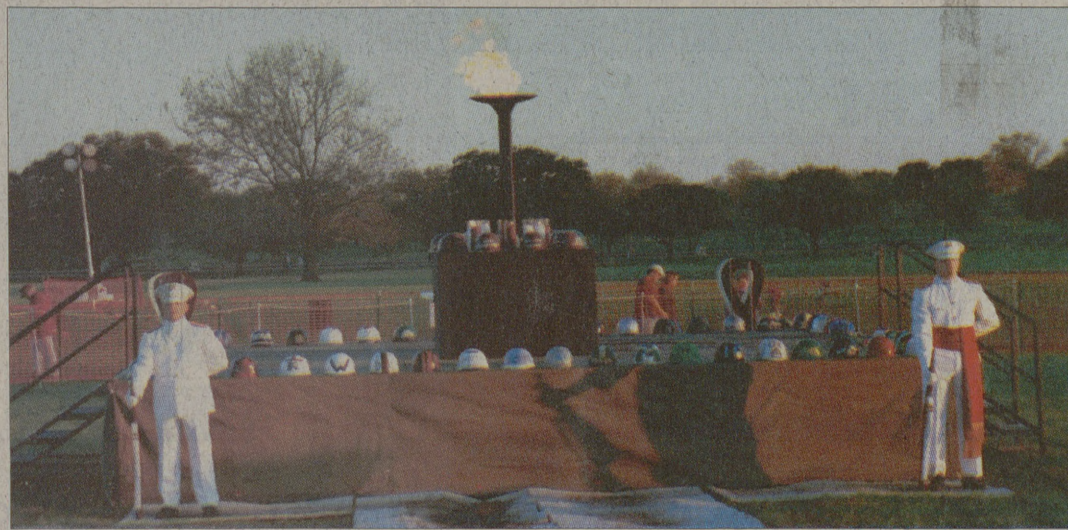


STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Students shielded their flames from the wind and rain at the Bonfire remembrance ceremony early Saturday.



ANDY HANCOCK/THE BATTALION

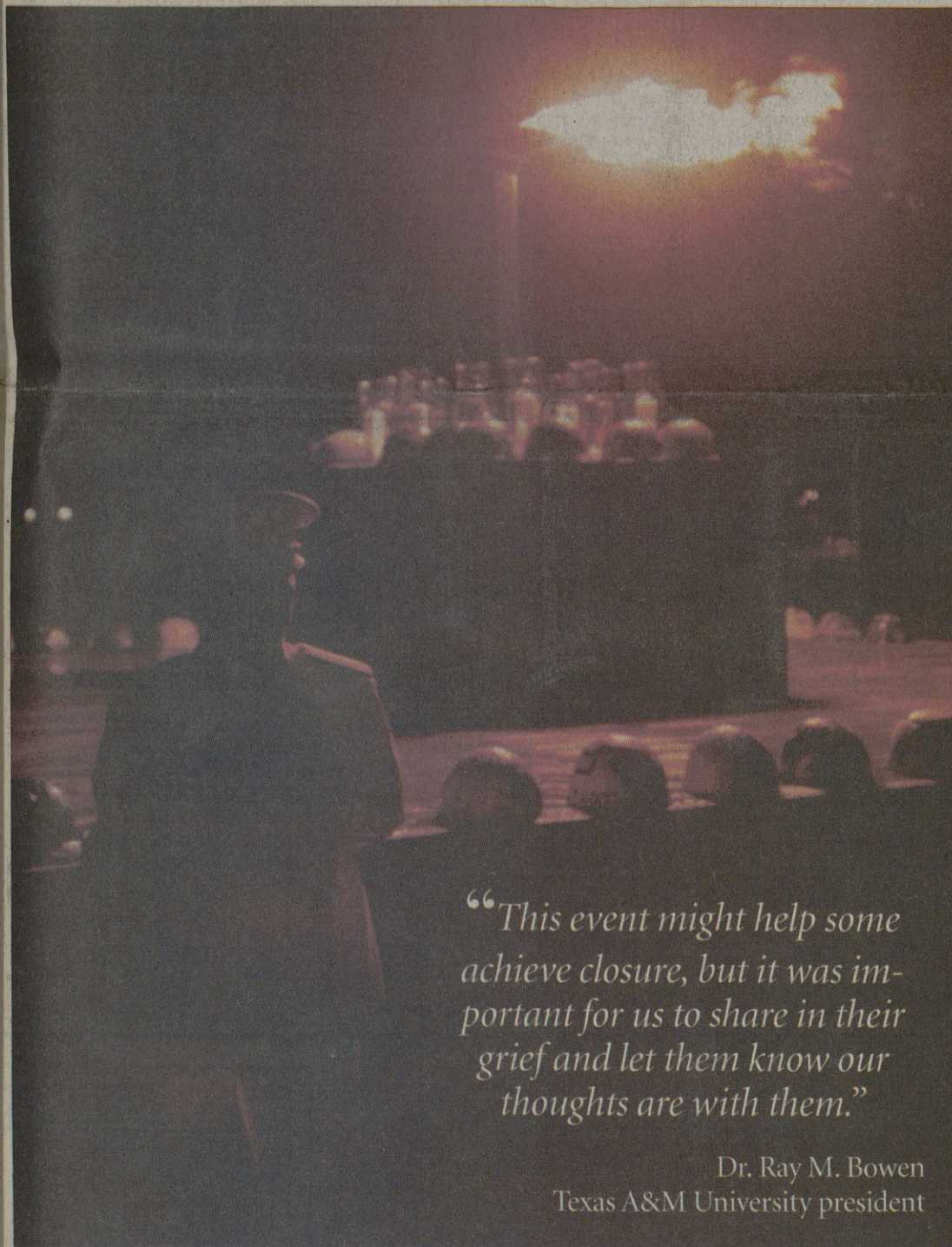
Members of the Ross Volunteers stand guard at the memorial flame. The cadets were on shifts, rotating until the flame was extinguished at 8 p.m. on Sunday. "Taps" was also played.

