
https://theeagle.com/news/local/remembering-bonfire-tradition-was-always-first-for-adams/article_991a8a58-083e-11ea-aa1e-af801ca51582.html

Remembering Bonfire: Tradition was 'always first' for Adams

From the Twenty years later: Remembering Bonfire series

Megan Rodriguez

Nov 16, 2019

Editor's Note

This story is part of a series remembering those who were affected by the Bonfire collapse on the Texas A&M campus on Nov. 18, 1999. Twelve Aggies were killed and 27 were injured.

Miranda Denise Adams' family always takes fresh flowers to her gravesite in Webster for her birthday, then celebrates the occasion with a cake back home in Santa Fe.

The biomedical science sophomore, who died in the Aggie Bonfire collapse on Nov. 18, 1999, was an aspiring pediatrician who had wanted to attend Texas A&M University since the sixth grade, according to her mother, Carolyn Adams.

It was the only school to which she applied. Miranda was excited to become an Aggie, but Carolyn said she was especially excited to participate in Bonfire.

"I still remember when she called and said, 'I found my niche. I found what I want to do,' and it was Bonfire," Carolyn said. "We were excited for her but said to remember that school comes first. She assured us that was going to be the case, and she did very well academically. But I think Bonfire was always first for her."

Carolyn remembers instant messaging her daughter the night of the collapse. Miranda was in a hurry because she was studying for an 8 a.m. exam before she went to work on Bonfire.

Carolyn was at home with her granddaughter, Tylee.

“Tylee had been sitting on my lap, and even though she was just 9 months old, she would bang on the keyboard,” Carolyn said. “I would send it to Miranda and say, ‘That’s Tylee saying that she loves you,’ and Miranda got a kick out of that.”

When Tylee’s parents — Miranda’s oldest brother, Greg Adams, and his wife, Kelly — came to pick up Tylee that night, they sat down for a few minutes to instant-message Miranda.

“It was not something we normally did, but looking back it was a special gift that each one of us got to talk to her that night,” Kelly said.

The family members attend each Bonfire Remembrance Ceremony on campus, and there are other personal ways that they keep Miranda’s memory alive.

For Miranda’s brother, Mark, it meant naming his first daughter Emma Miranda. For her cousin Erin, it was using a personal item in her wedding. She carried a handkerchief made out of a bonnet from Miranda’s baptism, because Miranda had planned to do the same someday. Greg and Kelly have made a point to share stories about Miranda with their children.

For Carolyn, it’s passing her own memories of Miranda down to the grandchildren, who she regularly takes to the cemetery in Webster to visit Miranda’s gravesite.

Miranda is such a part of the family’s conversations that Carolyn said the children born after her passing speak about her as if she never left.

“She’s gone from our presence, but she’s never gone from our thoughts,” Carolyn said.

Misty Newsome was Miranda’s best friend since elementary school. From lip-sync performances together in the fourth grade to playing in the marching band as teenagers to serving as Santa Fe High School’s student council president and vice president, the two were inseparable. Newsome chose to go to Baylor University, Miranda chose A&M. But both made time to visit each other.

Newsome keeps a photo of Miranda on her piano at home, and takes time to post some of her favorite memories on Facebook on Miranda's birthday and on Nov. 18. She said she frequently thinks about who Miranda would have become. Who would she have married? How many kids would she have? All questions that will forever remain unanswered.

The passing of 20 years since Miranda's death is hard to process, Newsome said. The upcoming remembrance ceremony is a reminder that more time has gone by than Miranda's full lifetime. "We just didn't have enough time with her," she said.

But Newsome said she finds hope in knowing that Miranda was committed to her Christian roots.

"I just try to be grateful and thankful that she is in the arms of Jesus, and we can be sure of that," Newsome said.

Kenny Adams, Miranda's father, recalled some of his favorite memories, including the day she was bursting at the seams with excitement after attending A&M's Fish Camp. Kenny said the night after she returned home, Miranda visited him at work and couldn't stop talking about the university.

"Such a fireball," Kenny said. "She was eager to go, and had the spirit driven in her heart already."

Thinking back to the night of the collapse, Kenny said the 12 who died were part of a particularly committed group of Aggies who were "bound and determined to do their job, and they fill it with that Aggie spirit and love they had with the university."

Carolyn keeps up with Miranda's friends on social media but said it can be bittersweet to watch them grow up. She wonders what Miranda would be doing now.

It's a challenge the entire family has had to overcome through their own methods of coping and remembrance.

“None of us are perfect, but she was the perfect daughter for Kenny and I,” Carolyn said. “We couldn’t have asked for a better daughter.”

Photo gallery: Texas A&M Bonfire

Bonfire



Dave McDermard/The Eagle

Bonfire