



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE

PRIDE

The Alumni Magazine of Texas A&M University-Commerce

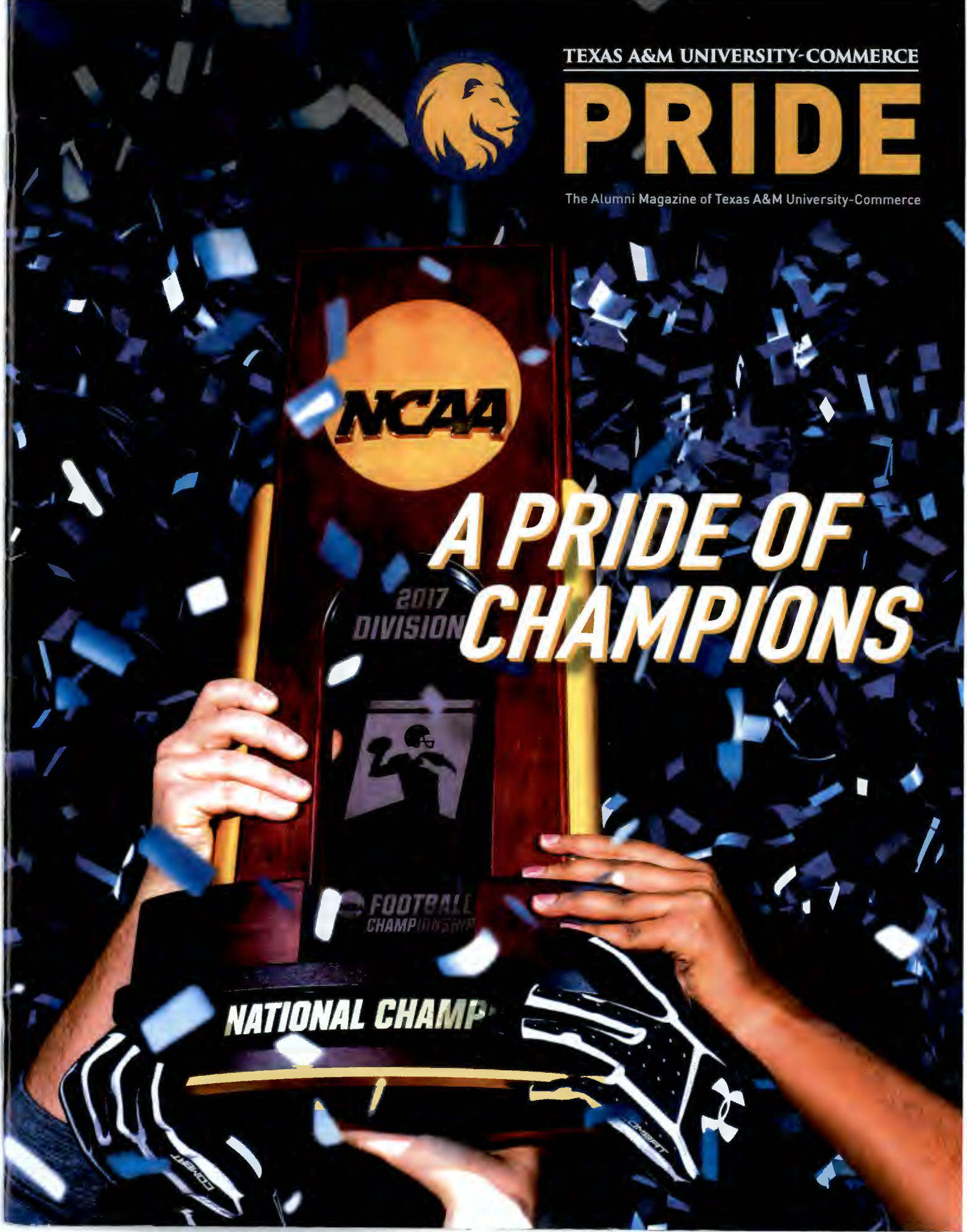
NCAA

2017
DIVISION

A PRIDE OF CHAMPIONS

FOOTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP

NATIONAL CHAMP



On the HEART of a SERVANT LEADER

By Lynne Liberato

Dr. William “Jack” Bell and Dr. Otha Spencer taught us how to write a lead and calculate an f-stop, but we learned so much more as journalism and photography students in the early 1970s. We learned that practicing journalism called us to be public service champions.

The culture that these fine men impressed upon us endures at the university. Our professors, along with the entire A&M-Commerce family, instill in students the need to champion public service as we practice our crafts. Every issue of this magazine provides new evidence that those lessons have been well taught and well executed.

While our heritage as a teachers’ college is certainly a contributing factor, I believe the culture of this college and any organization is instilled by its leaders. Everything I have read about Professor Mayo, the founder of our college, indicates that his approach was that of a servant leader long before the term was broadly used.

“Servant leader” was not a term anyone used when I came to campus in 1971, but it existed in deed. Dr. Bell demonstrated it. He not only chaired the Journalism Department but also served as Commerce’s mayor for four years. Dr. Spencer demonstrated it. He surveyed the Journalism Building’s third floor from his foreboding office at the end

of the hall with a demand for excellence. To him, photojournalism was instrumental to a free society.

Today, we see public service champions in our teachers, our nurses, our business people, our journalists—all of our students and alumni. It is who we are.

Years ago, I put down my notepad and camera to become a lawyer. Even so, the values I was taught at East Texas State University continue to influence me every day. While my professors did not teach me to practice law, they have guided my practice of law. Whether as a journalist or lawyer, the same lesson holds true—I must practice my profession to serve the public good.