BURNING Bright



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

An estimated 25,000 people attended the ceremony to honor and remember the victims.



BERNARDO GARZA/THE BATTALION

A member of the Ross Volunteers stands at quiet attention at the end of the Bonfire Remembrance ceremony held at the site of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse. All 12 were honored at the service.

"This event might help some achieve closure, but it was important for us to share in their grief and let them know our thoughts are with them."

Dr. Ray M. Bowen
Texas A&M University president

TAMUG cancels beach memorial

Texas A&M University-Galveston (TAMUG) canceled its Aggie Bonfire memorial ceremony scheduled for 7 p.m. Saturday due to severe storms in the area, said Todd Sutherland, campus director of student activities at TAMUG.

The storms, which left the beach under 6 inches of water and left the area impassable to traffic, continued through the weekend.

Twelve small flames were to be lit along the beach in Galveston for the memorial service.

This year's Galveston Bonfire committee, like the main campus' committee, was assigned to plan the memorial service in place of a Bonfire, Sutherland said.

The Student Senate has adopted the same Bonfire resolutions as the College Station Senate, and TAMUG will honor A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen's two-year Bonfire hiatus.

Bookstore to supply books for 27 injured

The Texas A&M Bookstore in the Memorial Student Center will provide textbooks free of charge to the 27 injured students of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse until they finish their educations at A&M.

"Students will receive textbooks as if they had received them through the bookstore," said Marc Eckhart, general manager of the A&M Bookstore.

Eckhart collaborated with J. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, and Richard Floyd, associate vice president for finance and control.

The bookstore offered this option to the 27 students for the Fall 2000 semester and agreed to continue the offer until the students graduate.

"It's the right thing to do," Eckhart said. "It's a great service to provide for the University's community."

Students will have to present picture identification to bookstore employees to receive their textbooks.

Aggies meet at Polo Fields to remember

By MARIANO CASTILLO
The Battalion

Light drizzle accompanied the tears of those waiting for the Bonfire Remembrance Ceremony.

The 12 students who died in the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse were honored by Aggies at the Polo Fields early Saturday morning.

Some held each other, some prayed and many just stood in silence. As the ceremony approached, the number of people in attendance swelled to about 25,000, as the rain steadily fell.

At 2:42 a.m., the time of the Bonfire collapse, the spotlights surrounding the torch were turned off and a memorial flame was lit. Twelve cannon volleys echoed like thunder across the Polo Fields before a voice penetrated the silence of the night: "Standing here in the cold and darkness at 2:42 [a.m.] today may seem odd to those who do not understand the Aggie family or Aggie spirit. But for those of us who

do, it makes perfect sense. It is the right time and the right place to do the right thing."

A prayer was read in remembrance, and a roll call for the victims, similar to Aggie Muster, was read.

As each name was

Forrest Lane said students and friends would have stood for the remembrance ceremony regardless of the weather.

"Unfortunately, the weather made it difficult tonight," said Lane, a senior

to candle.

