



## Lucas John Kimmel

# Carrying On Tradition

**L**ucas Kimmel was a young man who had taken the time to map out a blueprint for the dreams and ambitions he carried with him when he left home and turned his attention to college. Long ago he had developed a distinct plan for his future.

He wanted to become a veterinarian.

He wanted to serve his country with honor and distinction by spending time in the military.

He wanted to follow in his brother's footsteps by attending Texas A&M University.

It would be an opportunity, Kimmel knew, to do his part by helping carry out the Tradition of building Aggie Bonfire. When the call finally came, when he heard those axe handles being beaten together in the early hours outside his dorm windows, Lucas Kimmel never wavered.

He grabbed his pot and went to work.

He would be on the site every time he was needed. For the first time in his life he was on his own, and he was determined to make every hour on the A&M campus count.

The school year of 1999, in fact, was the first one Lucas had ever spent away from home. He was a freshman who, on the Sunday before Bonfire fell, had celebrated his nineteenth birthday.

A graduate of Tuloso-Midway High School in Corpus Christi, Lucas had actively involved himself in such athletic endeavors as being a member of the swim team, as well as running track.

He was also active in the 4-H Club, working with animals, growing even more determined to pursue his goal of becoming a veterinarian. One highlight of his life was achieved when Lucas earned his Eagle Scout badge.

Lucas, the son of James and Walieta Kimmel, was a biomedical science major at Texas A&M, joining the Corps of Cadets' Company D-2, known as "Dog Company," and serving with the Second Brigade, 4th Battalion.

He was the recipient of an Army ROTC scholarship, as well as a scholarship from the Corps.

Lucas Kimmel always knew that the military would one day be an important part of his life. At Texas A&M, he had his chance to prove it, and he was making the most of it.

Said Kyle Warner, a friend from high school, "Lucas knew exactly what he wanted to do. He had everything laid out. He was going to do it. But now he doesn't get to."

Warner remembered the competitive spirit that dwelled within Lucas.

He recalled, "We would show up for practice and swim for two hours. Most of us would be using every bit of energy we could to get out of the pool, and Lucas would be running around and yelling, at the top of his lungs, one of those songs he sang, or one of his enthusiastic chants."

It was the same enthusiasm, the same competitive spirit that marked Lucas Kimmel's days at Texas A&M.

In his hometown, the Rev. John Ouellette, the pastor of St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Violet, remembered the young man as an altar server, telling mourners that Lucas Kimmel's good nature showed him to be "an instrument of the presence of God. Every time you encountered him and you encountered those good qualities, you were encountering Christ."

His values, those good qualities, only reflected the ones he had inherited from his parents.

Christine Pieper, Lucas's sister, said the Kimmel family wanted the families of other victims to know that their "thoughts and prayers" are with them.

She called her brother a leader, a role model and a "mischievous little squirt."

Christine said, "Lucas used to tell me, 'you're my hero.' "But he was the hero." 🐾