

A  
Couple,  
Christmas  
*and*  
Kimbrough





# *Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays*



The Christmas season is a beautiful time to reflect, celebrate, give thanks and express gratitude for the many blessings received throughout the year. At West Texas A&M University, we are thankful for the opening of our new Agricultural Sciences Complex as well as the beautiful Veterans Memorial. We're building an on-campus stadium, offering a new doctoral degree, and our students have found success in the classrooms, on the field and on the regional and national stages. These are just a few of the many things that have made 2018 a special year, and I'm thankful for those that learn, teach and work at WTAMU.

As we reflect and rejoice over God's Providence, we are especially grateful for the many friends across the region who contribute to our success as an educational institution. I met many of you during my tour of the Texas Panhandle, and I hope WTAMU continues to be representative and responsive to all of you and those that we serve.

I hope this reflection evokes special memories of Christmases past as we celebrate a few of the University's own enduring traditions. Mary and I wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and a holiday season filled with love, hope and happiness.



*Walter and Mary Wandler*



# Home Game

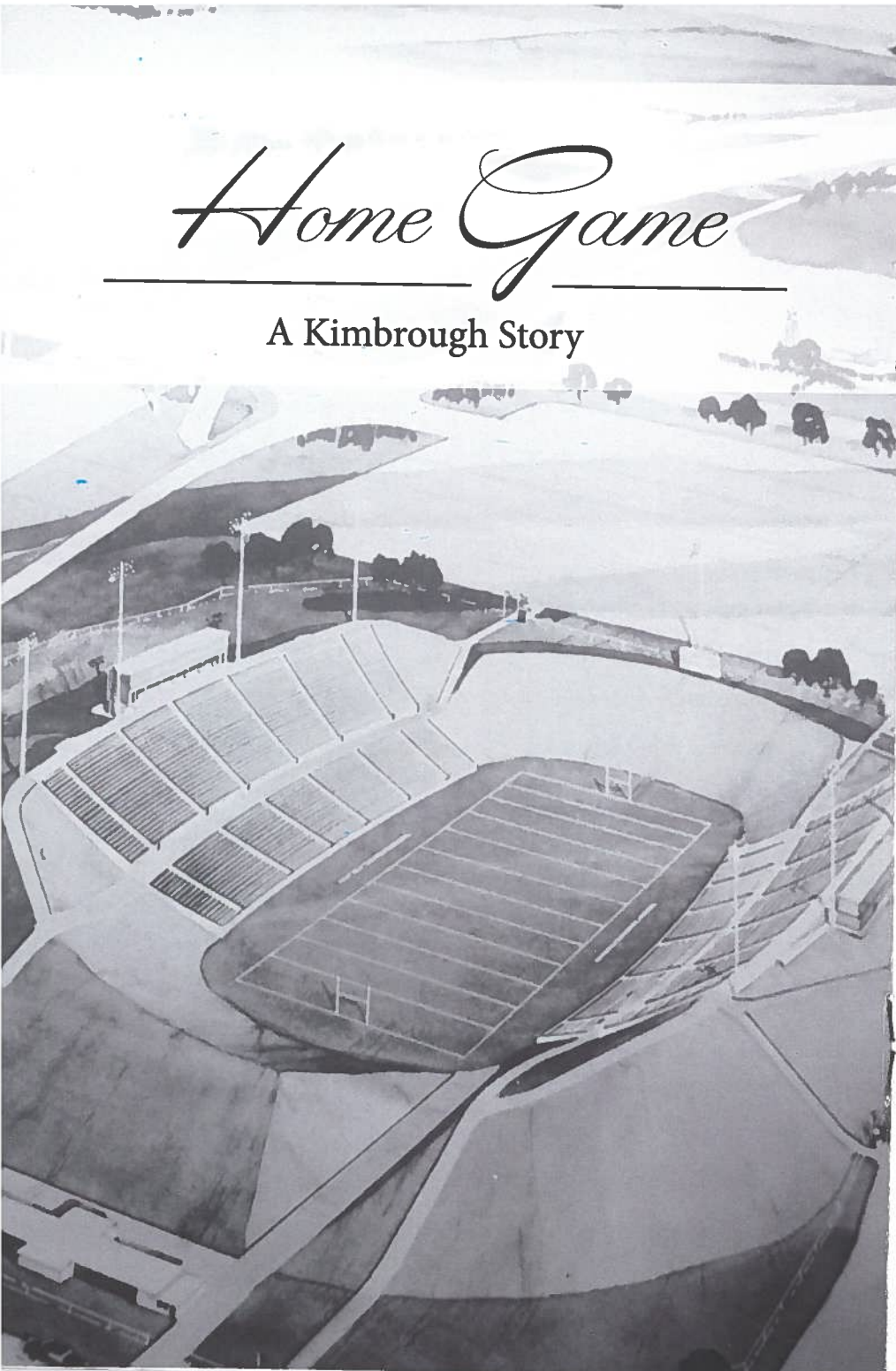
## A Kimbrough Story

Over the years, activities like the Dress-Up Dinners, Sadie Hawkins dances and soft drink dates at the drug store faded away just to be replaced with new places for meeting and dating. Cars became more visible on campus for trips to Amarillo, and the SUB became a popular gathering place for friends and couples. Although no statistics are available, probably one of the most popular and enduring date locations in WT history is Kimbrough Memorial Stadium.

Originally dubbed Buffalo Bowl on Canyon Hill, the new, innovative stadium didn't see its first game until September of 1959—just a few months after Buddy and Mikala Stephens exchanged their wedding vows. It isn't exactly a Dress-Up Dinner with a red velvet dress, but there is no doubt that through the years, many young students got that first glimpse of their future spouse at a Buff football game.

In 1959, Buffalo Bowl replaced the on-campus stadium, which was too small to handle WT's growing fan base or bring in top Division I NCAA football teams. Interest in a new stadium began in the late 1950s. Plans were made, and the state pitched in \$400,000. The college launched a campaign to cover the remaining costs of the estimated \$700,000 bowled stadium. Area towns and counties pitched in, and students spearheaded a fund drive to raise \$50,000. Their efforts surpassed the goal with \$52,000 in pledges.

The college hosted its first game at the new stadium in late September of 1959 with an estimated 11,000 fans in attendance and more than likely, Buddy and Mikala were there, too. Buffalo Bowl on Canyon Hill featured the best in stadium amenities with electrical outlets for plugging in portable radios or electric blankets. It was the place to be for



