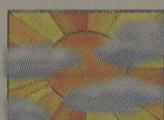




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TOMORROW

Elementary my dear Watkins

New basketball coach, Melvin Watkins leaves UNC-Charlotte to revive Aggies

By JEFF SCHMIDT
Assistant sports editor

A new day has dawned for Texas A&M Men's basketball and Melvin Watkins will be the architect. Watkins, who led North Carolina-Charlotte to consecutive 20-win seasons and NCAA Tournament appearances, was hired as head basketball coach, Athletic Director Wally Groff announced yesterday.

Watkins spent 18 years as an assistant coach for alma mater after he took the 49ers to the Final Four in 1977 as a player.

"I'm very excited about this opportunity, and very proud to be a part of the (A&M) family," Watkins said at a Wednesday press conference. "The last few days have been tough for me. I've had sleepless nights, but the opportunity wakes me up."

Before the press conference, Watkins had an informal meeting with the players, and he told them of his open-door policy and what he expects in them.

"I saw a group of men who are hungry and a group who feels that passion," Watkins said. "As we enter the new arena, we want to create a winning atmosphere."

"You have to have a belief in yourself. Components of success are consistent and if you apply

them you have a chance to be successful," Watkins said. "I believe in hard work and rollin' up the sleeves."

Watkins, 43, replaced Jeff Mullins at UNCC before the 1996-97 season and compiled a 42-20 overall record with a pair of NCAA Tournament victories at UNCC. He was named Conference USA Coach of the Year his first season after leading the 49ers to a 22-9 regular season and a first round win against Georgetown in the NCAA Tournament.

This season, the 49ers defeated Illinois-Chicago in the first round of the NCAA Tournament and pushed top-seeded North Carolina to overtime before losing.

"Melvin was one of the top three candidates from the start of what was a very thorough and exhaustive coaching search," Groff said. "I am extremely pleased and excited that he has accepted the position, and we look forward to working with him and his staff. The primary goals for all of our programs are to contend for Big 12 Championships and to be competitive on a national level. I am confident in Melvin's ability to lead us to those goals."

A nine-person search committee decided on Watkins when Mississippi Coach Robb Evans was rejected by Groff. New Mexico Coach Dave Bliss was then thought to be the leading candidate, but he decided not to pursue the job.

Watkins was one of only two candidates to for-



New A&M men's basketball coach, Melvin Watkins speaks at a press conference yesterday.

mally interview for the position. Vanderbilt's Jan Van Breda Koff interviewed the day after Watkins and was told Watkins likely would accept the vacant position.

Perhaps Watkins' first order of business will be to persuade sophomore guard Brian Barone to stay at A&M. Barone is the son of former Head Coach Tony Barone, who was reassigned in February. Although Barone said he has no timetable for his decision, he does plan to talk with Watkins and decide pretty quickly whether to stay or not.

PLEASE SEE WATKINS ON PAGE 9.

RHA delays vote on visitation bill

By AMANDA SMITH
Staff writer

The Residence Hall Association (RHA) tabled the resolution last night that favors extending visitation from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily in all residence halls on campus.

RHA failed to meet the required quorum of 50 RHA members to vote on the resolution.

Peter Schulte, the RHA vice president for administration and a sophomore business major, said the extended legislation is well-developed.

"The committee has gotten a lot of good input from the residents," Schulte said. "It is a good way for the Department of Residence Life people to stay on campus."

Schulte said RHA needs to vote on the extended visitation proposal by the next general assembly, April 15.

"There is a lot of support for the

extended hours visitation bill within RHA but the legislation could go either way," Schulte said.

An addition to the extended hours, the resolution supports the right of each hall to vote for complete 24-hour visitation or 24-hour visitation on weekends only.

Currently, only co-educational residence halls allow 24-hour visitation. Northside co-ed halls include Clements, the FHK complex and Lechner. Southside co-ed halls include Eppright and Wells.

All non co-ed halls currently allow visitation from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily.

Rusty Thompson, the assistant director of residence education for the Department of Residence Life, said co-ed halls tend to have fewer disciplinary problems. Thompson said fewer problems may be due in part to 24-hour visitation and other factors.

PLEASE SEE RHA ON PAGE 2.

Heightened experience



GREG MCREYNOLDS/THE BATTALION

Blair Halliwell, a University employee, touches up the stone flowers as part of a renovation project beneath the overhang of the Academic Building on Wednesday afternoon.

Sexual harassment suit thrown out by judge

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a dramatic victory for President Clinton, a judge threw out Paula Jones' lawsuit Wednesday and said her claim of sexual harassment wasn't worthy of a trial even if the president's alleged behavior was "boorish and offensive."

Jones "has failed to demonstrate that she has a case and the court therefore finds that there are no genuine issues for trial," U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright wrote in Little Rock, Ark.

"While the court will certainly agree that plaintiffs' allegations describe offensive conduct, the court ... has found that the governor's alleged conduct does not constitute sexual assault," she ruled.

Her 39-page ruling abruptly halted a sensational lawsuit that had haunted the White House for more than three years and threatened to place his sexual conduct with a variety of women before the nation in a historic trial.

Clinton, wrapping up a six-nation tour of Africa, was so stunned by word of the ruling that he asked if it was an April Fools' joke. The president is "pleased that he has received the vindication he has long awaited," press secretary Mike McCurry said.

Jones' lawyers said an appeal is "very likely" and that while they were disappointed with the decision, "this ruling does not vindicate or exonerate Mr. Clinton."

"It is a shame that unless the ruling is reversed on appeal, there will now never be a determination of who was telling the truth and who was lying," her law firm said in a statement.

