

Know Your Fight Song – There Will be a Test Later

By Stefanie Pettit



Angela Brown, #1 fan

Nobody knew Eastern's fight song. Or even that Eastern had one.

"That was symbolic of everything," says Angela Brown, director of Alumni Relations. "The fight song is a basic point of pride. I said then and there, that day in 2001, that would be my legacy here. This school *will* know its fight song."

And we do. She made it happen.

Alumni Relations was just gathering steam when Brown signed on as assistant director. With a small staff, she did a lot of grass roots work, revamping an electronic newsletter to make it more interactive, creating innovative events for alumni and developing chapters in cities where there were large numbers of Eastern grads — like Seattle, the Tri-Cities, Tacoma and Spokane.

"The idea was to create meaningful partnerships," Brown said. "I found people were quietly proud, but I wanted to create a 'red rumble.' I wanted to get them to shout about their alma mater. I figured it was my job to make it okay for them to do that."

The fight song would be that vehicle.

First, she started with the Alumni Board, getting them to stand at the beginning and end of each meeting to sing the song. She got students from the Music Department to record it, and she took the CD to events and played it. Then she had "GO EAGS" signs (with the fight song printed on the back) distributed at athletic events.

"I'd stand at games and scan the crowd," she says. "When I'd spot board members or others I knew, I'd make eye contact and give them a look, willing them to stand, wherever

they were. It was painstaking. Sometimes, there were just a handful of us standing and singing."

Then Paul Wulff, head football coach, joined in. After every winning game, he and the players move over to the stands where the students sit — and sing the song.

"Now the whole crowd gets up," Brown says with pride. But it's more than just the song. It's about being involved.



At a pre-game party in Kansas City (from left) Coach Giacoletti's sisters Lori Giebelhausen and Conni Murphy; Barb Richey, director of University Relations; Angela Brown, director of Alumni Relations; the coach's mother Alice Giacoletti. In front, Lori's daughter Kylie

"I have alumni tell me they can't afford to give any money to Eastern. Fine. We want your time, your involvement. Just be out there telling our story, talk about our cyber security program, our award-winning student filmmakers. Be proud, be visible. Be a mentor to a student. Provide an internship. Work on our legislative advocates group. Give back however you can," she says. "Of course, money is good, too."

She is so gratified, she admits, that with the success of the men's basketball team this year, she is feeling that pride swell.

"People are calling me, without me reaching out first."

"We know we are about more than basketball, but people galvanize around sports," Brown observes. "It's a way to focus that pride, something to rally around. I can't begin to express the multiplier effect this basketball experience has for the University as a whole."

But, getting back to the fight song, two stories stand out from the Kansas City trip.

The band, cheer squad and several staff

FIGHT SONG

Go, Eagles, Go

Put all you have in every play.

We'll let you know

That we are with you all the way.

So then, it's fight, Eagles, fight.

Show us the fight we'd like to see.

Red and white just fight, fight, fight

And Eagles will win the VICTORY.

E-A-S-T-E-R-N Eastern, Eagles

Go, Fight Win.

members accompanied the team and coaches on the charter flight. All were asked to keep a low profile and relatively quiet as the team met up front with the coaches and watched tape of the team they would play, Oklahoma State.

"Angela has a lot of energy," her close friend Barb Richey, director of University Relations, says understatedly. "For her to sit still, quietly, that long, was an act of sheer willpower."

But as they came in for a landing in Kansas City, Brown calls out, "Y'all know the fight song?" And she — along with the staff, band, cheer squad and others — sang it, and sang it loud.

"I wanted the players to hear us, to know that while we might be a small presence when we got to Kemper Arena, we would be a force," she recalls.

Actually, on game day, by the time Brown got done with them, a lot of people at Kemper Arena — mostly from Kansas University, Oklahoma State's arch rival — were singing the fight song, among a sea of orange Oklahoma State shirts.

The night before the big game, Brown and a small group of Eastern fans went to a sports bar in Kansas City to watch on television as Spokane neighbor Gonzaga University played Valparaiso in its first round of the tournament in Seattle.

Brown and friends got to chanting the fight song. They distributed the words. Everyone in the entire bar sang along. Over and over again.

"Isn't that something?" Brown says. "Three years ago, nobody knew the song, even here in Cheney. And there we were in Kansas City, and everyone was singing it. The song grows as our pride grows."

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