



YOU HAD ME AT ROLL TIDE!

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he lines that surrounded Madison Angus' largest passions in life were well defined.

Madison, the oldest of four daughters, loved her family and the outgoing teen loved her friends. The other passion for the Minooka, Illinois native was The University of Alabama.

Madison grew up in the Chicago suburb, where conversation, when it comes to college athletics, generally begins with Notre Dame, includes Northwestern and rarely ventures from the Big 10 footprint.

Not for the Angus family.

Scott Angus, an Illinois state trooper, fell in love with the Southeastern Conference – particularly SEC football – and introduced that love to his oldest daughter. An important part of that introduction was tales of Bear Bryant.

“Every Saturday in our house, every single television would be on with college football,” said Eileen Angus, Madison’s mother. “We love college anything but football really grabs our heart. She watched it her whole entire life.”

Madison did more than watch Alabama football. She engulfed. She knew stats and history. She knew rosters and rules. If it had to do with Alabama football, she learned about it.

How important was Alabama football to Madison?

Eileen loaded the family up with Alabama shirts in the days leading up to the 2013 BCS National Championship Game against Notre Dame. A relative questioned the family’s rooting interest.

"I said 'Matthew, she has been a big Alabama fan for the last seven years of her life and whatever Madison loves, I'm going to stand for,'" Eileen said. "He said 'Aunt Eileen, you've been an Irish Catholic your whole life.' I said 'Matthew, that is a valid point, a very valid point, I'm sorry I have to go with my daughter's passion.'"

How important was Alabama football to Madison?

She missed her senior homecoming dance to visit the Alabama campus and attend a Crimson Tide football game. To be fair, a homecoming scheduling switch at Minooka Community High School was the reason both were on the same weekend. Tickets were bought and plans were made by that time. However, Scott and Eileen still offered to sell the tickets and plan another trip to Tuscaloosa.

"She said 'Absolutely not, Mom, who cares about homecoming? This is Alabama, this is the rest of my life,'" Eileen said.

Madison had decided at a young age that Alabama was her only college option. She visited Notre Dame's campus for a track meet while a freshman in high school. She reported, after returning, that she loved the campus but added "I got to be honest, it's no Alabama."

Eileen laughed while telling the rest of the story: "I told her she hadn't been on the campus yet, how could she know it's no Alabama? She said 'Mom, I know, I just know.'"

The Angus family, obviously, had also fallen with Alabama. But consenting to send your oldest child more than 14 hours away for college isn't easy to embrace. For Scott and Eileen, though, those feelings changed on the September weekend in 2013 when Madison skipped her homecoming for the family's first trip to Tuscaloosa.

"When we went there, my husband and I did everything we possibly could to find something wrong with the college, the campus, anything," Eileen said with a laugh. "There was nothing. Everywhere I looked, I knew this is where my Madison needed to be."

Their seats for Alabama's victory over Ole Miss were three rows from the top of Bryant-Denny Stadium.

"I have the most fabulous picture with the stadium behind her," Eileen said. "She looked at us and said 'Mom, Dad, this is the greatest moment of our lives.' I remember crying. She used the word religion because it was a church like experience."

Madison had a clear vision of what she wanted from her college experience. She planned on a six-year program that included a Master's Degree. She would study International Economics. On the day she got the acceptance letter, Madison started a countdown on her phone to the day she left for Tuscaloosa. She recruited two friends near her home to be UA

roommates and found another roommate in Virginia. She worked four jobs so she could save for college. Her favorite job was at a local ice cream store because, as she told her mom, 'Who can be sad when you're giving them ice cream?'

Sadly, Madison never lived her plan. She lost her life in a single-car accident on Memorial Day – May 26, 2014 – on the way home from work. Less than 24 hours later, one of Eileen's daughters showed her a text from a UA account that read: "We lost one of our own today. Class of 2018 Madison Angus. Pray for her and her family."

"I thought to myself, 'Wow, this is a university that has over 30,000 students and this is a girl who just had her housing. She never even started her first day of classes and they already recognized us as family,'" Eileen said. "It was just step one of so much powerful beauty that they bestowed upon us."

Eventually, the family felt the need to not only honor Madison's name but, as Eileen put it,



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- Eileen Angus, Madison Angus' mother

"spread her joy."

Shirts were printed with one of Madison's favorite sayings – 'You had me at Roll Tide' – on the front and a memorial to her on the back. The sale originally helped with funeral costs but it's become much more than that. Friends, family and strangers have bought the shirts and taken pictures wearing them in spots all the world. Some of the pictures have been posted at a website honoring her memory - RememberMadison.com.

The family also organized an annual kickball tournament – The Madison Cup – that began on Memorial Day of this year. Thirty-two teams entered the event, which included Madison's favorite food and drink and live music. More than \$30,000 was raised during the event.

"It was a day of everyone coming together and celebrating one of the most beautiful girls I had the honor of knowing for 18 years, 8 months and 26 days and I get to call her my daughter," Eileen said.

It was also a day to fund scholarships for out-of-state students at The University of Alabama. Eileen said the family had searched for scholarship money after Madison was

accepted but found little for students outside Alabama. Four scholarships — at \$4,000 each — were awarded with part of the money raised. The application process consisted of three things: 1. Tell us about yourself. 2. Why Alabama? 3. How will you pay it forward after graduation?

While the idea was a success, the Angus family still was a bit confused on how to move forward with the scholarship. A family friend suggested they call the Crimson Tide Foundation for information on scholarship endowment. Doing that is a special way to honor a friend or loved on who has passed away. These gifts ensure a legacy that extends far into the future. Any type of gift can be designated as a memorial gift.

Eileen said it's a comforting feeling to know that Madison's memory will continue to last at UA. The family also bought a brick at the Crimson Promenade.

"It's very important to me," said Eileen. "I kind of go there (on visits) and touch that. Going there on that campus and seeing that brick, I feel like we put a little bit of her there forever. I signed it for her."

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