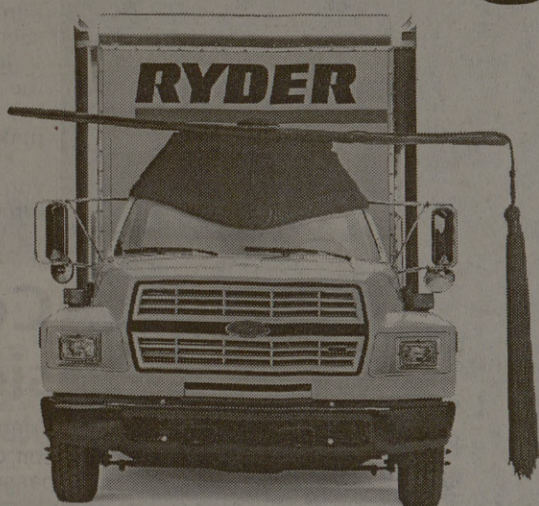


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