

## James Randel "Randy" Matson Pampa High School Class of 1963



James Randel "Randy" Matson grew up on Browning Street where his parents, Charles and Ellen Matson, would see Randy convert the vacant lot next door not only into a baseball field, but later, into a shot put ring.

He went on to win two gold medals at the state Track Meet in Austin, first in shot and first in discus. He was only a 17 year old junior at Pampa High School and newsmen in attendance wrote, "This quiet, modest young athlete is classified as limitless." His double victory was the most impressive ever recorded by a high school weightman.

In 1962, returning home from the Austin state meet and at the suggestion of Coach Lyons who had become Randy's mentor and friend, Lyon suggested Randy experiment with the college (sixteen-pound) shot. Climbing into the attic of the PHS locker room, he located a rusted, old sixteen-pound shot left behind by some long-forgotten coach. Lyon made him a gift of it and with the same care one might extend a rare antique. Randy polished the rust away. It was to become the instrument he would use throughout his collegiate career. It was Coach Lyons who told Randy, "You have a great future ahead of you. If you want to badly enough and are willing to make the necessary sacrifices, you could make the Olympic team one day. What you choose to make of yourself from this point depends entirely on you. . ."

Randy would go on to win the shot and discus state championship again his senior year as well as all-district defensive end in football, all district two years in basketball and all-state his senior year. During his junior and senior years at Pampa High School he was honored with All-State and All-American in Track. He graduated from Pampa High School in 1963.

In 1964, Matson, a rangy freshmen at Texas A&M from Pampa, Texas, in his first full year of working with the 16-pound shot, would win the Olympic Silver medal in the Olympic games held in Tokyo. He was then 19 years old. Randy Matson blazed into shot put prominence in one short year and that brilliant flame has rarely flickered.

He went on to become the world record holder (71'5 1/2"--no one else has reached 70 feet at that time), the Olympic Gold Champion in 1968 in Mexico City, and was the Track & Field News' 1970 Athlete

of the Year. The AAU voted him the Sullivan Award in 1967 for outstanding amateur athlete in the nation and he was also named Helms Hall of Fame Athlete of the Continent. A few of his other awards are Texas A& M Hall of Fame in 1972, Texas Sports Hall of Fame in 1974, Panhandle Sports Hall of Fame in 1979, National Sports Hall of Fame in 1981, National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1984, National High School Sports Hall of Fame in 1988 and Pampa High School Hall of Fame in 1999.

Randy is married to the former Margaret Burns, also from Pampa, and is the proud father of three grown children: Jessica, Jim and Cole--all A&M graduates. In September of 1998 he became the very proud grandfather of McKean Ashley Matson.

Matson has been working for the betterment of Texas A&M University for most of his adult life. As an athlete in the 1960's, he put Texas A&M on the map with his feats in track and field. In the middle of all this he managed to complete a BBA degree in Marketing at Texas A&M as a member of the class of 1967.

It was in September of 1972 that he became employed by The Association of Former Students of Texas A&M, one of the strongest alumni association in the world. Since 1980 he has served as Executive Director and has remained in that position until the present day.

Gig 'em!