

# Sleep tight, **RED RAIDERS**

**E**very Red Raider mother wants her children to grow up to be Red Raiders. So when author, Tiffany Kristynik, realized her husband was turning her two little boys into Aggies, she said, “that wasn’t going to work for me.” It was then that she decided to steer her boys in the right direction.

Growing up in Cypress, Texas, Kristynik’s passion for the science, agriculture and the outdoors was apparent from an early age when her father would take her hunting, fishing and water skiing. This passion brought her to Texas Tech University and continued throughout her time there.

Kristynik started out in the nursing program at Tech because of her love for science and the medical field, but soon realized she has a deeper love for agriculture and quickly changed her major to animal science. Continuing her love for the outdoors and agriculture, she was a member of Block and Bridal as well as a part of the 2003 National Champion Meats Judging Team.

After graduating in December of 2003, Kristynik moved back home to Houston, eager to join the work field and live on her own. However, she soon went back to get her teaching certificate after realizing that being a sales recruiter was not the correct fit for her. She wanted to share her excitement for learning and science with students.

After stumbling across the Goodnight Team website, which describes the book series as a captivating and fun way for children to learn about different college sports teams through “simple rhymes and engaging illustration,” Kristynik realized this was how she was going to teach her boys to love Texas Tech. Kristynik knew sharing inspiration to grow and learn about Texas Tech with her children was

important, and writing a book about the school she loved so dearly was how she did just that.

“The immediate passion was to write a children’s book, that was always there,” Kristynik said, “the next was the passion for Texas Tech, so I married the two and wrote Goodnight Red Raiders.”

When asked about her thought process while writing the book, Kristynik smiled remembering everything she loves about this university. From the beautiful campus, to the welcoming people, to the sound and flowers, the memories were abundant. Laughing, Kristynik explained her publisher’s reaction to her first submission.

“When I first submitted my manuscript to my publisher, she said, ‘this is 50 something pages. This is a children’s book, you’re going to have to cut it down,’” Kristynik said.

Going back to the drawing board, Kristynik researched the traditions of Tech and picked the ones that were going to be long-standing traditions, deeply rooted in history. Her main goal in this selection process was

to honor traditions, not fads. Since the book has the university’s name and trademark on it, and had to go through a collegiate licensing program, so Kristynik made sure the book honored the school.

“I had to find the 26 best things about Texas Tech,” Kristynik said, before commenting on how reflective the process was. Once she picked the traditions that were going to be in the book, she said the words came naturally and the writing was easy. She then played around with the order of the sections until she found the perfect rhythm to tell the story.

That, however, was not the end of Kristynik’s role



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Photo provided by David Robson.

## “IT’S THE PERFECT STORY FOR RED RAIDER FANS EVERYWHERE.”

with the book. In fact, she played a key role in finding the pictures that were used as references for the illustrations. Kristynik said she scoured the Internet for pictures of the Tech campus and once she found them, she had to obtain the copyright from the photographer in order to use them. The challenge for the illustrator of the book, was to manipulate different parts of their reference pictures to fit the book, without taking away from the integrity of the photograph.

Matt Gardner, the illustrator for Goodnight Red Raiders and four other Goodnight Team books, emphasized how important it was to stay true to how things look on campus. He even went as far as to put very small details in the graphics that would really connect with Tech alumni who were reading the book. One example he pointed out was making the structure of the bed in the book match the architecture of the campus, something he would not have been able to do without help from Kristynik.

“It’s fun for me to learn through the writers of the book,” Gardner said.

While he never got to meet Kristynik in person, he said she was easy to work with, which made for almost no challenges during the design process. The one part that frustrated Gardner the most was NCAA’s restrictions on what could and could not be done to the photos. Gardner explained that any illustrations with people in sports jerseys could not have number on it so that the illustration would not look too similar to an actual team member. Other than those restrictions, Gardner said the designing process took a laid-back approach.

Suzanne Isaacs, the founder and publisher of Ampersand, Inc., which publishes the Goodnight Team series, explained the process it took to get the book approved. The first step is to get permission from the

Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC), which handled the licensing for Texas Tech. The CLC approached the licensing director at Tech with the proposal for the book. Once the university approved the book, the manuscript had to be finalized and reference pictures had to be obtained.

Both Isaacs and Gardner commented on how easy it was to work with Kristynik. They agreed she was always on top of getting the manuscript or pictures to them, and was always quick to respond. Since the three of the book’s team members are spread out in different states, staying one top of their communication with one another was vital in the success of the book.

Goodnight Red Raiders was officially released on September 2, 2015, and since then, Kristynik has felt nothing but warm feedback from alumni of Texas Tech. She sold 1000 books in her first month and attended seven book signings in Houston and Lubbock, Texas. She said that doing research to find the best place that has the right market for the book was crucial in booking a place for a book signing. She said one of her favorite things about book signing is she gets to meet new friends and fans of Texas Tech.



*Tiffany Kristynik said her time back in Lubbock promoting her book was almost emotion and brought back many great memories.*

Kristynik says she’s always trying to emphasize that this book is not just a children’s book, but can be a graduation gift, an alumni gift, or even a house-warming gift. When asked to describe her book in one sentence, Kristynik said “It’s the perfect story for Red Raider fans everywhere.”



{ JORDAN GREGORY  
TROY, TEXAS }