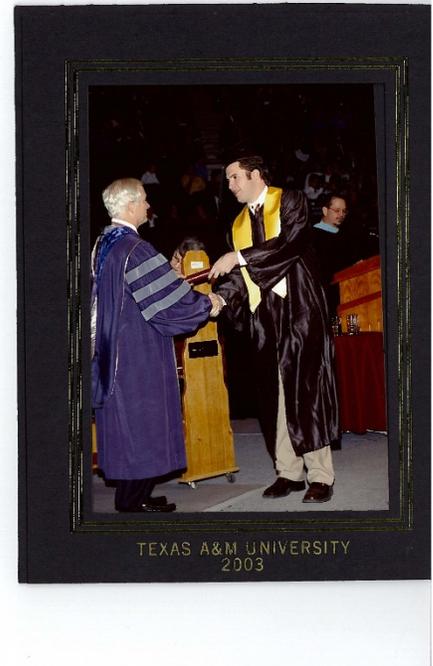


## ***How was the name, Vandegrift, selected?***

A: The LISD Board of Trustees unanimously voted to name the school in honor of Lt. Matthew Ryan Vandegrift, a Leander High School honors graduate (Class of 1999) and athlete – who was killed in Iraq in April 2008. He graduated from Texas A&M University with honors and a degree in international business, before enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in August 2005. He was killed just four days past his 28th birthday.

## ***Who was Lt. Matthew Ryan Vandegrift?***

Lt. Vandegrift grew up in the Steiner Ranch subdivision — very near this new high school — and was an honor graduate at both the high school and college level. He participated in extracurricular activities, and demonstrated the highest character, plus a devotion to service demonstrated by the fact that he volunteered to defend the ideals of our great nation. Matthew Vandegrift was a walking role model for what we hope to see demonstrated by each and every Leander ISD graduate.



## **What is Valor Day?**

*Every April 21<sup>st</sup>, our school will hold an assembly to honor the school's namesake, Lt. Matthew Ryan Vandegrift, for his service and sacrifice to our country. April 21<sup>st</sup> is the day Matthew passed away, and in a tragic irony, is also the date of "Aggie Muster."*

*VHS is named in honor of Lt. Vandegrift, a Leander High School honors graduate (Class of 1999) and athlete – who was killed in Iraq on April 21, 2008. He graduated from Texas A&M University with honors and a degree in international business, before being commissioned in the United States Marine Corps in August, 2005. He was killed just four days after his 28th birthday. In fact, you can go to the display case and see a picture of Matthew that was taken on the day he was killed. It is a picture of him sitting in a chair within the palace walls with his unforgettable and infectious smile.*

**Aggie Muster** is a time-honored tradition at Texas A&M University which celebrates the camaraderie of the school while remembering the lives of **Aggies** who have died, specifically those in the past year. **Muster** officially began on April 21, 1903 as a day for remembrance of fellow **Aggies**.

**What is the significance of the Crest?** Our school crest is modeled after Lt. Matthew Ryan Vandegrift's 5th Battalion patch. The term "Second to None" can be found in Latin at the bottom, and the significance of the 5 stars coincides with the fact that VHS is the 5<sup>th</sup> high school in Leander ISD.



**What exactly is a "2<sup>nd</sup> to None" Student?** Matthew Vandegrift's Marine Crest had "2<sup>nd</sup> to None" in Latin on the bottom ribbon. You can see this on our crest. This also became our school motto. Especially interesting, the crest has 5 stars, and we are the 5<sup>th</sup> high school. So, since we opened, we have had each program in the school have the students in that program nominate a student for this honor. Essentially, they are saying that the selected student embodies the character, honor, and commitment that Matthew displayed. So, over the years, we have several hundred students that have gone forth in the world, and carry this honor with them. This has been a real source of comfort and pride for the Vandegrift family, as they see all of these fine young people carrying and representing the spirit of their son. These students are celebrated each year on the morning of Valor Day at a breakfast reception hosted by the Vandegrift family.

### **What is the significance of the School Song?**

The song was selected and modified to incorporate the Marine concept of *Semper Fidelis* (Always Faithful) with the music from the 1945 [Rodgers and Hammerstein](#) musical *Carousel*.

**We'll never walk alone**

**Vandegrift always proud (we) hold our heads up high, **always faithful** "second to none"  
At the end of our journey a new one begins, in our hearts we will always be one  
Walk on toward our hopes, walk on toward our dreams though sometimes we're on our own  
Walk on, walk on with memories strong and we'll never walk alone  
**We'll never walk alone****

"You'll Never Walk Alone" is a [show tune](#) from the 1945 [Rodgers and Hammerstein](#) musical *Carousel*. When Mr. John "Dutch" Vandegrift heard our school song for the first time at the dedication, he shared that his was actually one of his favorite musicals.

As we dug in to the origins of the song, we found an interesting plot line that we had missed over the years.

In the musical, the character Billie, dies during a robbery. The character Nettie Fowler, sings the song "You'll Never Walk Alone" to comfort and encourage Billie's widowed wife, Julie.

The song appears again in the final scene where Julie is graduating from school with her classmates. We learn that Billy has been granted the chance to return to Earth for just one day to see his grieving wife, but he is invisible to the living and she can't see him

As Billy watches the graduation ceremony he is able to silently motivate his saddened wife, Louise, through the lyrics of the song, and soon, teary eyed, Julie sings joyously with the rest of her class.

So, when I hear our School Song, I like to think Matthew is here with us, reminding us within the song lyrics that we never walk alone.

In fact, the band created a special arrangement of the music to highlight a Single Baritone Soloist in the middle of the school song. This solo was created to symbolize Matthew's voice and legacy.

***Fight for VHS***

***We fight to win, we will attack  
All for the glory of the Silver and Black  
We are the best, we will not rest  
Let's get a vic-tor-y for***

***V-H-S***

***Keep trying for the final score  
Come on you Vipers fight for more, FOR MORE!!!  
Come on you Vipers fight, fight, fight for-e-ver  
V-H-S***