



Education Support

Remembrances of the First Lady of Drill Team

"Miss Davis was a visionary. For over 50 years she instilled a pride of excellence which she taught to everyone who crossed her path, through determination, dedication, discipline and desire. Truly she is a legend in our time not only because she lived her dream to the very fullest, but because she taught thousands upon thousands of young girls to live their dream with pride and always to strive for excellence. Not only on the performance field, but on the field of life." *Donann Kelley, Kilgore Rangerette '85-'87*

"Being a Rangerette was my first drill team experience and it was under the direction of a one-of-a-kind leader. Gussie Nell set the standard for what is truly an art form and she influenced so many young people's lives in such a positive way. She will be missed but her legacy will live on every time a drill performs at halftime." *Ruth Flynn, Director of the Tyler Junior College Apache Belles*

"Always be poised and have manners...and never lose your tomatoes!" *Stephanie Carns, Jr. All American® '93-'94*

"I do what I do because she did what she did." *Melissa Preston, Former Rangerette '82-'84, Director – South Grand Prairie H.S.*

"I have been taking my teams to American Drill Team School® for twenty-one years. The first year I was a director, Gussie Nell Davis attended the Kansas University camp. I will never forget the spectacular demonstration that she gave on 'Poise and Projection' and what an impact that had on me. She truly demonstrates the famous quote of Ralph Waldo Emerson: 'The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.' She has taught thousands of young people how to be elegant and to believe in the beauty of their dreams. Her beauty will live on through the lives she has touched." *Cathy Alcorn, Olathe East High School Talons*

"When I think of Miss Davis, I think of someone who started a ripple in a pool that eventually became a tidal wave, reaching out to thousands of girls either directly or indirectly. The values she taught go on long after the dancing stops. I think that is a wonderful legacy. It will never end. I thank the Lord that I had the opportunity to know her and experience her wisdom." *Danese Fondren, Former Rangerette, Director – Lumberton High School*

"I was a freshman Rangerette during Miss Davis' last year. We were on the practice field practicing and needless to say, I was nervous. I slipped and fell in the twist-fall line. She stopped and made everyone look at me because I had fallen. I didn't ever fall again. She was really a wonderful lady. She taught me a lot of things that have stayed with me and will be with me all of my life." *Lisa Griffin, Rangerette '78-'80, Director – Lufkin High School*

"I remember Gussie Nell Davis as a person who helped establish my philosophy about dance/drill team. She helped me realize my potential and see things through the way she lived. She made me feel special as a human being. She was a constant in my life and I will miss her greatly. There will never be another person like Gussie Nell Davis." *Kathy Wood, Rangerette '62-'64*

"I was in college as a physical education major attending the Texas Association of Health and Physical Education/Recreation convention in Houston. Miss Davis was invited to be the Key Speaker for the drill team seminar. Many of the people that were attending were athletic minded and didn't understand a whole lot about what this 'dance lady' was going to say to them. Within 3 to 4 minutes, her entire audience was sitting up so that their 'bread baskets' wouldn't tump over. She had the athletes realizing the good contribution that dance could make. I think that the dance/drill team world owes her a lot and we will miss her a bunch." *Cindy Martin, Director – Pine Tree High School*

