

DIANE SUAREZ • THE BATTALION

Reflections of a quiet, steady star

Children need heroes. In some cases, like now, adults do too. They look to someone to set an example, to act in a manner for people to strive to emulate.



MARK PASSWATERS

In these extraordinary times, we have been given a view of some real heroes in New York and Washington. In more normal times, athletes are often called upon to carry the mantle of a role model.

Sometime in the next couple of weeks (depending on how Major League Baseball resets the schedule), Cal Ripken Jr. of the Baltimore Orioles will take the field for the last time as a player. With his retirement, America will lose one of the truly great people in professional sports, and an era will come to an end.

Certain things, in retrospect, indicate the end of one's childhood. For me, no retrospect is needed. When Ripken hangs up his jersey for the last time, the end of his 20-year career will eliminate the last vestiges of my childhood.

When Ripken first put on an Orioles uniform, Ronald Reagan had been president for less than a year. The Soviet Union was still our enemy. There was no CNN, and the Internet would have been considered a science-fiction

fantasy. For two decades, Ripken made a very healthy living playing a game. He played it so well and with such consistency that it was literally impossible to remove him from the lineup for 16 seasons.

Ripken's amazing consecutive-games-played streak of 2,632 games overshadows his other feats. He is one of only a handful of players to have both 3000 hits and 400 home runs in a career.

In 1990, he nearly went the entire season without making a fielding error, and his fielding percentage for that season is the best ever for a shortstop.

I will miss Cal Ripken greatly. So will a nation in need of heroes.

When Ripken came to the major leagues, "big" men did not play shortstop. Small, quick players, usually with little hitting ability, played there. Ripken's excellence redefined the concept of a shortstop, allowing players like Alex Rodriguez and Nomar Garciaparra to follow him.

While tall and strong, Ripken was not the most gifted player. He succeeded through hard work and great intelligence. He would change batting stances in the middle of an at-bat if he found something that worked better.

Slower than most shortstops, Ripken studied opposing hitters

constantly, learning their tendencies. As a result, he was rarely out of position when a ball was hit to shortstop — or, later in his career, third base.

What separates Ripken from his peers the most was the class and modesty with which he approached his success. Unlike some players who crave the spotlight and refer to themselves in the third person, Ripken is rather shy and awkward in public.

In spite of this, he has always taken time for the fans. He signs autographs before and after games, in many cases for hours on end. He has established several charities in the Baltimore area. His classy, blue-collar approach to baseball has won over not only the hard-nosed people of Baltimore, but the nation as well.

I have never seen an Orioles game where Cal Ripken was not in the lineup. From childhood to college, Cal Ripken was always on the field. It will be difficult to fathom listening to the radio or when the Orioles visit Texas and not hear the broadcasters say, "Well, here comes Cal."

In the movie "Field of Dreams," James Earl Jones said that baseball is a "symbol of all that was once good in America, and can be again."

Cal Ripken was the walking manifestation of that ideal. I will miss Cal Ripken greatly. So will a nation in need of heroes.

Mark Passwaters is a senior political science major.

Asians are making their mark on the entertainment industry

The portrayal of Asians in movies is more positive now than it ever has been. Successful movies such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Rush Hour 2*, are showcasing Asian celebrities who are gradually becoming equal with their Caucasian counterparts.



RUBY LEE

With the Asian culture slowly becoming mainstream, this trend no doubt will have a positive effect on the film industry. However, in order to better understand why it is so important that Asians are now portrayed in a positive light, one must understand the history of Asians in the movie industry.

In the past, Caucasian actors played the roles of the "Orientals", under the reasoning that the viewing public did not want to spend their time watching an Asian on screen. There might be some truth in this, while Caucasians were trying to depict an "Oriental" stereotype, Asians were merely trying to depict another human being.

When Asians were given roles, they were primarily for the purpose of comic relief. One example would be the role of the Japanese man in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. The entire role was belittling and racist, culminated by Audrey Hepburn pacifying Mickey Rooney with, "Don't be angry, you dear little man... If you promise not to be angry, I might let you take those pictures we mentioned."

Asians were lumped together and given one identity; regardless of the race of the person in the script, any person from an Asian country would do, whether they were Korean, Japanese or Chinese. While this held true for many Asians at the time, the problem was that there were few positive portrayals. It is understandable to depict each race as having a variety of occupations, and therefore being reflected in the movies as such, but it is inexcusable to depict an entire race as second-class citizens.

A likely reason for the negative depictions of Asians in the movie industry can be found in the historical interaction of the United States with people from the Asia. In World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War the United States was fighting against people of Asian descent. However, one must remember that the United States also had Asian allies. Until recently, Asian males were given extremely weak roles, shown as economically unstable, uneducated, socially inferior and undesirable. According to 2000 census, the median household income for Asian Americans today is \$51,200, almost \$10,000 higher than that of European Americans. A fifth of Asian-Pacific men over the age of 25 have advanced degrees, compared to the male national average of 10 percent.

The difference is even more with Asian females. Eleven percent of Asian-Pacific women hold an advanced degree, whereas the national average for women is 7 percent. Yet, once again, Asian women tend to be typecast into roles of obedient wives of Caucasian men. If they are successful by their own merits, they are portrayed as having discarded their Asian heritage and being "Americanized".

It tends to be especially difficult for an Asian actress to play positive roles, as they are almost always shown dating men who are not Asian. In these settings, they have little contact with other Asians and seem to be disconnected from the Asian community.