It was always a special time for students to celebrate and share the spirit of Christmas and reflect on the goodness of life at WT.

December in the early 1960s was an extra-special time for Carolyne Glanton '61, and David Brandon, '62, when they exchanged wedding vows in the Joseph A. Hill Memorial Chapel on campus. The chapel, the site of many weddings—including Buddy and Mikala Stephens—was dedicated in October of 1950. Dr. Joseph Hill, WT's second president, supported the idea of a chapel on campus, saying that West Texas State "needed a place whose very atmosphere breathed the spirit of worship." The chapel is one of the few found on a state college campus, and it has served as the site of many student and former student weddings and more.

In 1970, WT celebrated a new tradition with the Carol of Lights. Students, organizations, residence halls and local businesses contributed to the cost of the bulbs to outline Old Main. A flip of the switch illuminated the University's oldest building and marked the beginning of the holiday season at WT. The choir sang and *The Christmas Story* was read at the very first Carol of Lights event. The tradition grew through the years to include the lighting of additional buildings as well as trees and shrubs around campus, while students and the choir sing carols with lighted candles. It's a tradition that now includes the community as well as a toy drive for needy children.

While many traditions have faded over the years, the Carol of Lights continues. Student organizations still decorate trees and collect gifts for those in need. While many colleges and universities across the country are busy trying to create Christmas-free campuses, WT relishes in the joy of the season and the spirit of giving. December is a time for

studying for finals, but there is also a sense of joy with Christmas dinners, receptions, gatherings and gingerbread-making contests as well as food and gift collections for various organizations in the Canyon and Amarillo communities. The festivities are open to all as a way of coming together to celebrate WT and the season with renewed hope and thankfulness. Celebrating this special holiday is a time-honored practice at WT and reflects the endurance of more than one hundred years of sacred tradition at our ever-evolving University.



*"For even the Son of Man came not to be served  
but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

—Mark 10:45

As we enter the holiday season, I hope each of you will take a moment to reflect on the goodness of life and rejoice in the many blessings we all enjoy. At West Texas A&M University we are thankful for each of you and the history, memories and hopes we share for this wonderful institution and the role it plays in shaping lives and communities across the Texas Panhandle. May the memories of holidays past bring you joy and a spirit of hope and comfort that continues throughout the New Year.

Walter and Mary and all of the students, faculty and staff at West Texas A&M University pray for a blessed Christmas for each and every one of you, happy holidays and a prosperous New Year.





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