

Memorial

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"(The memorial) is not the biggest project I've ever done, but it's the most intense and challenging," he said. "It's definitely the most significant thing I've done, and I've learned so much about A&M and its traditions. Now I can see why Aggies stick together."

While Christianson will contribute bronze bio-portraits, Overland Partners, Inc. in San Antonio will construct the rest of the memorial — 12 portals, each facing a Bonfire victim's hometown, that will form a circle connected by panels.

A member of A&M's Class of 1982, Robert Shemwell, principal and architect for Overland Partners, said his school spirit motivated his involvement with the memorial.

"Bonfire is such a powerful icon, and when something like this happens, it really tears at our perception of symbols," he said. "I feel a great sense of responsibility to work on something that has this much meaning to so many people."

With several Aggies on staff at Overland Partners, the design process has been especially personal, Shemwell said.

After holding a series of lunch

meetings and reviewing five proposed plans, Shemwell said the company was ready to make a decision.

"There were a whole lot of hands that went into the process," he said. "Even our process of design was analogous to Bonfire because it was such a collaborative effort where everyone came together for a common purpose."

However, other graduates — especially those from the University of Texas — have shaped the final outcome of the Bonfire Memorial.

"As an Aggie, you take for granted that everyone knows your traditions, so having an outside view helped make the project more complete," Shemwell said. "All of my partners are big UT grads, very much UT animals born and bred, but I think there was a realization that this was an event that was not just an A&M thing. It was a Texas thing, and we're all in it together."

Shemwell said the design has been reviewed by victims' families, and he has received a favorable response.

"We know that there's no school like A&M, and there's no kids like these kids," he said. "If this design and process can help healing between family relationships and their relationship with the University, then we will have done our job."

Powell

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mates' loyalty to their friend only strengthened. "Right after Bonfire fell, we shut down the next few classes," he said. "The whole class collectively took up a donation and bought something for his parents."

For Morgan, his former students' innate leadership skills made a lasting impression.

"Chad was a natural leader," he said. "He was going to be in charge of something, no doubt about it."

Yet Powell's attitude and character were what struck his professor most.

"There was just something about his personality — he was just so darn likeable," he said. "He wasn't just your pencil-and-paper success. He was the whole package."

—Kendra Kingsley

Frampton

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Antonio a month ago to meet with the artist working on his son's sculpture for the Bonfire memorial and was impressed with what he saw.

"I am very, very pleased with the memorial," Frampton said. Frampton said he is happy with the way everyone has been working together to get the memorials completed. The memorial will be a great way for people to remember those lost, he said.

"I can't wait until (the memorial) is done so I can come down to College Station and visit," Frampton said.

Frampton said one thing about his son is certain.

"He loved Bonfire."

—Kim Katopodis

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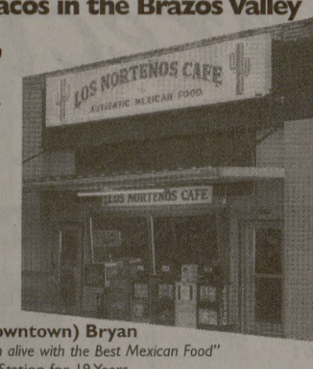
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