Some of the fault may lie within the Asian culture. In addition, there is a lot of mystery about this group, which may have cultivated some of the stereotypes in the movies. But fault can also be found in the educational system. Every child in the United States is taught from an early age that African-Americans were discriminated against and that the American Indians were oppressed. However, seldom is the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 mentioned, despite it being the first significant law passed by Congress restricting immigration into the United States.

In 1902, Chinese immigrants were made permanently illegal by the United States, and their citizenship eligibility was not restored until 1943. School children today learn about segregated schools, but usually only in the context of African-Americans. Rarely is the Gentleman's Agreement of 1906 mentioned, the policy that segregated Asian school children in San Francisco.

Asians were at one point an oppressed group in the United States and still are in some industries, such as the movie industry. Michelle Yeoh was denied the part that was given to Carrie Moss in *The Matrix*, despite Moss's lack of experience in martial arts. No wonder Yeoh declined supporting roles in the sequels. Bruce Lee lost the starring role in *Kung Fu*, the series he helped develop and decided to return to Hong Kong, where he became a major star.

The outlook now is much more positive, with stars such as Zhang Ziyi becoming more and more popular. However, in order to fully appreciate how far the Asian race has come in the movie industry, it is imperative for one to understand their beginnings. Upon understanding the history, these recent successes are all the more encouraging and a good indication that Asians are finally becoming accepted into American culture.

Ruby Lee is a sophomore computer science major.

EDITORIAL

Texas A&M University — Celebrating 125 Years



THE BATTALION

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AGGIES STAND TALL

In the face of tragedy, A&M fields an impressive show of spirit

The Texas A&M community came together to form a powerful image of patriotism Saturday. In the face of national tragedy, a heartening reminder of the American spirit of unity has risen from the ashes of terrorism.

The Red, White and Blue Out was a smashing success, and the nation took notice. A picture of the sea of America's colors that graced Kyle Field on Saturday was featured on the frontpage of every major newspaper in Texas. And as they have noted, only Aggies could have pulled this off.

The small group of students who organized and coordinated such a large event in a limited amount of time are to be commended. There were many obstacles along the way, including a lack of materials for the unexpected

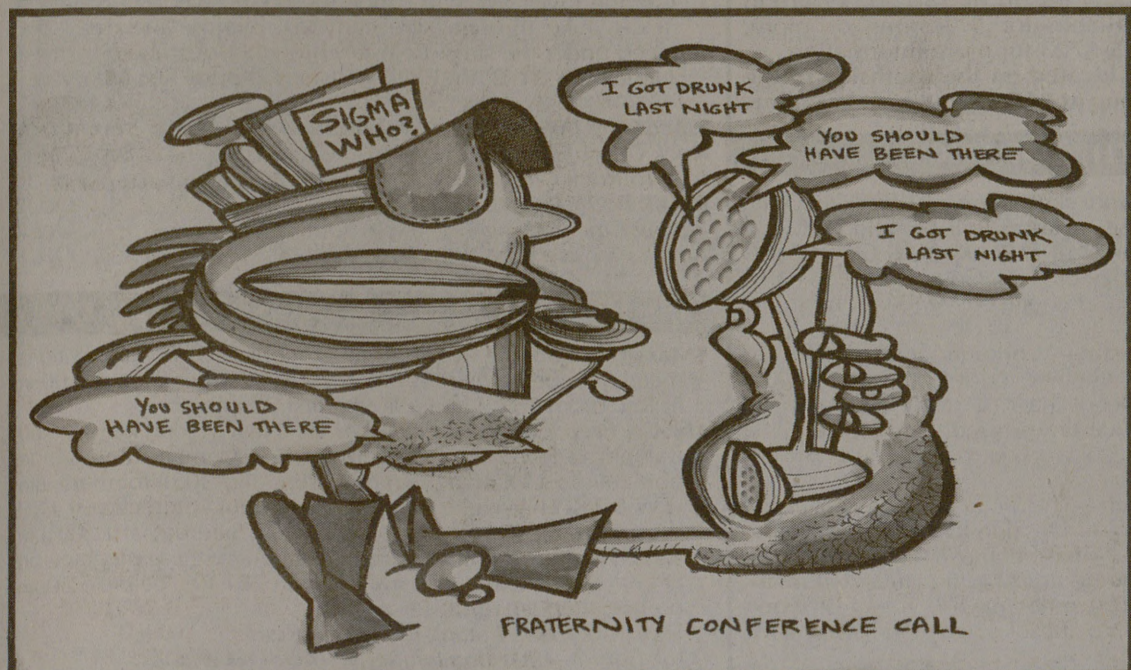
demand and the race against time to meet it. But overcoming of these challenges is an indication of how, in Aggieworld, the seemingly impossible in support of a good cause is indeed possible.

To print and sell more than 70,000 shirts and raise more than \$150,000 for relief efforts is nothings short of amazing. After selling out of shirts on Thursday students flocked to help as an overwhelmed local printer could not meet the demand.

With the assistance of the Aggie spirit and the Internet, where the idea was born and began to grow instantly, Aggies dealt with this national tragedy much in the same way they dealt with their own, two years ago this fall: together, with a kind and giving heart.

The Red, White and Blue Out was a smashing success, and the nation took notice.

CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE UN-CARTOONIST ©