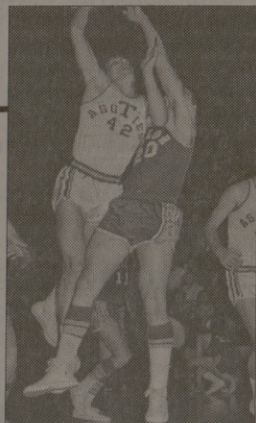


1966

Air conditioning was added to G. Rollie in 1967.



Aggies won the SWC championship in 1969.

1970

1974

A women's locker room was added to G. Rollie in 1973. A lecture hall, storage room and lockers in the varsity locker room completed the additions for 1973.

## Coaches, students remember Holler House

By JEFF SCHMIDT  
Staff writer

After 44 years of service, G. Rollie White Coliseum will no longer be home to basketball. Beginning next season, the new arena will house basketball and will be the future of Aggie Basketball. In G. Rollie, the men's basketball team has compiled a 338-140 record and the women have a 179-97 (.647) record, prior to this season. The coliseum will still be home to women's volleyball and kinesiology students. The coliseum will still attend class there.

G. Rollie opened its doors in 1954, when legendary college football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant was the athletic director. When it first opened, G. Rollie was considered "high-tech." Originally, in a sense, it was a true Aggie essence, the coliseum was built to hold both basketball and rodeo. The coliseum also had windows and no air conditioning. The women's locker room was also substandard. In the 1960s, G. Rollie was an intimidating place.

"It was the greatest place to play basketball in the history of the world," former coach Shelby Metcalf said. "I don't know if the other coaches had the same feeling about the place."

Metcalf began as the head coach in 1963 and led the Aggies to the Southwest Conference championship and to the NCAA Tournament. Metcalf coached until halfway through the 1989-90 season. Metcalf is the winningest coach in SWC history with an overall record of 438-306. Metcalf also owns SWC records for total victories, league victories (239), total games coached (744) and most seasons coached (27). It was Metcalf's competitive teams that brought the fans in and coined the nickname "Holler House on the Brazos."

"We had won enough games there to be a tough place to play," Metcalf said. "We were noisy, but we were under control. It was a wholesome place."

Metcalf is in part referring to incidents that happened while playing in Austin. University of Texas

players used to grab Aggie basketball players and hold them in the stands to keep them from returning to the court.

New gyms at Texas and Baylor gave the schools a leg-up on recruiting. The new arena was long overdue. Metcalf said he feels Reed Arena will help improve Aggie basketball, which appears to be in a state of apathy.

"It's going to help you recruit. However, it still takes a good team, yell leaders, students (to revive interest in the basketball program). The new arena is probably past time. Texas has got the jump on us (with the Frank Erwin Center)," Metcalf said.

Metcalf's most memorable moment in G. Rollie came in 1975 when Aggie guard Mike Floyd hit "the shot heard 'round the conference." The Aggies were tied at 60 with Arkansas. The winner would be conference champion. Floyd drained a jumper at the top of the key as the buzzer went off to give the Aggies a 62-60 victory.

"It was a great play. We had the picture of the shot framed and gave it to Mike," Metcalf said.

In Metcalf's 27 seasons, he only had three losing seasons. After he got forced out during the 1989-90 season, A&M had their first losing season since 1977-78. A&M has only had one winning season—1993-94—since Metcalf's ousting.

Billy Pickard was a student at A&M when G. Rollie opened in 1954 and will be here when it closes, only as the associate athletic director for facilities.

"The day we moved in was my most memorable moment," Pickard said. "DeWare (Fieldhouse) was an abomination. You had humidity in the basketball locker room. At the time we moved into G. Rollie it was one of the best in the country."

However, you will not see any tears in Pickard's eyes when the basketball teams move into Reed Arena.

"I'm never sad of progress. I had an old Ford and I couldn't wait to get an automatic," Pickard said. "We have a gigantic advantage over our friends in Austin."

Current Oklahoma State Head Coach Eddie Sutton remembers when G. Rollie was in its prime.

"The place was always full. It was one of the toughest places a visiting team can play in," Sutton said.

