

The Aggie 100. AGGIES. ENTREPRENEURS. DREAMERS.

What is your dream?

To create a truly global business. To be the boss I would want to have. To control my own destiny. To become a premier company in the industry.

Sound like big dreams? Impossible dreams? Big, maybe. Impossible, never. These are the dreams of David Wesson '82, Danny Bowers '82, Carol Bowers '82, Kimberly Willmott '86 and many others. They are typical of the entrepreneurial dreams that your fellow Aggies are living today. They are just a few of the dreams that have set 100 Aggie-owned or -led companies on the path to the 2006 Aggie 100.

Students enter A&M with big dreams. Some dream of changing the world, leading nations or discovering breakthrough technologies. Some dreams are more down to earth and involve being the best architect, engineer or accountant possible. For some, the fact that they can be the first in the family to complete college is big enough. These dreams get them out of bed each day and drive them to complete their education. They help them persevere when professors are demanding and the tests are tough.

Entrepreneurs start businesses in much the same way. They dream of changing the world—globally or just their own small piece. They dream of improving peoples' lives. Many seek freedom and independence. Like a student, these dreams get them out of bed each morning and keep them going through product problems, financial challenges and satisfying the most demanding customer.

Aggies and successful entrepreneurs share many traits—integrity, loyalty, tenacity and a solid work ethic, just to name a few. They also share the trait of being a dreamer. They envision a better future; a goal accomplished in the right way and then set about making it a reality. Imagine what happens when you combine Aggie determination and entrepreneurship ... imagine the potential of people who dream big and who are used to making things happen. Imagine 100 of them and you have the Aggie 100 Class of 2006.

The Aggie 100

Mays Business School's Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship created the Aggie 100 to identify, recognize and celebrate the success of the 100

fastest-growing Aggie-owned or -led businesses in the world. The Center also conceived of the program as a unique platform for today's entrepreneurs to share their lessons learned with today's students.

Each year, the Center seeks nominations for the fastest-growing Aggie businesses and invites each

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nominated company to apply for inclusion in the list. Applicants are ranked by compound annual revenue growth over a two-year period and the top 100 companies are named to the year's Aggie 100 list. In addition to revenue growth, each company must be Aggie-owned or -led, be at least five years old and have had revenues of at least \$100,000 in 2003. The companies must also operate in a manner consistent with the Aggie Code of Honor.

On Oct. 12, the 100 companies sent representatives to campus for ceremonies honoring their achievements. This year, 95 companies sent over 180 representatives to campus for the two-day Aggie 100 affair. Recipients were welcomed with a reception at the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Building and then individually recognized at a luncheon on the second day. Over 600 people joined in the celebration at the Zone Club as trophies were presented to each company to commemorate their membership in the Aggie 100. The energy in the room was amazing as current students, members of the Board of Regents, the chancellor, the university president and other members of A&M's leadership team turned out to honor these successful former students.

2006 Aggie 100

This year, the energy and excitement stirred up by this new Aggie tradition continues. With the help of The Association of Former Students, the Texas A&M Foundation, numerous college deans and the Center's own team of volunteers, hundreds of companies were nominated from around the globe. In the end, only 100 could be honored and named members of the Aggie 100 Class of 2006.

The leaders of this year's Aggie 100 represent Class years from the last six decades, going back as far as 1951. They graduated with degrees ranging from agriculture to zoology and include people with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from A&M. Twenty-nine of the companies on the 2006 list were also on the 2005 list.

The Aggie 100 focuses on the fastest-growing Aggie businesses and this year's list certainly includes some fast-growing companies. The No. 1 company is GEODynamics which grew at a two-year compound annual growth rate of over 530 percent. Founded by David Wesson '82, this rocket-ride of a company is bringing "game changing" technology to the oil field. Growing by five times each year indicates that he must have found a true market need. All of the 2006 companies are fast-growing. The threshold to make the list this year was a two-year compound annual growth rate of over 23 percent—a growth rate that would satisfy most business leaders. The average company on this year's list grew by more than 52 percent per year between 2003 and 2005. The complete list, along with profiles of the top 10 companies, is presented on the following pages.

Making a Difference

Aggies are encouraged to make a difference. Take a look at the companies included on the list and you'll see that our former students are doing just that. Their companies are global. Three are headquartered outside of the United States and many serve customers around the world. Within the United States, 10 different states are represented on this year's list.

Virtually every industry you can imagine is included. Our former students have leveraged their A&M degrees to start energy companies and car dealerships. These Aggies are restaurateurs, manufacturers and home builders. They provide oil field, financial, marketing, medical and landscaping services, consulting on everything from energy to the environment and information technology. The companies sell software, lumber, cell phones and stair railings. Members of the Aggie 100 build houses, office buildings and shopping centers. In short, these Aggies touch nearly every facet of life.

In total, the Aggie 100 produced revenues in excess of \$5 billion in 2005. Truly, these Aggie-related companies are making a difference to customers, employees and their communities. They are also setting the bar for others. Bob Borsch '03, founder of House of Forgings in Houston, is just one example. Ask him if his dream is coming true and he'll tell you that they are meeting and surpassing financial goals. He'll also talk about the pride he has in his team and the fact



that they are able to give back to church and community organizations. Clearly, many Aggie companies are successful on multiple levels.

Sharing Wisdom

While the Aggie entrepreneurs appreciate the honor, the most powerful part of the Aggie 100 is not the recognition. These companies don't need trophies, ceremonies and press to tell them that they are on the right track. The most powerful aspect of the program is gathering successful Aggies on campus and allowing them to share stories and lessons learned with today's students. One entrepreneur called it "closing the loop—returning to where [he] learned so many lessons and doing [his] part to influence tomorrow's leaders."

During their time on campus, many of the Aggie 100 representatives spoke to student clubs and classes. They interacted with students in organizations and colleges from business to engineering, agriculture and veterinary medicine. They also shared lessons with student groups from the MSC and Corps of Cadets. Think back to your days on campus. How often did you have the chance to meet and learn from peo-



ple living their dreams everyday—people willing to pass on difficult as well as uplifting lessons?

The honorees' lessons ranged from solid business advice to very personal messages. Many speakers emphasized the value of networking, especially within the Aggie Network. Every entrepreneur spoke from the heart and left the students with a lesson they wouldn't have to learn the hard way. These experienced leaders interacted with over 1,500 students during their time in Aggieland, and in the end, that is the real power of the Aggie 100 program.

Aggie 100, A Team Effort

Like all of the companies included on this year's list, the Aggie 100 program's success is the result of a team effort. The Center would like to thank The Association of Former Students, Hollinden Professional Services Marketing, Infinity Pro Sports, PKF Texas, The Research Valley Partnership and the Texas Business Journals for their support. A&M's leadership team has embraced the program as well and supported at all levels. The Center is very grateful for the support. >>

Congratulations to the 2006 Aggie 100!