



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENTS

PART I OF 4

Reflections, advice from the most visible student government position on campus

By David Barry
THE BATTALION

During his senior year in high school, Will Hurd had set his sights on attending Stanford University. At the time, Hurd viewed Texas A&M as "a redneck, Podunk University." But then he made a visit to College Station which would prove to be eye-opening.

"I saw that the opportunities at A&M were going to be incredible," Hurd said.

He enrolled at A&M and led an active career in student government, culminating in his election as student body president in 1999. Hurd now lives in Delhi, India, where he has been an antiterrorism coordinator for the U.S. Consulate since 2003.

Wherever former SBPs can be found around the globe, their lives bear the mark of their experience in student government.

Hurd said his experiences at A&M, especially as a student leader, have strongly influenced who he is today.

"You get things from (participating in) student government that you can't get in a classroom," Hurd said. "The MSC is a microcosm of the real world."

Hurd, who had traveled outside of Texas only twice before he enrolled at A&M, said he encourages students to study abroad, learn a foreign language and "attend more class than you miss." Some of his advice, he admitted, is an example of a "Do as I say and not as I do" philosophy.

Joe Jordan, elected student body president in 1983, remembers spending 40 hours each week on his presidential duties.

"It was an honor to be able to represent the students," he said.

As student body president, Jordan developed simple skills such as time management and phone etiquette. "It's a learning experience, and if you aren't having fun you won't enjoy it," he said.

That's why Jordan advises future student body presidents not to take themselves too seriously.

"Somebody will always write The Batt and say something nasty, but don't take it personally," he said.

Jordan said being student body president helped him stand apart from the other job candidates when he first applied to IBM, a company which he said he would not have considered before he held the position.

He is now a business development executive and lives near Fort Worth, managing the marketing and sales force for IBM SurfAid Analytics.

Another former student body president, Fred McClure, has gone from the halls of the MSC to the halls of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. After earning a degree in agricultural economics from A&M and a law degree at Baylor University, McClure lobbied the Senate for former President Reagan and served as head of congressional affairs for former President Bush.

He currently works as a lawyer and lobbyist at the law firm Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal LLP in Washington, D.C.

McClure earned the distinction of being the first black student body president at A&M in 1976. Previously, he had been state president of Future Farmers of America and speaker of the Student Senate at A&M. Running for student body president, McClure said, "was a natural thing to do."

McClure said that being student body president and working as a



FILE PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AGGIELAND AND THE BATTALION

Former A&M student body presidents, clockwise, from left: Will Hurd '99; Fred McClure '76; Schuyler Houser House '01; Joe Jordan '83. Their experiences after leaving A&M have included living near Tokyo while pursuing a masters degree to lobbying the Senate for former President Reagan.

lobbyist in Washington, D.C., have at least one thing in common: "The simple issue of having people with disparate views find some ground of commonality, where you can reach some sort of accord or agreement that lets things go forward."

He said that future student body presidents should not forget that they are there to be a servant of the students.

Just outside of Tokyo, former student body president Schuyler Houser House is earning a masters degree in international management at the University of Maryland University College. (She said the similarity of her maiden name and her married name House is due to an alphabetical seating arrangement in a freshman course).

"(As student body president) I learned more in one year about other people and about myself than I'd learned before or have since," said House, who was elected SBP in 2001.

House presided over a rocky time in student government, when students were working to save the Bonfire tradition in the aftermath of the Aggie Bonfire collapse.

"As student leaders, we had to deal with complicated and emotional issues, make difficult decisions, face a lot of public pressure and wrestle with our own sadness," she said.

Will Hurd was student body president at the time of the

tragedy. He said he still has a difficult time listening to "Amazing Grace" because he associates the tune with the Bonfire tragedy.

After a pile of logs collapsed on the A&M campus, killing 12 students, Hurd faced a media avalanche on behalf of the student body. He said he conducted close to 70 interviews over a three-week period.

"I was able to bring the face of the good things about Bonfire and A&M to the world," Hurd said. "I would love to have never had that experience."

Despite many visible changes to the A&M campus, Jordan said the attitude of students hasn't changed much since the early 1980s.

He recalled a prank where he was dragged by his dorm mates and thrown into a pigpen on the west side of campus. The pigpens are gone, perhaps replaced by a research lab, but A&M and its leadership opportunities have made a permanent impression on Jordan and his fellow student body presidents.

"Learn as much as you can from every person you meet and give as much as you can to the University community while you are there," House said. "Understand... the core meanings of the traditions and values that make Texas A&M great, and don't forget to uphold those steadfastly after you graduate."

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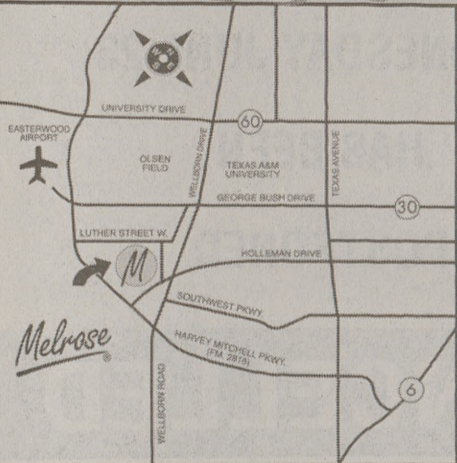
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