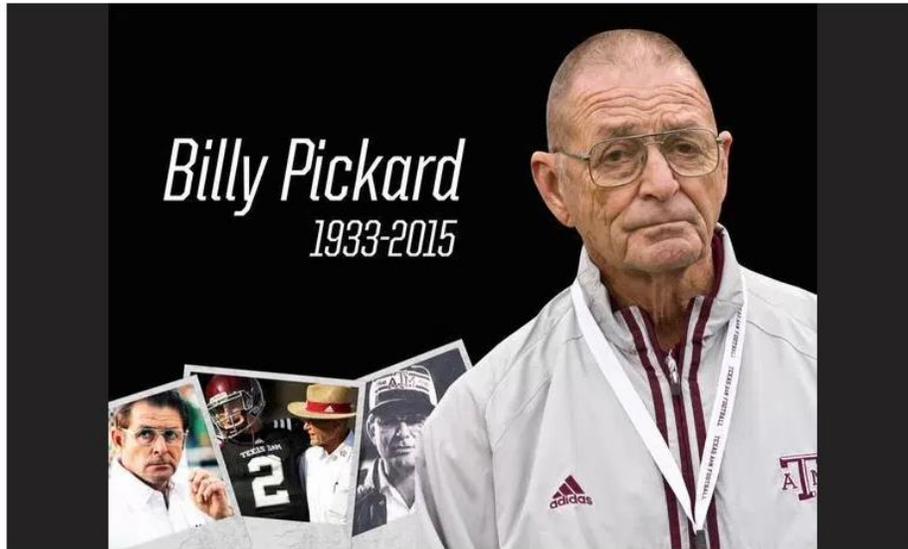


## **TEXAS A&M LEGEND BILLY PICKARD PASSES AWAY**

Dear Members,

Texas A&M Athletics lost a great mentor, inspiration and perhaps the most loyal team member today. Mr. Pickard passed away at 12:05am this evening. Please keep his family in your prayers during this very difficult time. Sending thoughts and prayers to all the lettermen affected by this loss.



[The Eagle News](#)

[Aggie Sports reflection](#)

[Statesman News](#)

[KBTX News](#)

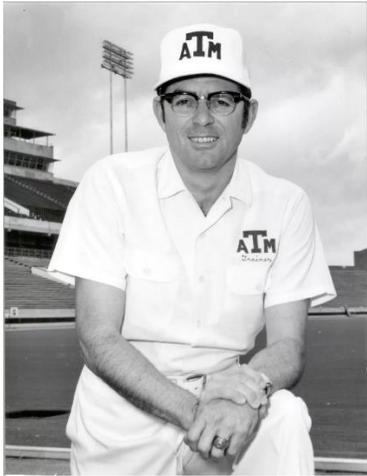
[SportsDay News](#)

COLLEGE STATION-- The legendary Texas Aggie Billy Pickard, Class of '56, passed away at 12:05 a.m. on Monday, Mar. 9, 2015 at the age of 81 after suffering a stroke.

Before passing early Monday, Mr. Pickard was surrounded by his wife Linda, and son Kevin Robert, Aggie Class of '97, and daughter-in-law Amy, along with his daughters Janet and Joy and several grandchildren along with friends were by his side for a prayer service as his two other sons—Joe and John, listened in via telephone.

“Typical of dad,” Kevin said. “He wanted to spend one more day in Aggieland.”

Texas A&M football coaches from Paul “Bear” Bryant to Kevin Sumlin, and players from John David Crow to Johnny Manziel, will miss the man simply known as Mr. Pickard or Pick.



The core values of Texas A&M University--respect, integrity, leadership, excellence, loyalty and selfless service are appropriate when describing Wilford "Billy" Pickard.

A San Antonio native, Mr. Pickard's affiliation with Texas A&M began in the fall of 1952 as a freshman in the Corps of Cadets Company A-Armor. Later that year, he would move into Hart Hall as part of Company A-Athletics as a student football trainer. He continued in that role serving with great distinction with legendary head football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant and assisting the head trainer, Smokey Harper. Mr. Pickard was a valued asset at the infamous Junction Boys football training camp prior to the 1954 football season. Mr. Pickard tended to a member of the Junction Boys, Gene Stallings, who would play a major role in getting Mr. Pickard back to Aggieland.