Monica Duarte, a senior biomedical science major, said the remembrance ceremony was a chance to look back on the events of the last 12 months.

"I thought it was a very solemn event where students could reflect on the past year — not only on Bonfire, but on how things have changed since," she said.

The memorial flame remained lit until 8 p.m. Sunday, the time when Tim Kerlee Jr. died, on Nov. 19, 1999, becoming the 12th and final victim of the collapse.

A lone bugler marched up to the memorial flame, where all 12 candles were lit, and played "Taps." Two members of the Ross Volunteers, who had stood guard at the site when the flame was lit, then approached the stage and blew out the 12 candles.

The ceremony was simple but powerful, moving many people in the crowd to tears.

See BONFIRE on Page 2.

"I thought it was a very solemn event where students could reflect on the past year — not only Bonfire, but how things have changed since."

— Monica Duarte
Senior biomedical science major

called, the recipient of that person's Bonfire Memorial Scholarship approached the memorial flame and placed a Bonfire pot on a table decorated with 12 candles. The rain made it difficult to keep the candles lit but showed the loyalty of Aggies who braved the weather for their fallen friends.

Student Body President

political science major. "But people were here, and no matter what we would have planned, I think that ultimately, we all came together like we would have anyway."

With the roll call complete, the sound of bagpipes playing "Amazing Grace" filled the air, and the families spread the flame, which quickly passed from candle

Plaques under 12 street lamps in Brison Park dedicated, memorial plaque on display in MSC

By COURTNEY STELZEL
The Battalion

Nothing can take away the memory of lost loved ones, but lasting reminders can help keep their spirit alive. In remembrance of the 12 Aggies who lost their lives in the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse, the city of College Station and the Memorial Student Center (MSC) unveiled plaques at a ceremony in Rudder Theater Saturday afternoon.

A plaque with a maroon and white ribbon bearing the names of the 12 victims was unveiled.

"This plaque is a sign of remembrance for those lost and for each other, so that we may never, ever forget," said Forrest Lane, student body president and a senior political science major, on behalf of the MSC as the Bonfire Memorial plaque.

A committee of eight representatives from the Traditions Council, the Residence Hall Association (RHA), the Corps of Cadets and the Memorial Student Center (MSC) began designing the memorial in June, said Rusty Thompson, assistant director of the MSC.

The Flagroom will host the Bonfire Memorial plaque until a more permanent location is chosen.

"We wanted it dedicated and housed in the MSC because that is the student center and a high-traffic area," said Josh Kaylor, president of RHA and a junior agricultural development major.

College Station officials presented 12 plaques to be placed at the base of

12 antique street lamps in Brison Park. Although the plaques are not yet finished, temporary replicas will stand in their place until they are completed.

The plaques feature a small picture of Bonfire and the victim's name, class and hometown. The plaques were funded by the city of College Station and organized by the College Station Historic Preservation Committee.

"On behalf of the angels, we thank you for such a truly special place to come to both the school and city."

— Timothy Kerlee Sr.
Father of Bonfire victim
Timothy Kerlee Jr.

College Station City Council members, Texas A&M administrators and family and friends of the Bonfire victims attended the ceremony.

Royce Hickman, Chamber of Commerce president and CEO for the city of College Station, spoke of last year's tragedy and the impact it had on Aggies everywhere.

"The world was able to see A&M at its very best when the tragedy occurred; the Aggie family represented our strong school spirit and dedication to one another," Hickman said.

The 12 plaques were presented by Dennis Maloney, a College Station councilman and a College Station Historic Preservation committee member.

"Brison Park was chosen because there are no playgrounds there, just tranquility and love in the park; we felt this was most appropriate," Maloney said.

Timothy Kerlee Sr., whose son Timothy Kerlee Jr. was killed in the collapse, spoke on behalf of the parents and family members of the 12 victims.

"On behalf of the angels, we thank you for such a truly special place to come to both the school and city," he said.

Last November, the College Station Historic Preservation Committee ordered antique street lights to be put in Brison Park, the oldest park in the College Station park system, located in the oldest section of the city.

"It just so happened that we ordered 12 poles," said David Gerling, Parks and Recreation superintendent and liaison for the city of College Station to the Historic Preservation Committee.

About a week after the order was placed for the light poles, Bonfire collapsed, killing 12 Aggies and injuring 27 others.

"We were in a committee meeting and somebody said 'Why don't we dedicate those lights to the Bonfire victims?'" Gerling said. "We felt that the light posts fit nicely to memorialize the Bonfire victims. It is just a coincidence that the number we had ordered was the same as the number of victims who died."