

# AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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## Keeping it in the family

Freshmen learn to survive college life with a little help from older siblings

By **Tori Foster**  
THE BATTALION



SETH FREEMAN • THE BATTALION

Nancy Smith was putting together a high school graduation album

for her oldest daughter and was amazed that she couldn't find any pictures of her daughter without her younger brother.

Smith can now continue her photo album with pictures of both her daughter and her younger son attending Texas A&M.

Like the Smiths, many other Aggie families watch as siblings continue the tradition of attending A&M.

"Sarah was our first child to leave home, and I was much more worried about her than I am with Curtis. Because A&M has been such a positive thing for Sarah, I'm not as worried about him," Smith said.

Sarah Smith will help her younger brother Curtis, a freshman history major, become acquainted with the nitty-gritty of daily life away from home and mom.

As she helps him move into his residence hall and into college life, she said she will enjoy watching her brother settle into A&M.

"It will be fun to see Curtis meet people and hopefully get involved like I did," said Smith, a senior communications major. "We will see if he will get drawn into A&M like I did; I hope he does."

Eddie Crocker, a freshman general studies major, is entering college with an ace up his sleeve: his older sister Courtney, a senior accounting major.

"Already my older sister has shown me my way around and helped me out with choosing my professors," Crocker said. "She will be able to tell me what to stay away from, what to do and not do."

Many first-year students have a hard time making the adjustment to college.

For those students lucky enough to have

an older sibling, it's helpful, said Margaret Griffith, health education coordinator for the A.P. Beutel Health Center.

"The older sibling will be able to hint on how to navigate through the road blocks, and it is great to have that support and comfort," Griffith said. "They just need to guard against the younger sibling not branching out on their own."

Knowing what a challenge college has been for her, Courtney Crocker said she thinks about how much easier it would have been for her had she been in her brother's situation.

"I wish I had someone to help me out when I was a freshman," Crocker said. "When I came to A&M I didn't know all of my options or how to get involved. It took me a year to really get into the flow, and I really wish I had someone who knew about the different organizations and could have helped me filter through them."

Crocker said she is trying to make her brother's transition to A&M as easy as possible by giving him hints on how to be successful.

"It's the hidden secrets that I can show him like pickaprof.com and where to park," Crocker said. "I can answer questions such as where these buildings are and what are these classes. These are the small things, but they really help."

Though the two sisters are willing to help their brothers, both would like to see them discover their own paths to walk down.

"Even though I am here, I really want Curtis to experience college for himself," Smith said. "I get excited about being a Fish Camp counselor. I want him to find something that he can get excited about."

Kimberly Taylor, a sophomore business major and third-generation Aggie, found the

decision to attend A&M an easy one.

With her brother's help, she said her first year was a breeze and having her brother around made the transition to college easier.

"I was never nervous because he was just a call away," Taylor said.

"Every problem or question I had he could answer or he knew who to call if he couldn't. It was reassuring just to have him there."

Freshman year in college is a once-in-lifetime experience and a great time to meet new people Smith said.

"I was a different person when I came here than who I am today, and I attribute a lot of that to A&M," Smith said. "A&M has a place for everyone. You can find your own niche, it is such a welcoming place."

Even though some freshmen have had the advantage of having older brothers and sisters during their first year in college, Smith said that at a school like A&M it is not as crucial to have an older sibling as it may be at

other universities.

"I didn't have a family member here to help me when I came, but there were lots of other people willing to help me," Smith said. "No matter who you are or where you come from, we all have a bond and that is because we are Aggies and being a part of the Aggie family is such an awesome thing."

Even though sending her children off to college was a scary thing for her, she is happy both of her kids will be together, Nancy Smith said.

"Sarah has a very loving nature toward her brother. She worries about him and the decisions he is making," Smith said. "Most of all, I am hoping that they will develop a stronger bond that will last throughout their lives."

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— Kimberly Taylor  
sophomore business major

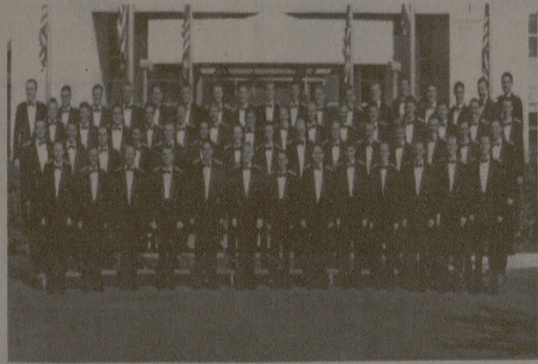
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