"I'm shocked," said Susan Carpenter McMillan, Jones' spokesperson. "I'd be less than honest if I didn't tell you I was completely blown away by this decision."

While the White House cheered the decision, Clinton's legal woes are far from over. Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr is pressing his criminal investigation into whether Clinton lied about having sexual relations with White House intern Monica Lewinsky and encouraged her to cover it up.



Clinton

"Judge Wright's ruling today has no effect on our authority and we will continue working to complete the investigation as expeditiously as possible," Starr said in a statement just hours after the ruling.

The White House brushed off the lingering issues. "This has been a fact of life and no doubt other things will remain a fact of life for him," McCurry said. He said Clinton had shown "extraordinary discipline" in not being distracted.

In her ruling, Wright said that whatever went on in the Arkansas hotel room in 1991 between Jones and Clinton, then the state's governor, she had failed to prove she was harmed emotionally or in her career as she contended.

"The plaintiffs' allegations fall far short of the rigorous standards for establishing a claim of outrage under Arkansas law," Wright wrote.

Whatever went on in the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock "was brief and isolated; did not result in any physical harm ... did not result in distress so severe that no reasonable person could be expected to endure it," the judge wrote.

Big Event tackles 400 jobs Saturday

By AMANDA SMITH
Staff writer

Helen Pugh is thankful for the help she receives from Big Event each year. The College Station resident and Texas A&M supporter said students have come to her home to help clean out the gutters and perform other chores that she cannot do alone.

"I appreciate the Big Event," Pugh said. "They didn't mind getting up on the roof because I wouldn't be able to get up there. The students do an excellent service to the community, and they always help with more than what I ask for."

More than 3,000 volunteers are expected to complete more than 400 service jobs in the community Saturday for the annual Big Event.

Congressman Joe Barton will kick off the ceremonies for Big Event at 8:30 a.m. in front of the Jack K. William Administration building.

"The students do an excellent service to the community..."
Helen Pugh
College Station resident

Debbie Emminger, Big Event director and a senior community health major, said anybody in the Bryan-College Station area is eli-

gible to apply for help. "It is our way of saying 'thank you' to all socioeconomic backgrounds in the Bryan-College Station community," Emminger said. "A lot of people have misconceptions about the Big Event, but anybody is eligible."

Big Event is the largest student-run community service event in the nation and is coordinated by an executive committee of Student Government.

The history of Big Event can be traced to 1982, when Joe Nessbaum proposed a bill to the Student Senate to develop a community-wide service event. The first event included six students who cleaned up the grounds of a local cemetery.

PLEASE SEE BIG EVENT ON PAGE 2.

Software takes science to edge

By JENNIFER WILSON
Staff writer

Geophysics students now have the opportunity to learn about their field in a hands-on learning process thanks to a software donation.

Seismic Micro-Technology of Houston donated \$410,000 of software to Dr. Joel Watkins to teach his geophysics students on computers instead of by textbooks.

The software helps locate oil and gas deposits by examining pictures of layers of rock.

Bill Lance, director of marketing at Seismic Micro-Technology, said the donation was a result of a shared goal between the corporation and Texas A&M to train students in the techniques of modern technology.

"Our goal is to provide tools to educate young geoscientists," he said. "The three-year donation offers the latest versions of the software to the students, and I imagine it will continue again after the three year period ends."

Lance said there is a shortage of trained geoscientists and the software gives students the opportunity to experience modern technology and learn what otherwise would be taught by a textbook in a practical way.

"The software gives students the ability to know how to deal with the technical tools," he said.

Dr. Joel Watkins, a geophysics professor, said the technology makes it easier to explain concepts to his students.

PLEASE SEE SOFTWARE ON PAGE 2.

Panel examines future role of arts on campus

By KELLY HACKWORTH
Staff writer

The English Language & Literature Society and Sigma Tau Delta presented an arts panel last night to about 70 students to discuss the future of the arts program at Texas A&M University.

Dr. Woodrow Jones, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said the college needs a stronger arts program.

"Arts are a reflection of liberal learning," he said. "It is through arts that we get a chance to act out what life is all about."

Dr. Paul Parrish, arts development coordinator and a panelist, said the department wants to offer a music degree and a combined theater and music department.

"It would be the first time in the history of Texas A&M that there would be a department whose mission would be the arts," he said.

Parrish said the arts program may help

Texas A&M get a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, a national honor society.

"The absence of developed academic programs in arts was one of the criticisms," he said. "This will be a positive step forward, but no guarantees are built into that."

The process of implementing the arts program will be long, Parrish said. It will take about a month to move the proposal up to the chain of command, he said.

"We should know within the next academic year," he said.

Dr. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, said the Board of Regents is looking for a \$5 million donor for the Arts program.

"It may sound like a lot of money to us, but when \$5 million is an endowment, that's \$250,000 a year to spend forever," he said.

The \$5 million is needed to make the request feasible to the coordinating board,

Jones said.

It is especially attractive because state funding is not necessary, he said. The money will be used to underwrite the program, and provide scholarship, and it will not drain the state funds, Jones said.

"Since we are the only public university in the state without a music program, we are asking them to allow us to duplicate programs," Jones said.

Dr. Peter Lieuwen, music section coordinator, said the music major will not emphasize performance at this time.

"Many good Texas schools have performance degrees," he said. "A lot of the jobs in music are not in the performance area but music technology and music therapy."

Southerland said the Aggie Band will not be affected by the new music program. "Colonel Toler supports this program," Southerland said. "The only way we would have a problem is with a performance program."