

# Bonfire victims remembered



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

The flags in front of the Jack K. Williams Administration Building fly at half-mast Sunday. Funeral services were held this weekend for four of the 12 Aggies who died when Bonfire collapsed early Thursday morning.

## Services across state memorialize fallen Aggies

COLLEGE STATION (AP) — Classmates, families and friends gathered in churches yesterday, quietly sobbing and praying for the 12 people who died when a four-story pyramid of logs collapsed at Texas A&M University.

At A&M United Methodist Church, a youth minister recited the names of the dead and a man and a woman lit 12 small white candles. Tim Kerlee Jr., who often attended the church, was the youngest and the last to die.

"The spirit of Aggieland is great," senior pastor Charles Anderson told the congregation, "but the spirit of Aggieland is not enough."

Thousands of people attended three funerals and countless church services across the state yesterday to honor the fallen Aggies. Eleven of them died during Thursday's collapse, and Kerlee, 17, died the following night at St. Joseph Regional Health Center in Bryan.

Local, state and federal officials planned to meet today to plan an investigation strategy. But Anderson said the answers would do little to comfort those left behind.

"Answers won't hold your hand. Answers won't cry with you. Answers won't pray with you," he said. "Answers won't hold you in their arms, and answers will not sit by your bedside on a sleepless night."

Gov. George W. Bush was one of about 1,800 people who attended a memorial service yesterday evening at the Central Baptist Church in Bryan. A somber Bush entered the large red brick church and signed the guest books of all 12 victims.

"I'm here to help the Aggie family from what has been a tragic situation in the state of Texas," Bush said. Bush did not speak at the service but stood and waved to the crowd when he was introduced and afterward shook hands and hugged the victims' relatives. He said he had not been to the accident site but planned to visit on Thanksgiving.

Also yesterday, 19-year-old Jamie Hand, an environmental design major and artist who sang at her

church, was buried near her home in Henderson. A busload of Aggies attended the funeral, several of whom gathered in front of her casket to sing the "Aggie War Hymn."

"If Henderson was a magical kingdom, Jamie Lynn Hand was without a doubt its princess," Rev. Ron Barney told about 1,500 mourners.

In Austin, services were held for Christopher Breen, 25, an A&M graduate who had returned to help pass on the bonfire traditions. Breen's family kept the ceremony private, but in a statement recalled his love of the outdoors and thanked those who offered love and support.

**"I'm here to help the Aggie family with what has been a tragic situation in the state of Texas."**

— Texas Gov. George W. Bush

"He loved people, and we thank all of his friends for letting us know how much he meant to you," the statement read in part. "Sharing your memories broadens our knowledge of Chris and the many facets of his character."

In Katy, near Houston, a funeral was held for Christopher Lee Heard, 19, an engineering major and a 1999 graduate of the Marine Military Academy, a private military prep school in Harlingen. Almost 100 young men in uniform from the academy or the A&M Corps of Cadets attended the service. Jason Heard said his brother had decided the week before he was killed to enlist in the Marines and be in the reserves because he couldn't wait until after graduation.

Heard's drill instructor recalled the student as kind of a prankster who would fill your boots with shaving cream and smear creamy

peanut butter on your telephone. Others remembered his love of hunting and fishing.

His parents, Les and Andrea Heard, said they still feel their son's presence because they have seen a lone goose on their morning walks the past two days and it is not crying like it is lost.

They also spoke of being "unequivocally in favor of continuing the Aggie bonfire tradition."

In Bellaire, Scott West was remembered for his devotion to A&M.

"He was an Aggie," Reverend Mark H. Young said at the funeral, held at Bellaire United Methodist Church near Houston. "Well, that about says it right there, doesn't it?"

Young led the 1,000 mourners in remembering West, 19, whom friends described as a quiet, pensive and fiercely loyal cadet.

A&M cadets flooded the pews, lined the church walls and filled the choir section behind the pulpit.

"I was passing people on the way down here who had no idea who he was," Steve Morrison, who oversaw Scott's Corps of Cadets company, said. "They just saw that an Aggie had fallen, and they wanted to be here."

At another morning worship service, Dwight Edwards, senior pastor of Grace Bible Church, tried to provide an explanation to people who helped construct the huge bonfire — a venerated tradition on the A&M campus for 90 years — and may be wondering why escaped harm.

"The reason you are here this morning is not luck," he said. "He [God] has something for you to do. God is not through using you for his purpose."

At the end of the service, students and other churchgoers took up an offer to pray and made their way to the altar to comfort each other.

At First Baptist Church in Bryan, about 50 students knelt around the altar and prayed during a moment of silence. At least eight of the students killed in the accident attended the church in the last month, minister Tim Owens said.

## Memorial services

Funeral services for the 11 victims of Thursday's bonfire collapse at Texas A&M University:

**Nathan Scott West**  
Services were at 2 p.m. Saturday at Bellaire United Methodist Church, Bellaire.

**Christopher D. Breen**  
Services were at 2 p.m. yesterday at St. Austin Catholic Church in Austin. Memorials can be made to St. Mary Catholic Center, 603 Church Ave., College Station, Texas 77840, or the Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base, B.S.A., P.O. Box 509, Ely, Minn. 55731.

**Christopher Lee Heard**  
Services were at 2 p.m. yesterday at Kingsland Baptist Church, 2555 Kingsland Blvd., Katy, Texas. Memorials to a scholarship fund in care of Institutional Advancement Department, Marine Military Academy, 320 Iwo Jima Blvd., Harlingen, Texas 78550.

**Jamie Lynn Hand**  
Services were at 2 p.m. yesterday at Crawford-Crim Funeral Home in Henderson.

**Timothy Doran Kerlee**  
Memorial service was at 4 p.m. yesterday at A&M United Methodist Church. Funeral date is pending.

**Michael Steven Ebanks**  
Vigil was at 7 p.m. yesterday at R.L. Turner High School, 1600 Josey Lane, Carrollton; Funeral will be at 10 a.m. today at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, 1705 E. Peters Colony Road, Carrollton.

**Jerry Don Self**  
Funeral will be at 2 p.m. today at First Baptist Church, 300 S. Center, Arlington. Memorials can be made to the youth ministry at Mid-Cities Bible Church in Bedford.

**Chad Anthony Powell**  
Services will be at 10 a.m. today, Harvest Baptist Church, 7200 Denton Highway, Watauga.

**Bryan Allan McClain**  
Visitation was at 6:30 p.m. yesterday at Porter-Loring North Chapel in San Antonio; Funeral will be at 1 p.m. today at Alamo Heights United Methodist Church, 825 E. Basse Road, San Antonio.

**Jeremy Richard Frampton**  
Funeral will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday at the Methodist Church in Turlock, Calif.

**Lucas John Kimmel**  
Funeral will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday at St. Anthony's Church in Violet, Calif.

**Miranda Adams**  
Services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 18220 Upper Bay Road, Nasau Bay.

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We would like to express our heartfelt condolences and extend our prayers to the friends and family of the Aggies lost.

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