



LOST AGGIE TREASURE

*RECOVERED*

*after* 32 Years



**W**hen The Association of Former Students received a stack of letters from St. Paul's fifth grade class, it was the beginning of an Aggie Ring reunion 32 years in the making.

Two years ago, San Antonio student Mario Cervantes, then age 9, found an Aggie Ring along the shores of Calaveras Lake. It was obviously old, had started to corrode, and was encrusted with mud. Still, it looked interesting to young Mario, so he took it home with him. He showed it to his mother who told him to keep it safe so that perhaps one day they could give it back to its owner.

Last year, Mario mentioned the Ring to his teacher, Kristi Sorenson. She asked if Mario would bring it to show the class. He did. And when Kristi saw the Ring, she asked Mario's permission to help return it. Having a grandfather who had attended Texas A&M, Kristi knew that the lost Ring would be treasured by its owner. "When I saw it was an A&M Class Ring, it just blew me away," said Sorensen. "I knew we would have to find the owner. I know how spirited Aggies are."

Each student wrote a letter to The Association describing the Ring in detail. This helped the students learn to write business letters. The engraving on the inside of the 1965 Ring, the letters said, read Joseph C. Brown.

The Association quickly located and contacted Joe Brown at his veterinary practice in San Antonio.

"When I asked Dr. Brown if he had lost his Ring," said Amy Glass '92, Brand Manager for The Association, "I expected him to say that it had been lost for a few months, maybe even a few years. I never expected the answer I got."

He said he lost the Ring on a stormy night 32 years ago in a boating accident. As he jumped into the cold waters of Calaveras Lake southeast of San Antonio, his hand shrunk, and the Ring fell to the bottom. "I remember watching it go, almost like it was in slow motion. Then it was gone," Brown recalled.

Brown and his friends dove for hours before finally realizing their efforts were in vain. He was particularly distraught because not only had he lost his Aggie Ring, but also a family heirloom. The only diamond his grandmother had ever owned had been given to him on his graduation from veterinary school in 1967, and was mounted in the shield on the ring crest.

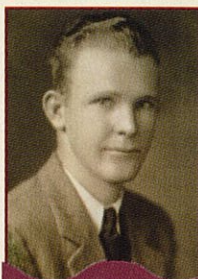
"When I learned how long the Ring had been missing, I was stunned," Glass said, "and Dr. Brown was obviously in shock from the news. Then I learned why my phone call was such a surprise to him."

Dr. Brown's mother had died just two weeks to the day before he got the phone call. Shortly before her death, she mentioned to her son that she always thought he would find his Ring and his grandmother's diamond. She offered to buy him a new Ring, but he refused. He said that it just wouldn't be the same.

"Its as if she has found my Ring for me," said Brown. "I am truly overwhelmed."

*"When I saw it was an A&M Class Ring, it just blew me away. I knew we would have to find the owner. I know how spirited Aggies are."*

—Kristi Sorenson  
Teacher, fifth grade class, St. Paul



Kristi Sorenson knew the Aggie Ring was important because her grandfather attended A&M in the late 1920's.



Students waited anxiously to see Joe Brown '65 reunited with his Aggie Ring.



The San Antonio media and press covered the story of the lost Ring.



Ilana Zapata Sarah James Christian Rivera  
 Aaron Sackey Gus Ontiveros  
 Danielle Suarez Nathan Peña  
 Allegia Trevino



The students who contacted The Association enjoyed learning about Aggie tradition.

James Raymond  
 Elvin Flores  
 Amanda Hurtado  
 Edward Paul  
 Steven Heminger  
 Sarah Cuellar  
 Brianna Becker  
 Marcus Hamser  
 Ashley Nicole Buenrostro  
 Samantha Flores  
 Mario Cervantes  
 Jackie Garcia  
 Kristi Sorenson  
 Jon Garza  
 Hinojosa





*The students of St. Paul's fifth grade class immediately bonded with Dr. Brown.*



*State Senator Jeff Wentworth '62 attended the event, shown here with teacher Kristi Sorenson.*



*L-R, Joe Brown '65, Kristi Sorenson, Mario Cervantes, Amy Glass '92*

**T**he Association put the teacher and the Aggie together on the phone, and quickly arranged a presentation of the Ring. The students at St. Paul School in San Antonio were thrilled to learn that their letters had produced results.

The return of Dr. Brown's Ring was a media event in San Antonio. State Senator Jeff Wentworth '62 attended, as well as representatives from the San Antonio mayor's office. With major radio and press representatives present, Mario Cervantes humbly returned the Ring to its original owner. There wasn't a dry eye in the room.

"I asked Mario if he was excited about all the reporters being there and he said 'No, not really,'" said Mario's grandmother, Dominga Barrera. He told me "Nana, Dr. Brown's nana gave him the diamond in that Ring. I know how much I would miss you if you were gone. I'm just happy that he'll have that piece of her back."

When he put his Ring on, Brown stated that he would be proud to pass the Ring on to his own grandson one day, and that if Mario ever earned his own Aggie Ring, he would never have to worry about paying for it — Aggie word of honor.



*Mario and his family visited with Joe's wife, Linda, second from the right.*