"The program deserves better than this. Hopefully, students will get behind the new coach. I think it (Reed Arena) will help recruiting. I'm not saying they'd have a better homecourt advantage than G. Rollie, but this year they had no homecourt advantage," Sutton said.

Assistant Athletic Director for Student Services John Thornton was a team captain for Metcalf dur-

ing the 1974-75 season and even coached 12 games in 1990. That team won the SWC title and but lost in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. Thornton also serves as the radio color commentator for Aggie basketball games. The times that stand out in his mind were the times he stepped out onto the court before a game.

"My most memorable moment was coming out onto the court with the team to a standing ovation to a packed house," Thornton said. "That made everything you endured worth it."

Thornton played in the most highly attended men's basketball in A&M history: a 1974-75 game against Arkansas. The game drew 8,608 people and 1,700 watched the game on closed circuit at Rudder Auditorium. This season, men's games average only 3,387 fans a game. The women average significantly less. The largest crowd this season was against Kansas, over Christmas break, when 6,548 people showed up. Only one other game this season was over 6,000—Texas. Aside from those games only one other home game had more than 3,000 fans.

"That kind of atmosphere was phenomenal," Thornton said. "Having Reed Arena has already helped recruiting, but if you had the opportunity to have recruits come to a game (in G. Rollie) when people were enthusiastic, they'd love it."

"It's (no more basketball at G. Rollie) a mixed feeling. It'd be sad for anybody that had the experiences we had as a player and a coach. At the same time, being close to the situation, I'm really excited about the future," Thornton said.

PLEASE SEE COACHES ON PAGE 10.

## Coliseum home to more than basketball

By APRIL TOWERY  
Staff writer

G. Rollie White Coliseum has hosted many special events from basketball games to graduations. However, there is another "jolly Rollie" that often gets overlooked. G. Rollie has played host to several memorable entertainment events as well.

Numerous musical performers and entertainment acts including R.E.M., Three Dog Night, Clay Walker, Buffett and the Harlem Globetrotters, have entertained crowds in G. Rollie.

In 1980, Bob Hope gathered a group of Aggies in the coliseum to promote his television special

"Bob Hope for President." Hope, impressed by the Texas A&M traditions, later attended a midnight yell practice at Kyle Field in support of the University.

Dan Quayle spoke to Aggies in 1992, in what would be the largest rally of his political career.

The coliseum was designed to hold even more events than it will ever see. The floor of the building is removable, in order to accommodate rodeos, but now it is too late. A rodeo has never been scheduled there.

Some students will always have memories of pitching their tents and camping outside G. Rollie in anticipation of football tickets. Others remember sitting in the coliseum throughout the solemn traditional ceremony of Aggie Muster. Former stu-

dents hold fond memories of sitting in G. Rollie during one of the most important moves of their future — college graduation.

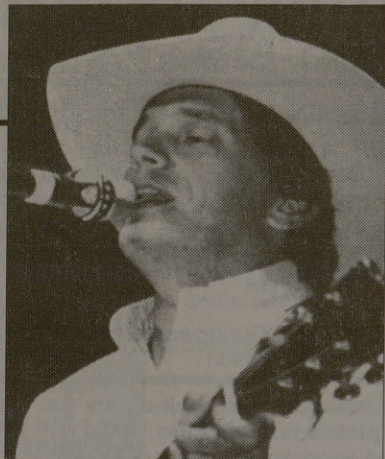
And plenty of students have enjoyed a "jolly" time just seeing one of their favorite musical performers or entertainment acts.

Almost every Aggie has a special memory inside the four walls that hold G. Rollie White Coliseum. Some memories bring a tear to the eye, but almost all bring a smile to the face.

For 44 years, G. Rollie White has seen hugs and heartache, laughter and tears. As the lights go out on the last game, Aggies will miss G. Rollie White Coliseum. Gig 'em.

RESEARCH BY JEFF WEBB  
DESIGN BY TIFFANY INBODY

1988



George Strait entertained Aggies in 1988.

1992



Tony Barone became A&M's head basketball coach in 1991.

1996



The Ross Volunteers perform in the last Muster ceremony in G. Rollie in 1997.