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Membership is **FREE**, but registration is required each year to ensure that our records remain current.

The HAMC is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization recognized under section 501(c)(3). Our Federal Tax ID# is 76-015741.

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Submissions are encouraged and should pertain to news/information relevant to Houston Aggies. Send to:

Houston Aggie, c/o deborah lawson '92
P.O. Box 940082, Houston, Texas 77094-7082
deborahlawson@aggienetwork.com.

Submissions may be edited for length, grammar, accuracy, or for any other reason. Articles may also appear on the HAMC's website. Please contact the editor for additional information, including deadlines.

For information on advertising in the Houston Aggie, please contact Elizabeth Hamburg '07 at **elizabethhamburg@aggienetwork.com.**

Because the Houston Aggie Magazine is sent via bulk mail, it is not forwarded or returned. Please remember to update your address on the website: www.HoustonAgs.org.

Editor: deborah lawson '92

Sponsors: Elizabeth Hamburg '07

William G.
Pritchett '44
and Rick
Pritchett '07
show off
their Aggie
Rings.



Editor's Corner

I've been involved with the HAMC since 2007, doing everything from assistant treasurer at the Downtown Lunch to President in 2013 to my all-time favorite job – editing this newsletter. But the hardest thing I've ever done is say "Here" at Muster for someone I love.

As an Aggie, I've never met a stranger. I believe that with all my heart. And I also believe that Muster is the most powerful tradition that we Aggies celebrate. I love the idea of getting together to celebrate the lives of those who are no longer with us on this earth, but who live on in our hearts, our minds, and our traditions. There is no greater joy for me than hearing the resounding "Here" when each name is called; knowing the love that fills our hearts and the memories that will live on forever.

This year, I lost several people who have had a profound impact on my life, so this issue is personal. I hope you enjoy it.
 deborah '92



*I've seen 'em lose and I've seen 'em win,
 But I've never seen 'em quit.*

Dr. Kristin Marcum, Class of 2003



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President's Message

Howdy Ags! We've kicked off our 2016 Membership Drive with a new mantra:

Attend. Donate. Volunteer.

ATTEND

Attend. The Houston Aggies host countless events every month and throughout the year to encourage a wide variety of people to participate. We have your typical happy hours around town, your atypical happy hour at Athena Gun Club, breakfasts, a crawfish boil, a golf tournament, Muster, Coach's Night, a Barn Dance, and numerous other special events through the year. We are also excited about the reactivation of ANI, our own Aggie Networking Initiative, so please look for more details on our website in the coming weeks. If there is an event that you feel we are missing, please feel free to reach out to us and let us know!

We love to see our active members, their guests, and lots of new faces at each of these events, and encourage you to come out and get involved. Our volunteers (and our Sponsors) are always beyond thrilled when we have a good turn out!

Donate. In order for these events to take place, we, of course, need money. Your donations fund scholarships, support TAMU clubs and programs, and most importantly, allow us to put on events like Muster and Coach's Night.

We greatly appreciate each penny, dime, dollar, ten, fifty, and hundred we receive. No donation is too small or too large to help us out. Take Muster, for example. If everyone who attended gave just \$8, the event would pay for itself. And many of you gave. Thank you! You made a difference.

In the last few weeks, each of you should have received a message from us in your snail mailbox. Please take a moment to verify your information and consider making a donation to the Houston A&M Club. Once you've decided, you can either go online to www.HoustonAgs.org to enter your updated information (and donate by credit card) or drop your mailer in your nearest mailbox (with a check).

We realize that some of you did this last year, and the year before, and the year before that. But verifying your information annually helps us ensure that you receive information about the Houston A&M Club for the coming year and we avoid unnecessary returned postage fees.

DONATE

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer. We saved the best for last. I cannot thank our volunteers enough. I, myself, started as an Aggie Volunteer 9 years ago with the Las Vegas A&M Club, and I have proudly served here for the last 6. We aren't asking you to come to every event and volunteer every time (unless you want to), but once you figure out what you enjoy and what you would like to help with, we would love to hear from you.

Thanks to a last-minute Facebook call, many of you came out and volunteered at Muster. We can't thank you enough for saving the day. Muster morning, as the rain continued and we wondered if we would be paddling to this year's event, some of our amazing volunteers notified us that they were flooded in. In response to our post, Volunteers came forth to help out our Aggie family in an amazing way.

THANK YOU to not only our volunteers for that day, but for EVERY event. Your time and dedication does not go unnoticed. Without you, none of our events or community volunteer opportunities would be possible.

A special thank you goes out to Elizabeth Hamburg '07, Executive Director, who came up with our new mantra. She has done an amazing job preparing for this campaign and ensuring that the 95,000+ Aggies in Houston know that there are many ways that they can participate with the Houston A&M Club.

I look forward to seeing you at events, hearing your ideas, counting the money (must I state the obvious) that you're giving back to local Aggies, and hearing how you would like to get involved.

Thanks and gig 'em!

Amy Blaase '03

Amy.Blaase@AggieNetwork.com





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Donald Thomson '04



"That guy can sell ice to Eskimos!" It's a common enough cliché for a smooth talker, but rarely a compliment. Unless you're Donald "DT" Thomson '04 and your job really is selling ice – well not to Eskimos – but ice hockey on the border of Mexico is hard enough. That's right, ice hockey in the 110 degree heat of South Texas...and they bought it!

