

African-Americans leave mark on campus

BY JULIE ZUCKER
The Battalion
Part 1 of 4

Eighty seven years after Texas A&M College opened its doors in 1876, the first African-American set foot on campus as an enrolled student.

Leroy Sterling, from Bryan, enrolled as an undergraduate along with 2,535 other students for the first

summer session at A&M in 1963.

Six other African-American students, two females and four males, joined Sterling for Summer Session II.

Four years later, in 1967, Clarence Dixon Jr., was the first African-American student to graduate from Texas A&M.

By 1969, 15 African-American students were enrolled at Texas A&M.

Known only as the Afro-American Society, the 15 students, led by senior Kenneth Lewallen went to

President James Earl Rudder with the following eight demands of the University:

- Recognize the Afro-American Society as an on-campus organization
- Hire a black counselor, approved by black students
- Hold an investigation on recruitment policies for sports, also investigate Athletic Director and Head Coach, Gene Stallings (whom the group wanted fired)
- Have immediate recruitment of black students in all major sports

•Host a black high school student recruitment program

- More black literature available in classes, in bookstores and newsstands
- Have a black student on the A&M civilian student council
- Have a truer representation of the role and scope of the black man in the compulsory American History courses on campus

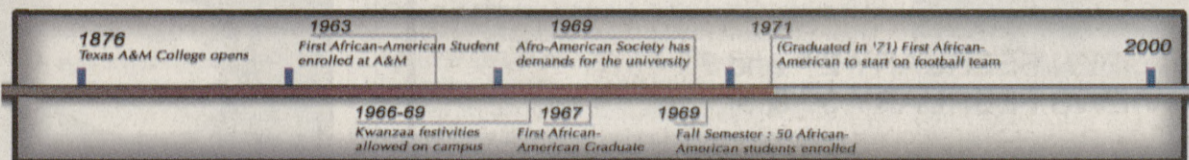
However, their demands were not met.

In University documents, Rudder said the "students went about it the wrong way."

Rudder said students have the right to petition, but organizations that use force and threats could face suspension from school for no less than one semester.

In the same documents, the Afro-American

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GUY ROGERS & JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

Alaska Airline crashes

88 die off coast of southern California

OXNARD, Calif. (AP) — An Alaska Airlines jet carrying 88 people plummeted into the Pacific Ocean on Monday after its pilot reported mechanical problems and was diverted to Los Angeles for an emergency landing. Several bodies were recovered from the chilly water, but there was no sign of survivors hours after the crash.

Flight 261, heading from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to San Francisco and later to Seattle, went down at 4:36 p.m. PST, the airline said.

A large field of debris rolled in big swells about eight miles offshore as aircraft and small boats converged on the site just before sunset. Hours later, the high-power lights of commercial squid boats illuminated the darkness as a cutter and small boats continued the search.

Several bodies were found, Coast Guard Lt. Chuck Diorio said, but he could not give a specific number.

"Every resource is out there to find people," Coast Guard Capt. George Wright said. "We're actively searching for survivors. ... In 58-degree water temperature, people can survive. We're not going to quit until we're positive there's absolutely no chance."

Alaska Airlines spokesperson Jack Evans said the plane was carrying 83 passengers and five crew members.

The airline said the pilot reported having problems with the "stabilizer trim" and asked to be



diverted shortly before the plane crashed. "Radar indicates it fell from 17,000 feet and then was lost from radar," San Francisco airport spokesperson Ron Wilson told KRON-TV.

A source with close knowledge of the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the flight was normal and stable until the crew reported control problems. Radar showed the plane

plunging toward the ocean shortly afterward.

Evans said the plane had no previous stabilizer problems, and FAA spokesperson John Clabes said it had never been in an accident.

Evans also said the plane was serviced on Sunday, went through a low-level maintenance check on Jan. 11 and had a more thorough routine check last January. It was unclear what Sunday's service entailed.

Alaska Airlines, which has a distinctive image of an Eskimo painted on the tails of its planes, has an excellent safety record. It serves more than 40 cities in Alaska, Canada, Mexico and five Western states.

The National Transportation Safety Board was assembling a team of investigators in Washington, D.C., and planned to send them to the crash site, spokesperson Pat Cariseo said. Gov. Gray Davis said he had ordered the California National Guard to offer whatever help is needed.

The weather was clear at the crash site, where the water is between 300 and 750 feet deep, Coast Guard Cmdr. Jim McPherson said.

The most recent fatal crash in the United States involving an MD-80 series jet was last summer's Ameri-

"Welcome back . . ."



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

Lyle Lovett (L) and Robert Earl Keen (R) held a press conference at Texas A&M University Monday to promote the Bonfire Benefit Concert scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 6, at Reed Arena. All proceeds will go toward the Bonfire Relief Fund which directly benefits victims of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

Redpots to demonstrate bonfire building process

BY ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

The redpots in charge of building the 1999 Aggie Bonfire will meet with investigators this week to demonstrate how the thousands of logs used in the stack were cut, assembled, and wired together.

The consultants hired by the Special Commission on the 1999 Aggie Bonfire want to observe the human and be-

havioral sides of the building process, commission chairman Leo Linbeck Jr. told *The Dallas Morning News* Sunday.

"How was it organized, how was it supervised, how they divided into teams - all the nonstructural elements," Linbeck said. "Did the people construct it in the way it was intended?"

Linbeck could not be reached for further comment Monday but released

a statement about the upcoming demonstration.

"This is just another piece of the research effort undertaken by the consultants. It is not open to the public. To my knowledge none of the Commission members, myself included, plan to attend," Linbeck said.

The commission noted in its weekly update that Packer Engineering, one of the four consulting firms hired to conduct the investigation, is almost fin-

ished measuring, weighing, and classifying the logs used in the Bonfire stack. This week, Packer will select a geotechnical firm to perform soil testing.