Dr. Bell was in my thoughts last year when the United Way of Greater Houston asked me to chair its Hurricane Harvey Recovery Task Force, a position similar to the one I had taken after three earlier natural disasters. It is an opportunity for me again to lead a team that is restoring people’s lives. Like everyone else who pitched in after the storm, I found that I got much more than I gave. And that observation brings me back to A&M-Commerce.

I suspect that Dr. Bell, Dr. Spencer and the many other fine teachers have a reason to champion public service. It provides a critical educational benefit by enhancing a student’s judgment. The

good judgment I acquired from public service has allowed me to give better advice to my clients, help manage my law firm and raise my sons. The ability to exercise good judgment may be the greatest of all professional skills.

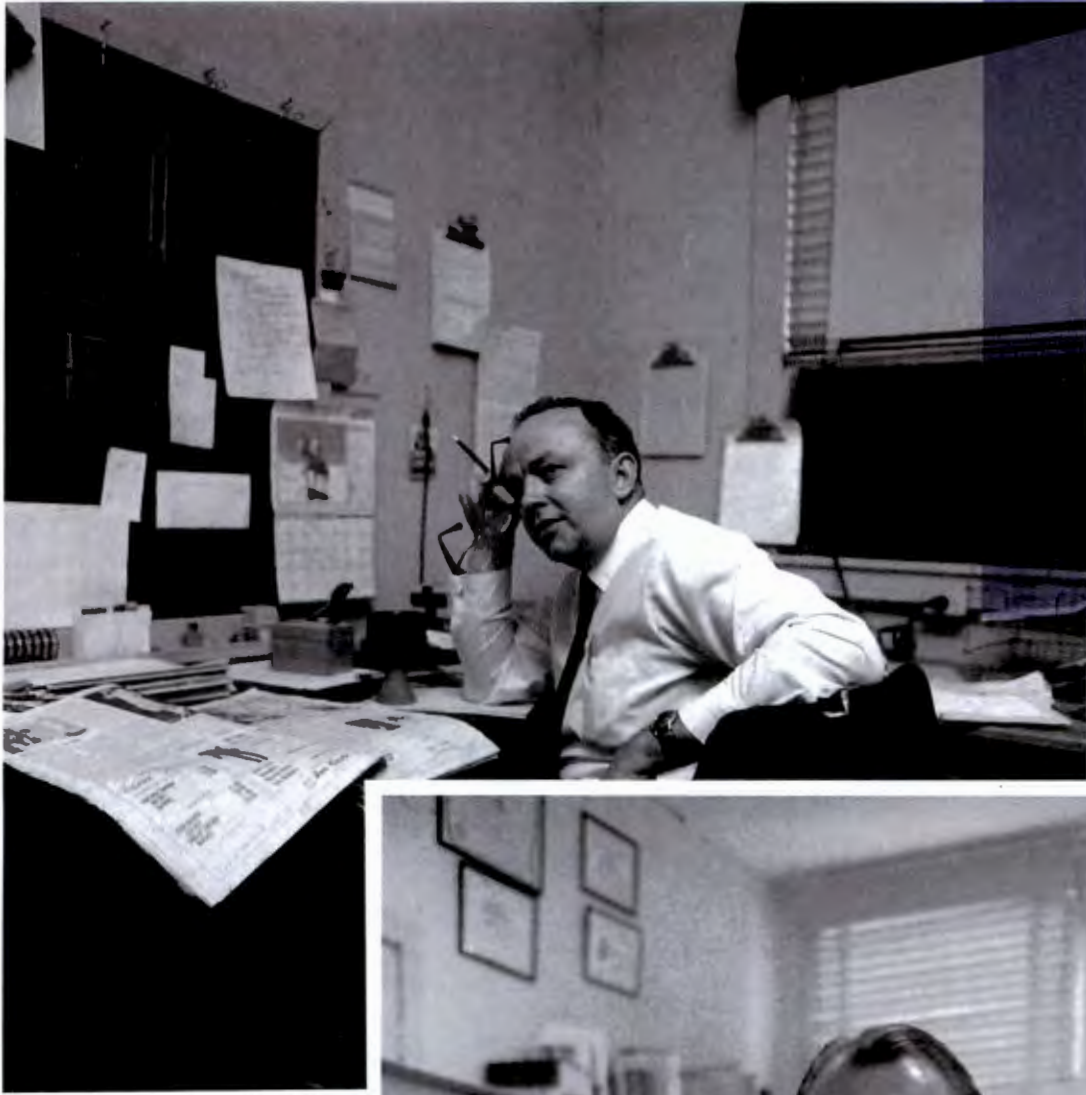
THE GREATEST GIFT ETSU GAVE ME IS THE HEART OF A CHAMPION—A CHAMPION WHO KNOWS THAT SUCCESS MEANS SERVING YOUR PROFESSION, YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOUR WORLD. —LYNNE LIBERATO

At ETSU, we were taught a lot of information, but how to apply it to champion the greater good is the biggest lesson I learned. 📍



Lynne Liberato

A Houston partner at the law firm of Haynes and Boone, Lynne Liberato started as a freshman at ETSU and ultimately received her master’s in Journalism here in 1976. She has argued at the U.S. Supreme Court, been elected president of the State Bar of Texas and was the first practicing lawyer to chair the community campaign for the United Way of Greater Houston.



"SERVANT LEADER" WAS NOT A TERM ANYONE USED WHEN I CAME TO CAMPUS IN 1971, BUT IT EXISTED IN DEED. DR. WILLIAM "JACK" BELL DEMONSTRATED IT.

—LYNNE LIBERATO



DR. OTHA SPENCER WAS ALSO A SERVANT LEADER. HIS SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY SPANNED 47 YEARS.