The Wied family, on the outside, looks as normal as any Aggie family would. Parents Keith and Susan Wied sent their four children to Texas A&M, because, as Texas Tech alum Keith says, “It’s the school that everyone wants to be, but isn’t.”

The Wied children were just as enthusiastic as their parents about becoming a part of Aggieland. Twins Michael ’06 and Shaun ’06 and their siblings Lauren ’08 and Ryan ’10 each made their own impact on campus during their collegiate years, be it in the Corps of Cadets, The Association of Former Students or Greek life. However, one of the biggest contributions to Texas A&M didn’t come from the Wied children, but from their parents, after being nominated and selected as the 2010-11 Aggie Parents of the Year.

The honor, presented in conjunction with the annual Parents’ Weekend, has been around since at least 1959, when Texas A&M began selecting an Aggie Mother of the Year. However, the tradition of welcoming and celebrating Aggie parents goes back at least to the first Parents’ Weekend in 1919, when the University was still all-male and all-military and concerned mothers looked forward to a chance to check on the wellbeing of their sons. Today, the Parent’s Weekend committee annually selects a couple each year to honor as Aggie Parents of the Year and serve as “the official greeters of Texas A&M.”

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In 2010, however, circumstances required a slightly different approach.

Susan Wied was a dedicated and supportive Aggie mom over the eight years her children attended Texas A&M, but she was also dedicated to fighting her long battle against breast cancer. She persevered until she passed away in March 2010, just weeks before she and Keith were honored as Parents of the Year.

Even as she fought the disease, Susan and Keith traveled regularly to College Station to spend important and positive moments with their children and friends. “Football weekends are my family’s most favorite Aggie memory,” daughter Lauren says. Although a six-hour drive from Lubbock wasn’t exactly easy, the weekends in College Station gave Susan respite from the medical appointments and chemotherapy treatments, surrounding her with the warm camaraderie and family atmosphere so special to Texas A&M. “All of our trips were memorable,” said husband Keith, who carries on her legacy of involvement and love for Texas A&M.

“She was the best mom,” remembers Keith, a Lynn County commissioner. “She was the disciplinarian when she needed to be, a teacher when she needed to be and loving, always.”

Lauren also remembers her mother’s impact as a parent and then as a friend in her adult years. “When I needed advice, she is who I would go to,” Lauren said. “She would have done anything for us.”

It was Susan’s faith and love as a wife and mother that her family carries on, but it is her dedication and perseverance that many in Aggieland remember her for. “I have no doubt that she would have been at every event possible as part of the Parents of the Year team,” Lauren said. “I know she would have preached to parents on how rewarding it can be to get involved with your child during their time at A&M, to experience the Aggie family.”

Banding together for support in difficult times is a hallmark of the Aggie family. More than a decade ago, the campus and the Aggie Network came together after the Bonfire tragedy, honoring the fallen and supporting a student body, a community and family that, like the stack, were broken. On the first Tuesday of every month, students take a moment at Silver Taps to remember their fallen. And each year, as spring breathes new life into campus, Muster gives Aggies a place to be collectively humbled by the legacy of many Aggies who have come before.

Some say that this support, this Spirit, is Texas A&M’s most defining tradition. It’s this very tradition that the entire Wied family are thankful to have experienced so fully.

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