In the fall of 1956, I had been elected head yell leader by my junior classmates, an honor I’ll always cherish and remember.

Talking with the other yell leaders, Corps Commander Jack Lunsford, and several others about traditions, it was noted that the Aggie T had not been performed at Kyle Field for several years, that it was an important event to the 12th Man and simply must not be forgotten and allowed to die. There had been a long intermission and our Class had never witnessed the “formation of the T” as students at Texas A&M.

This was important, so I went to Col. E.V. Adams ’29, commander of the band and one of the best Aggies I have known, and asked for his help to get this tradition back on track. He said “yes,” but only if the band members voted for it, because it meant the band giving up a game-time band march. That performance was already a famous tradition and something they had worked for all year. Being one of the best groups on campus, they fully understood the Aggie Spirit and voted “yes” to the man, and we were under way.

Col. Adams had films of previous formations of the T and a complete understanding of field maneuvers and how to get this done—even with 5,000 to 5,500 students who had never done it before and most of whom had never even seen it. He showed me how the four wing and battalion commanders could command the entire corps from four positions on the field and how military-trained people knew the basics. The other four yell leaders would shape this group of unknown size.

He also told me the big, basic requirement was permission from “the Bear,” Coach Paul Bryant—and I could tell he thought that might be “tough” (meaning impossible). Coach Bryant pretty much owned Kyle Field and its halftime. I went to Kyle Field and caught Coach Jim Owens and told him of our plan. I told him we needed the field for a practice session and at halftime in the upcoming Rice game (the one game I thought they would approve, if any at all). Coach Owens took my request to Coach Bryant and the word came back quickly from Coach Bryant—“No,” without hesitation or explanation—and he dismissed me. I thought, “We have come too far for this answer.”

The next day I went back to Coach Bryant’s office and explained to several people who shielded him from the “unwanted and uninvited” that I really needed to see him on an important matter. I finally got in and quickly explained my mission. He looked at me and said, “Weren’t you here yesterday? I thought we gave you an answer on that!” I said, “Yes, you did, but it wasn’t the answer I wanted.” I explained that I thought it would help the school—the 12th Man needed it, that former students would like it, and fans would appreciate it. He looked back at me and said, “Hell, son, if it means that much to you, go ahead.”

From there it was easy. Col. Wilkins got permission for use of an ROTC drill time and school facilities for rehearsal. Col. Adams drew the plan and I got use of Kyle Field so we would have access to the loud speaker system, though we were to be limited to one hour of use. I met with the whole Corps at one time and informed them “how to do it,” and we did it on game day without a hitch.

I always felt these men did far more than I knew to help accomplish this project. They were the type of
The Block T formed by the entire Corps of Cadets on Kyle Field in 1956 (above). As far as we were able to determine, the maneuver did not happen again at a football game until 2011 (left).

leaders so needed in our schools today. The Spirit of Texas A&M’s Corps of Cadets was demonstrated that day and showed clearly what our school is all about and why. Now 50 years later and 10 times larger, the Spirit lives on. We were the last Class to do this at a football game until 2011, and I feel the 2011 Block T was a gift from the Class of ’57 that kept it alive. We should be proud of it.

It was also inspiring to see this was chosen to honor our veterans, a significant number being Aggies who have served and are serving our nation, and repeated in the goodbye year for Texas A&M from the Big 12 Conference. The 1956 version of the Block T was Corps-only, and the 2011 version was enhanced by the band outlining the T and the Corps filling in.

I hope our entry into the SEC will also revive the tradition of the Block T to its place as a tradition we have left behind but not forgotten. In our 55th year of the Class of ’57, we hope to see it in its proper place and the Class of ’57 can be proud as we celebrate our 55th Reunion.

**Editor’s note:**
Special thanks to John M. Duncum, who first heard Dorsey’s story and persuaded him to write it down. “I think it emphasizes the kind of heart that does perpetuate the Spirit of Texas A&M and I thought it was history that should be recorded and not forgotten,” Duncum said. “To me, the core of this story may not be the Block T but the determination of a young man to get his ducks in a row and face Coach Bryant (really twice) to get permission to do something that was the right thing to do. This is the kind of student leader who becomes a leader in business or any other endeavor of life. A&M is the kind of academic environment that allows the development of creative minds to excel in life.”