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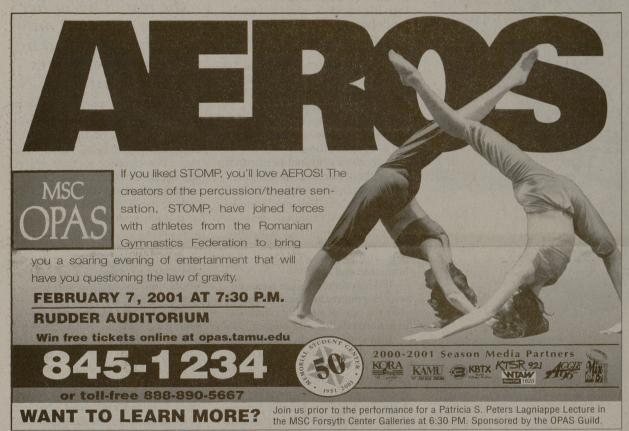
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#### GRAVES

#### Continued from Page 1

"When [Gaston] came on board, I said 'I want to be interchangeable with you," Graves said. "We've already been operating under that principle from the very beginning.

Don Powell, chairman of the Board of Regents, said he has no doubt that the System will function without missing a beat in Graves' absence, but stressed that Graves must take time to heal.

'We know he has surrounded himself with a very capable dedicated staff who can run the System in his absence," Powell said.

Graves agreed.

"I think we can do this without a beat being missed," Graves said. "I am confident they will be able to step right in and fill whatever gap is

Gaston said he has every reason to believe Graves will return to work after he overcomes the cancer, but he is ready to undertake the responsibility of managing the System in the meantime.

"[Graves] knows what each of us is supposed to do, and he is a leader who expects his leadership team to do their job," Gaston said. "Consequently, during the days he will not be working, he expects us to carry on through his delegated authority to us, and we will do the very best we can working together."

#### FAITH AND SUPPORT

Despite the roller-coaster events that led to the sarcoma diagnosis. Graves remains confident that he will overcome this obstacle. His confidence, he said, is due to his faith and the support he has received.

"With cancer, about 50 percent of it is mental," Graves said. "The ideal place in the world for us to be for that is College Station. This is an incredible community.

Graves said he and his family have overcome the initial shock of the news and they are ready to fight the disease together.

"I've been living a life of high risk all of my life," said Graves, a retired military officer and former paratrooper. "When you're young,

you feel immortal. As you get older, you realize mortality is beginning to be a reality.

But the news of the cancer has paled next to Graves' faith and the outpouring of support he has received.

'Not only the people we work with, but the people we live with and go to church with have already been incredibly supportive," Graves said. "Grace (his wife) and I feel sustained

"I don't know how people get through this without it," he said. "At the very beginning of this, we realized we weren't going to be able to sustain an optimism except through

Graves said the presidents at each of the System universities have offered their support and prayers.

Texas A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen said the A&M community is optimistic that Graves will recover completely.

"The obvious thing is that we need to remember [Graves] in our prayers," Bowen said. "He has displayed enormous strength and enormous character and we all hope he can pull through this.

Members of the Board of Regents have also expressed their concern on personal and professional levels.

'He's become an integral part of our family," said Regent R.H. Stevens Jr. "He's made a better place in a short period of time for the administration, staff and students that are part of the A&M System, and our thoughts and prayers are with him. We'll do whatever is necessary to support him in any way we can."

Powell echoed Stevens' senti-

"Any time you are associated with people, be it in a business or board, there is always more than a passing relationship, and I know that each of us feel a special bond for the chancellor and his wife, and we are concerned," Powell said.

Dwight Edwards, pastor at Grace Bible Church, the church Graves attends, said Graves persevered through the ordeal.

"He has been very strong, very realistic," Edwards said. "He is a very committed Christian, and his faith allows him to have an eternal perspec-

tive on what is going on. The and rich faith he has really contin to sustain him as he is wal through.

Graves held multiple prestignattal posts before coming to A&M cluding superintendent of the Military Academy at West P Graves also served as personal tant to Adm. Warren Crowe and Colin Powell when they were men of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Graves' wife, Grace, sur breast cancer in 1995. She Graves have two children and grandchildren.

#### **TUITION**

#### Continued from Pa

Brown that using incentives to attend sur A ex school is a worthy idea, but the ROLA lower tuition rates must not in The Bat the University's budget.

Brown said that, under the eeming the state would reimburse the tree coor the state would reimburse in ire cod versities immediately so they agation f suffer a loss of revenue.

Tuition at A&M has two conduct nents: state minimum tuito in Texas University authorized Based on resident tuition for facilities "No credit hour, at a \$120 minimusterling the state minimum tuition. Urector of sity authorized tuition is 4 state fir

credit hour. The bill would cut only stofficials ition in half, not University the North Only state residents would a trash ch for the tuition reduction. multisto

If the Legislature passes toute an Brown said, the program the even implemented in 2002, giving access full University a year to public. program.

"I'm excited about the propped and see it as a real opportunitooms a the students," Brown said they are fully offering summer school solid wo 50 percent reduced rate wil enough of a carrot to entice dents to take advantage of the sources.

If the program is successful legislators will consider expa the summer tuition reduction! state universities.

#### SOONERS

#### Continued from Page 5

The Sooner squad is led by junior guard LaNeishea Caufield, who leads the team in scoring at 16.7 points per game and leads the country in steals, averaging 4.4 per game.

The Sooners also boast two other players who average double digits in points scored.

Junior guard Stacey Dales is second on the team in scoring and leads

the Big 12 in assists with 7.4 per game. Sophomore forward Caton Hill has also made a big impact for the Sooners with six double-doubles on the season.

The OU team will be without its 6foot-3 center Jen Cunningham. The junior was the leading scorer for the Sooners' last time against the Aggies with 18 points.

"This team has the chemistry, and when a team has chemistry, it is hard to stop them when they are playing that way," Gillom said. Saunders has been the backbone

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of the Aggie offense for most of the Averaging 28.3 points per game in

Big 12 action, Saunders leads the Big 12 in scoring average. Saunders' overall scoring average

of 23.4 is good enough for sixth in the country as well. Defensively, Saunders ranks

among the nation's leaders in rebounds with a 6.1 boards per game

"She does her thing on the court," Gillom said. "When she is playing and trying to get everyone else involved and everyone else is scoring, it is a great situation."

Last time out against the So Saunders netted a career-high 35

Freshman point guard Toccara Williams has also made the record books in her first season with the

With three steals in the OSU contest, Williams surpassed Donna Roper's 1985-86 freshman season record of 71. Williams now has 74 steals on

the season.

Williams is also chasing t man assist record at A&M, at plenty of chances, averaging high 35.8 minutes per game.

The Aggies are also search the team's first back-to-backvik in Big 12 conference play. On Jan. 20, the Aggies defe

No. 25 Baylor Bears at home. The Aggies looked to get the

to-back wins when they trav OSU and took an early lead, but overcome by good shooting Cowgirl squad.

"We still come out and look tive, and the team doesn't get do

The Aggies will try to stop game losing streak to the tonight. The last time Texas came out on top of OU was in!

"I look forward to games like by ARATI Saunders said. "It really genthe Batt

Saunders and the Aggies will Jusiness their "hype" to the court when the usiness off with the Sooners at 7 p.m. ors in a

eir edu The

exa

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