Upon his graduation from Texas A&M, Mr. Pickard served as the athletic trainer at Port Arthur High School. In Port Arthur, Pickard would work on players from Nederland High School who was led by another Texas legend Bum Phillips. In 1957, Pickard moved to Brazosport High School as head athletic trainer where he served until his services were requested in Aggieland.



Mr. Pickard was one of the first hires made by a member of that Junction Boys football team and newly named Texas A&M athletic director and head football coach Gene Stallings. Mr. Pickard joined the football staff on a full-time basis as head athletic trainer on January 1, 1965.

Mr. Pickard gladly accepted additional responsibilities in 1972 when athletic director and head football coach Emory Bellard asked him to become the equipment manager, as well as head trainer.



One of the facets most admired by those who have known Mr. Pickard is his ability to adjust and his willingness to do whatever it takes to help Texas A&M University. As Marvin Tate took over the athletic director's position in 1978 and Tom Wilson assumed the head football coaching role at Texas A&M, Mr. Pickard assumed the responsibility of coordinating the training, equipment and all athletic facilities on campus in 1979.

When Texas A&M hired Jackie Sherrill as athletic director and head football coach in 1982, Mr. Pickard was a trusted confidant and advisor to Coach Sherrill. In 1987, Mr. Pickard was named an assistant athletic director for training, equipment and facilities.

With Texas A&M athletic director John David Crow and head football coach R.C. Slocum, Mr. Pickard continued in his role as assistant athletic director. As Wally Groff succeeded Crow as the athletic director, Mr. Pickard was named an associate athletic director for facilities in 1994 and was later named senior associate athletic director for facilities.

In this role, Mr. Pickard flourished in assisting with the building of all new athletic facilities on campus including the Bernard C. Richardson Zone at Kyle Field, the Bright Football Complex and Nye Academic Center, as well as the Carolyn and Jack Little Complex on west campus.

Even though he was highly involved with football, Mr. Pickard cared for student-athletes of all Aggie athletics teams. He was on the bench for the first Aggie basketball game played in G. Rollie White in 1954, as well as the last basketball game played in "Jolly Rollie". He was a fixture at Aggie baseball games at Kyle Baseball Diamond as well as Olsen Field and loved to question the official scorer's decisions. When approached by the Texas A&M Lettermen's Association about which sports to list beside his name on the donor wall, he simply said, "No sports, please, just list me as a company man."

Highly respected in the national athletic circles, Mr. Pickard has been an active member of the Southwest Athletic Trainers Association (SWATA) and served in many capacities with the organization including a term as president of the organization in 1960-61. In 1984, Mr. Pickard received the prestigious Frank Medina Award for his contributions to SWATA. The National



Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) elected Mr. Pickard to its Hall of Fame in 1985. In 2004, the Texas A&M Letterman's Association named Mr. Pickard to the organization's Hall of Honor.

Pickard mentored many athletic trainers and managers as well as field staff and that includes current Aggie equipment manager Matt Watson, football head trainer David Weir, women's basketball trainer Mike "Radar" Ricke, athletic field and maintenance manager Leo Goertz and his top assistant Craig Potts. Former trainers such as David Heath, Karl Kapchinski and Steve Smith learned the vocation from this Hall of Famer.

Shyness was not a word used in describing this veteran Aggie. Mr. Pickard was never afraid to offer his opinion. On one particular occasion, Mr. Pickard voiced his displeasure and concern about an underground passageway from the main campus to the west campus. Mr. Pickard made his point quite clear to Texas A&M President Dr. Ray Bowen prior to the project. Another character trait of this dedicated Aggie was his willingness to admit when he was wrong. Since the completion of that project, Mr. Pickard enjoyed jogging from Kyle Field to west campus via the passageway and told Dr. Bowen the project was a great success. The project is now known as Pickard Pass.



Mr. Pickard, who just happened to be born on Halloween, was known as the keeper of Kyle Field. Even after his full-time status ended in 2009, he would arrive most every day at 6 a.m. He was known to check each row of seats at Kyle Field and flush every toilet. He was honored in 2009 with Billy Pickard Day at Kyle Field when the Aggies faced Oklahoma State.

Mr. Pickard was a fixture at Aggie football practices even attending last Thursday's practice in the McFerrin indoor football facility. Last fall marked his 50<sup>th</sup> Aggie football two-a-days, and every Friday before home games Aggie head coach Kevin Sumlin would have Mr. Pickard address the squad.