After graduating with a Master's Degree in Sports Management, in 2007, Donald needed a job. That's when he met Aggie Glenn Hart '78 at a sports seminar on campus. Glenn was known for many business successes ranging from Laredo Energy to real estate developments to ownership interests in a variety of sports organizations. And Glenn wanted Donald to sell Corporate Sponsorships for his Laredo Bucks Hockey team.



But wait, ice hockey in Laredo?! "How did they keep the ice from melting?" "Where did they get the players?" "Who watches ice hockey in Laredo?" Those are just some of the questions Donald fielded over the years as he learned about people, about business, and about himself. So from 2007 to 2012, Donald sold ice, and the life experiences that he gained have proven to be invaluable.



"Go get 'em!" Donald still remembers the sage advice he received on his first day on the job. "Go get what?!"

Donald remembers thinking. He knew no one in Laredo, had never seen a hockey game in his life, had never sold anything ever, and did not speak a word of Spanish. And those three words were all the training he was going to get. But he'd been told:

"You have to get out of your comfort zone once in a while to find out what you're really made of." So he did.

After some hard struggles to find his footing, Donald eventually came to one simple realization. People don't want to be sold anything. They want to BUY. And they want to buy from people they genuinely like and trust. That realization proved to be the key to success for Donald in Laredo's family-centric culture. Once someone realized that Donald was a genuine, trustworthy person, the sky was the limit. By the end of his first year with the Bucks, Donald had helped lead the organization to the Central Hockey League's "Corporate Sponsorship Franchise of the Year."

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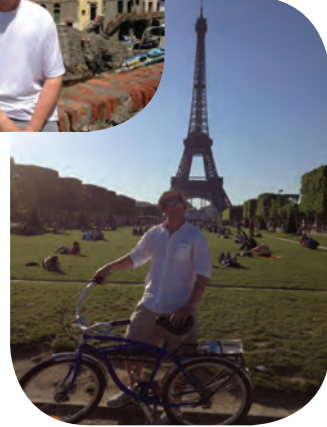
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After just 5 short years with the Bucks, Donald rose to President of Business Operations; but alas, it was time to move on. He was ready for a new challenge. One that would fulfill him by allowing him to help others. But first, he needed a break. That break came in the form of a year-long sabbatical that included a 2-month backpacking trip all over Europe before settling in the Houston area.

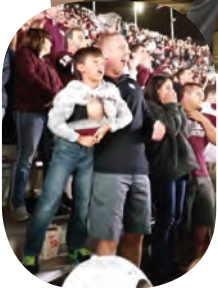
After his European sabbatical, which once again proved that getting out of his comfort zone would have a lifelong impact, Donald returned to his hometown of Houston. Looking for his next move, Donald became a regular at the Reveille Breakfast, where Aggies do Business with Aggies. Although he showed up at breakfast expecting to settle in the sports management arena, as his network grew, so did his options.



Soon, his rising star led him to The Woodlands and his next big break. But there was one thing that Donald couldn't leave behind in Laredo. Of all the strong personal relationships he had established with business leaders and hockey fans, his heart belonged to a sweet Latina named Xanath, and her two children, Julius (now 10) and Xarlet (now 8). So in 2012, Donald returned to Laredo with a sparkling rock and a family promise.



Today, Donald has found his calling in the Houston real estate market, quickly growing a largely Aggie clientele, who know that “DT” stands for “dedicated and trustworthy.” Donald has helped fellow Ags with their real estate needs all over the Houston area, from Katy to Humble to Downtown to Conroe. As a residential Realtor for Keller Williams Realty, Donald continues to follow the same model that made him successful in Laredo: Dedication towards others first and integrity in everything he does. Whether working with a first-time home buyer or an experienced seller, Donald has the heart of a teacher. His attention to detail and constant communication makes each client feel like they are his biggest priority.



He is often quoted as saying: “Real Estate is not my J-O-B. It is not even my career. It is my vocation.” Is it any wonder that many of Donald’s real estate “clients” are now his life-long friends...just as his past clients in Laredo continue to be today.

Meet Donald and the other amazing Aggies who call The Woodlands home at the monthly Aggie lunch at Americas on the Waterway on the third Wednesday of each month at High Noon.



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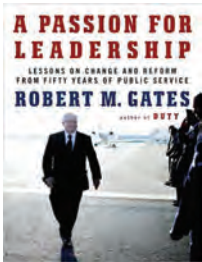
A Passion for Leadership

For sixteen years it has been my mission to write about leadership and the benefits it brings to an organization of any size resulting in increased effectiveness, productivity and profitability. However, nothing written to date exceeds the related experiences shared in this book by Robert M. Gates, who served as Director of the CIA, President of Texas A&M University and Secretary of Defense under both Bush and Obama. Fundamental to each tenure was the issue of reform, which in each case required actions of organizational change and the severe implications for both people and processes.

According to Gates, "In today's America, if a leader wants to inspire excellence, she must model it herself. She must treat her employees with respect and dignity, empower them, tell them the truth, trust them and hold them accountable. She won't get through to everyone, but she will influence enough people to accomplish her goals. Only the people who work for you can bring about the transformational changes you seek."

Gates defines a leader as "one who guides, one who shows the way." He further states, "A leader is in his position precisely because people had confidence in his judgment and believe he was the person for the job. There are no guarantees of success, but if he doesn't lead, who will?"

Bob Gates has both the intellect and the humanity to epitomize the nature of a true leader and his examples are lessons that all who aspire to lead others should learn. In a world where genuine leadership is sadly lacking in both the public and private sectors, Gates as a model is truly a blessing.



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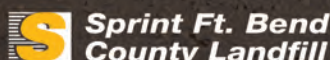
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