

Howdy, Class of 1980!

I am both humbled and honored to be the recipient of the Class of '80 E. King Gill Selfless Service award this year and wanted to both express my appreciation and tell a little bit of my Aggie story. An award like this really demonstrates the unique culture of A&M and the values that Aggies hold personally important.

I'm a second generation Aggie, with my father (Class of '85) being the person who first introduced me to A&M through tailgates and football games. I knew then that A&M was different from any other college I had visited and was exactly where I wanted to be. Now that I am a new former student of A&M, I can say that my first judgements were correct. Some of the most important lessons I learned from my time at A&M had nothing to do with my classes or earning a degree. The core values are seamlessly woven into the Aggie experience and continue to guide Aggies well past graduation.

As a freshman, I knew I wanted to be very involved on campus and joined several student organizations, including the Aggie Network Student Ambassadors (ANSA). I spent a lot of time at The Association of Former Students, working events like Class Reunions and prospective student tours. I learned what it meant to be a part of the Aggie Network, and the importance of "Aggies help Aggies". I took that a step further when I decided to study abroad in Rwanda, a trip that would change the meaning of Selfless Service for me and as a result, my choice of career.

In Rwanda, I repaired medical equipment and got to interact with patients at a small, rural hospital. At the time, I was majoring in biomedical engineering with the intention of going to medical school and dropping engineering entirely. Rwanda showed me the service in engineering that I never saw in the classroom. I would fix a piece of medical equipment and then immediately see it get used. Seeing the direct impact of my service in Rwanda was exactly what encouraged me to help start TUFU, or TAMU Urban Farms United, once I returned to A&M the following fall.

TUFU focuses on using vertical hydroponic towers to grow and supply fresh produce to the local community and students. There were many obstacles in growing the organization, but I'm proud to say that we've grown to being a recognized student organization that will persist long after I graduate.

Most recently, I committed to my dream program – EnMed. This program is a partnership between A&M College of Medicine, A&M College of Engineering, and Houston Methodist Hospital. I'll earn an M.D. and Masters of Engineering in the program, integrating the two fields I'm passionate about and that have enabled me to selflessly serve while at A&M. Thankfully, the Class of '80 E. King Gill Selfless Service award will help me afford this program and continue my efforts at embodying Selfless Service in my career.

This turned into a much longer story than I intended, but I hope that gives y'all a better idea of who I am and what this award means to me. Thank you all so much for this recognition and further integration into the Aggie Network. I have heard nothing but outstanding things about the Class of 1980 from my time in ANSA and am so grateful to be connected to your Class.

In the Aggie Spirit,

Alex Ramos '21 (& now '25)