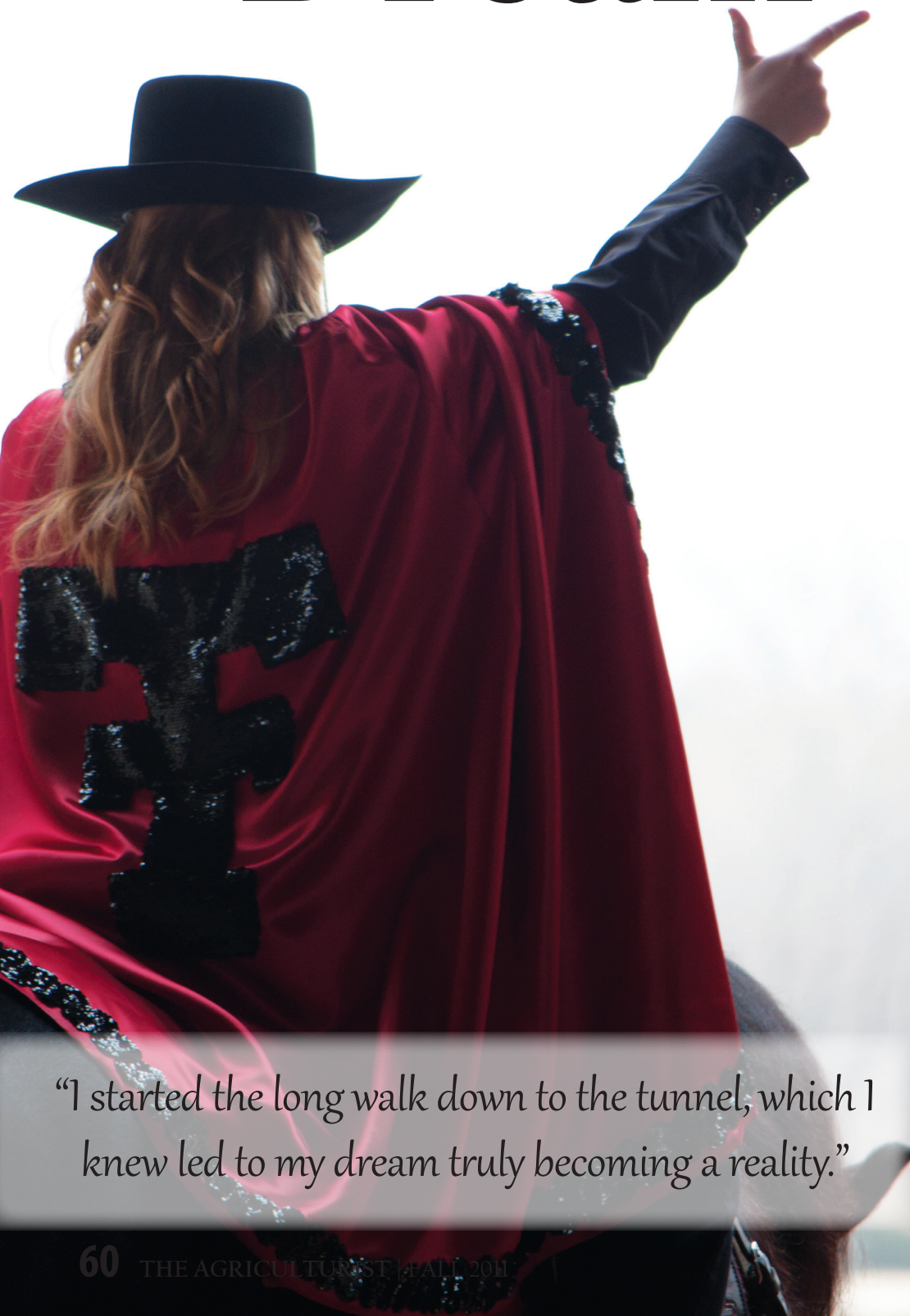



Living the Dream



"I started the long walk down to the tunnel, which I knew led to my dream truly becoming a reality."

Living lifelong dreams are something individuals hope to accomplish at some point in their lives, and some are determined enough to achieve their aspirations. Becoming the Masked Rider has been a dream that 49 past Texas Tech University students have gotten the opportunity to fulfill and live. Few can truly comprehend the meaning of this unique dream coming true to these students until they have actually lived it. 

During the Transfer of Reins, I remember putting the Masked Rider mask on for the first time and it was surreal. There was a span of two weeks from when I found out I was the rider until I was officially named the 2010-2011 Masked Rider, which I had to keep a complete secret from everyone except my mom and dad. It all happened so fast during the Rein Transfer I could hardly concentrate on the ceremony. When Bri, who was the current Masked Rider at the time, was putting the mask and hat on me, all I could think of was all of the great experiences I would soon have and the memories I was about to create. Other than my first run, officially being able to put on the mask for the first time as the new Masked Rider was one of the best moments in my life.

*Christi Chadwell
Masked Rider 2010-2011*

During the first football game that I was Masked Rider, I was full of emotions because becoming the Masked Rider was a childhood dream. I felt anxious, excited, nervous, happy and so many other emotions. Before the game started, I was already signing autographs for hours in front of the Frazier Alumni Pavilion and this only built my anticipation. After I was done signing autographs, the moment I had been waiting for was finally here. I started the long walk down to the tunnel, which I knew led to my dream truly becoming a reality. Once I exited the tunnel and went onto the field with Midnight Matador, the crowd started to cheer because they saw their beloved Masked Rider. I sat on the sidelines for a good 30 minutes before the band showed up and the show started. All the while, I was looking around trying to take it all in. Finally, it was time. The band crowded the tunnel and the drums started pounding. The horse's ears perked up, knowing his time was soon to come. As the rider, my heart started to beat, as I also knew the run would soon be here. The band took the field and started playing the National Anthem, and Midnight knew what was going to happen in just a few short minutes. He started dancing in anticipation as I was holding him back, calming him and soothing him. At this point, my heart was really beating. Then I heard it "go fight win." That was my cue. I turned the horse and let him fly down the field and before I knew it, the run was over. I was so elated. That feeling has stayed with me long after the game.

*Brianne Hight
Masked Rider 2009-2010*

I was the first Masked Rider to run at a Tech baseball game; therefore, I got to make history. On the football field, the rider does a straight run down the field and the horse does not even get to top speed, so the run is over in



PHOTO BY: ROBERT RHODE

about seven seconds. But for baseball, the run was about three times as long because I got to make the run all of the way out in the outfield. During my first run at the baseball game, I remember I was keeping a somewhat tight rein on Midnight to keep his speed in check. However, since the baseball run was so much longer than a football run, I gave him the reins and let him run as fast as he wanted to. Being the first Masked Rider to run at baseball games will always be one of my favorite Masked Rider experiences.

*Ashley Hartzog
Masked Rider 2008-2009*

I enjoyed any appearance where I got to interact with children. My favorite in particular was the Farm Days at the Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas. This appearance was especially special to my heart because I was a patient at the Scottish Rite Hospital when I was a child. Scottish Rite allowed me to have a childhood, without worrying about scoliosis and spinal problems. It was really rewarding to be able to go back to a place that meant so much to me as a child. I was honored to attend the hospital's event and give back to the volunteers, patients and doctors. It made everything worth the time to see the kids get excited to see the Masked Rider, pet Midnight Matador and take pictures with us. It was a priceless feeling to provide kids with joy and a role model.

*Christi Chadwell
Masked Rider 2010-2011*



PHOTO BY: ROBERT RHODE

Kate McDowell | Shamrock, Texas