The investigation teams are also expected to finalize a list of people to interview and what questions to ask. The firms will also present their budgets for the investigative work to commission members this week. The Texas A&M Board of Regents has already authorized the commission to spend up to \$1

million on the investigation. Although the investigation is underway, the four consulting firms have not yet signed contracts, because some legal issues remain unresolved.

The firms want the University to pay for their court expenses if they are called to testify or give depositions in Bonfire-related lawsuits. Lawyers at the Texas A&M System General Counsel's office have said state law prohibits such arrangements.

SCM CHAIRS

The following student will be honored:

Andy Scott May
(Junior Philosophy major)

The Silver Taps ceremony will be held tonight at 10:30 in front of the Academic Building. The ceremony is to honor those students who have passed away while enrolled.

Voters head to polls for New Hampshire primary

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Putting aside his attacks on Al Gore's honesty, Bill Bradley said voters who support him in the nation's first presidential primary on Tuesday will be "part of something that is new and fresh."

"We need a politics that's based on belief and commitment, not tactics and attacks," Bradley told workers at a research park in Nashua, striking a more subdued tone on the last day of campaigning.

But in an interview earlier today, he defended his recent criticisms of Gore's "misrepresentations."

"It was about time to tell the people what was the truth," Bradley said.

Gore has accused his rival for the Democratic presidential nomination of stooping to "personal vilification." But he also dropped the combative approach Monday.

"This is a contest. The real fight is for our future," Gore told reporters after getting up at dawn to shake hands with defense plant workers in the freezing rain.

In the GOP race, Texas Gov. George W. Bush and conservative activist Gary Bauer tried a different sort of contest — pancake flipping. Bauer, backing up to catch his pancake, fell off the low stage.

Sen. John McCain said he is "confident of victory" in New Hampshire, where polls show him in a tight race with Bush, and feels good about the upcoming South Carolina primary, too.

"The message is going to be sent from

New Hampshire to America and the world that we're going to give the government back to the people of the United States, take it out of the hands of the special interests, the big money people, and give it back to you," McCain told supporters in Keene.

Bush also sounded confident: "There's something going on out there. It's called energy and enthusiasm and excitement, and I like my chances a lot."

As the presidential hopefuls headed into final appearances in New Hampshire, there were signs of increasingly competitive races in both parties.

A newly aggressive Bradley criticized Gore over the weekend for an inconsistent voting record on abortion rights and for fund-raising scandals in the last election.

Waving a magazine article describing Gore's ties to a 1996 fund-raising event at a Buddhist temple, the former New Jersey senator demanded that the vice president clear the air.

"Quite frankly, I think there's more explanation that's needed," he said.

Gore released a letter from friendly congressional leaders asking Bradley to ease his criticism.

Known for his own tough attacks, Gore accused his rival of "stepping down to the level of personal vilification."

Bradley denied that he turned to negative campaigning because Gore passed him in the polls, saying he had endured attacks by the

Primaries past
Here is a look at the history of the New Hampshire primary since 1952 when voters began casting ballots for candidates directly. Included are the winners, voter turnout and weather in Concord, N.H., for each date. Names of candidates who went on to win the general election are in bold print.

Date	Weather	Winner	Turnout
March 11, 1952	Big snowstorm	Walter Dill Scott (D)	43%
March 8, 1956	Light snowfall	John F. Kennedy (D)	41%
March 12, 1960	Heavy rain	Lyndon B. Johnson (D)	46%
Feb. 24, 1976	Reverse ice storm	Jimmy Carter (D)	48%
Feb. 29, 1984	Stormy with snow to ice to rain	Gary Hart (D)	57%
Feb. 16, 1992	Cloudy, light rain and drizzle	Paul Tsongas (D)	62%
March 23, 1952	Weather data not available	Ezra Taft Hefner (D)	53%
March 16, 1964	Major snowstorm	Lyndon B. Johnson (D)	49%
March 7, 1972	Cloudy, cool	Richard Nixon (D)	51%
Feb. 26, 1980	Cloudy, then sunny	Jimmy Carter (D)	51%
Feb. 16, 1988	Variable cloudiness, early drizzle	Michael Dukakis (D)	49%
March 20, 1996	Cloudy, bit of snow and ice	George W. Bush (R)	44%

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Number of cars may decrease on campus

BY JORDAN DAVIS
The Battalion

The number of cars clogging the streets of Texas A&M's campus may soon be reduced, if a recommendation from the University's Campus Access Task Force is approved.

The task force, assembled in Spring 1999, presented 120 recommendations for improving campus transportation to A&M President Ray M. Bowen Monday.

The recommendation would minimize the number of vehicles on campus by enhancing the current mass transit system and making it easier to access the University as a pedestrian.

This would also include lengthening hours of operation for buses and improving the bus fleet's vehicles.

"We were charged with looking at all aspects of transportation at A&M," said Mary Miller, chair of the task force and associate vice president of administration. "That includes parking, buses, sidewalks, signage and anything you can think that affects how people move around campus."

Another recommendation is to move the railroad tracks along Wellborn Road off campus. Currently, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers commuting between Main and West Campus must compete with frequent trains, which the task force felt were a threat to safety.

The task force was formed by Jerry Gaston, former vice president of administration, and Tom Williams, director of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services. Members include staff and faculty, administrators from the campus and A&M system, representatives from Student Senate and members of the Bryan-College Station community.

Throughout the past year, members have discussed various ways to improve transportation at A&M. Through a Web-based survey and focus

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Batt Radio

- Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for details on the closing of Big Bend.

Batt Online

- Check out *The Battalion* online at battalion.tamu.edu