

Sam Houston



Mafrige Rock now part of Bowers Tradition

GoBarkats.com

Football

Posted: 11/10/2013 8:12:00 AM

No Bearkat benefactor personified Sam Houston State University's motto, "The measure of a life is its service," better than the late Ron Mafrige.

Saturday, in a pregame ceremony at the regular season home finale versus Nicholls State, a special new addition to Elliott T. Bowers Stadium will be introduced in the southwest corner of the stadium in memory of the longtime Bearkat benefactor.

The Mafrige Rock, a 58-inch tall block of Texas granite on a pedestal three feet by three feet, will now sit at the bottom of the ramp the Sam Houston football team descends each game at Bowers.

As the players exit the ramp, they will touch the rock then head onto the playing field to continue Sam Houston's tradition of football excellence.

Mafrige, who passed away in August, 2011, was a generous supporter of Bearkat athletics. Nicknamed "The Rock" by his friends and fraternity brothers in college, the 1960 Sam Houston graduate contributed more than \$2 million to the university.

"Ron was a leader in many ways for alumni," SHSU President Dana Gibson said. "Whether it was related to athletics or developing and advancing the university, he was an alumni leader for years."

Inspiration for the monument came from Mafrige's lifelong friends and Delta fraternity brothers John Bright and Ron Koska.

"John and Ron wanted to find a way to recognize Ron

Mafrige Rock Dedication

Mafrige Rock Dedication

Mafrige's contributions to this campus," SHSU athletic director [Bobby Williams](#) said. "Our department is honored that the Mafrige family, John and Ron have allowed us to implement this new tradition to celebrate a great person. The addition of the monument was announced at our 'Night of Champions' celebration last April."

Mafrige Rock Dedication

Mafrige led and participated in numerous Sam Houston organizations and initiatives. The Houston real estate entrepreneur served as National Campaign Chair for Sam Houston's first capital campaign.

"Ron Mafrige, my friend for more than 50 years, was a great teacher," Bright said. "He taught and believed three things. First, give back to your church, community and to Sam Houston. Second, support and honor our men in uniform. Third, when you leave Sam Houston, you should leave with your diploma in hand."

Mafrige was a Life Endowed Member of the Alumni Association and was a longtime member of the alumni board. He also was a board member and director of the Kat Pack and served as a member of the College of Business Administration's Alumni Advisory Council.

"Ron truly loved this great university and all the people involved in its mission to nurture students and develop leaders," Koska said. "He was so involved with helping the athletic department, but he also contributed generously to the College of Business and the arts. Ron (the Rock) Mafrige will always be remembered by all as a loyal and true Bearkat. He loved to watch his team and cheer them on as he is doing right now, looking down on all of us saying Eat 'em up, Kats!"

Mafrige was a recipient of the 1997 Distinguished Alumnus and 2004 Outstanding Service Awards.

"The family and I are honored to be part of a new tradition as Sam Houston State University," Chrissy Mafrige, Ron's wife, said. "If anyone could help our boys pull off a win it would be Ron through his sheer tenacity, enthusiasm, passion and love for all things Sam Houston."

In 2005, Mafrige gave \$250,000 to make possible construction of an 11,000-sq-ft strength and conditioning facility named after longtime Bearkat football head coach Ron Randleman.

"Ron Mafrige was a great friend of Sam Houston and Bearkat football," Randleman said. "His life epitomized service."

The Ron Mafrige Field House located in the south end zone of Bower Stadium houses the university's athletic administration offices. The Mafrige Basketball Challenge has generated more than \$250,000 in gifts and commitments for the SHSU's basketball endowment with the goal of reaching \$1 million.

"My father was extremely loyal to Sam Houston," Rocky Mafrige, Ron's son, said. "He fell in love with the university and people. It was a big part of his life."

In 2008, Mafrige donated \$40,000 to build the 20-foot-tall statute of General Sam Houston created by alumnus David Addicks, which stands near the Lowman Student Center and Smith-Hutson Building. He also purchased many of the granite benches seen across campus in honor of a number of people.

Outside of university endeavors, Mafrige and his family established scholarship programs at his high school alma mater, San Marcos Baptist Academy, and at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, where seven of his \$10,000 scholarship recipients have opted to attend SHSU. He was a member of the Houston 100 Club, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the Republican National Committee and the Houston Realtors-Political Action Committee.

"I love this university," Mafrige said in a 2006 interview. "The measure of an individual is what is left behind for your fellow man. I can't think of a better way to do that than to help young people get an education."

Copyright ©2024 Sam Houston