FROM
THE REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MERCER UNIVERSITY
December 4, 1969

SIKES FIELD

"Lieutenant Thomas Gary Sikes, Mercer alumnus, was killed in action in Vietnam on December 20, 1968. Lieutenant Sikes was the first and only Mercer ROTC graduate to be killed in active combat operations. The Student Government Association has initiated action requesting that the drill field used by the Mercer ROTC as a parade ground be designated "Sikes Field" in memory of Lieutenant Sikes. This recommendation has my approval, and it has been approved by the University Council. I present it to the Trustees for their consideration."

The Board of Trustees, on 4 December 1969, unanimously approved the above recommendation.
The President and Trustees of Mercer University cordially invite you to the Dedication Ceremony Sikes Field in memory of Thomas Gary Sikes Class of 1967 Saturday morning, May 30, 1970, at 11:30 R.O.T.C. Drill Field

Reply by May 25

Department of Military Science
Mercer University
Macon, Georgia 31207

1) I accept. There will be ___ in my party.

1) I regret that I am unable to accept your invitation for Saturday, May 30th I will be represented by:

Signed __________________________
Mercer Plans Memorial For Soldier

MACON, Ga. — The Mercer University ROTC parade ground and intramural field will be dedicated Saturday to the university's only ROTC graduate to be killed in Vietnam action. The field will be dedicated to Thomas Gary Sikes, class of '67, and will be known as Sikes Field.

A memorial stone will be unveiled by Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes, Lt. Sikes' widow who now is a student at the University of Georgia. Also present will be Lt. Sikes' parents, retired Navy Cmdr. Thomas J. Sikes and Mrs. Sikes of Jacksonville.

The dedicatory remarks will be made by S. Davis Laney of Columbus, a classmate of Lt. Sikes and now a student in the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer.

Dr. Rufus C. Harris, president of the university, will preside and William George Chamberlin II of Orlando, Fla., will give the meditation. Chamberlin is president of Scabbard and Blade military honor society at Mercer.

DEDICATION
SIKES FIELD

R.O.T.C. Parade Ground
Mercer University

Memorial Day – May 30, 1970
Eleven-thirty o'clock

Prelude ........................................ James Wilson Carmichael
                                      Instructor in Music

Presiding ................................... The President of the University

Meditation, Read Responsively .......... William George Chamberlin, II
                                      President, Scabbard and Blade
                                      Military Honor Society

Unveiling .................................... Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes

Dedicatory Remarks ......................... S. Davis Laney
                                      President, Class of 1967

Musical Selection ............................ John Webster Van Cura
                                      Instructor in Music

Dedication Prayer-Benediction .......... Joseph Millard Hendricks
                                      Dean of Men

Taps

Raising of the Colors

Note: Sequence of events occurred as indicated except that Dr.
      Garland F. Taylor, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts,
      gave the Invocation and the musical selection followed
      the Invocation.
President Rufus C. Harris welcomes the invited guests to the dedication ceremony
INVOCATION

BY

DR. GARLAND F. TAYLOR

"Lord God, our Heavenly Father, before whom all hearts are open, all desires known, we give thee thanks for this day, for the memories it stirs, for the privilege of living in this beloved country, and for all who have given loving service to make it great. Make us mindful, we pray, of our debt to those who have gone before us, and inspire our hearts to renew our own commitment and dedication to the spirit of loyal devotion. Bless our country and world in these days of trouble and anguish. Bring peace in men's hearts and among the nations. In our weakness, sustain us; open our hearing to the call of thy voice for each of us; give us a deep personal sense of thy presence among us; and in thy providence help us to be instruments for the doing of thy will in our time.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen."
MUSICAL SELECTION

THE 23RD PSALM

SUNG BY

JOHN WEBSTER VAN CURA

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. Thou hast been our
dwelling place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the
earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

I will praise thee, O Lord, I will sing unto thee among the people;

I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

For the Lord is good, and his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all
generations.

He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good
And sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail
But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles;
They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Behold, he that keepeth thee shall not slumber;
He that watcheth over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past.

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us And establish thou the work
of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it.
Mr. John W. Van Cura sings The 23rd Psalm

Mr. William George Chamberlin, II reading the meditation
Invited guests

Honor Guard in position at the memorial stone prior to unveiling
Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes, escorted by Colonel Joseph H. Jones, and Commander (Ret.) Thomas J. Sikes, accompanied by President Rufus C. Harris, move to the memorial stone for the unveiling.

Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes unveils the memorial stone.
Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes and Commander (Ret.) Thomas J. Sikes after the unveiling.

Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes and Commander (Ret.) Thomas J. Sikes return to the platform.
DEDICATORY REMARKS OF S. DAVIS LANEY

PRESIDENT, CLASS OF 1967

"On this solemn occasion, I have been asked to represent the Class of 1967, of which Thomas Gary Sikes was a member. But, in a larger sense, I am also representing my entire generation which has been struggling both physically and mentally with this great conflict in Southeast Asia. I am honored to have been asked to speak on this occasion.

"Gary Sikes died as a result of this struggle. He died serving his country, and in fulfillment of his obligations and duties as a soldier and a citizen. It is fitting that his Alma Mater take the occasion of this memorial day to honor his memory as well as his act of courage and sacrifice. We remember and honor what he did, and yet, we grieve that a life so young and unfulfilled was taken in its prime from those whom he loved and who loved him.

"The tragedy of war is the tragedy of young men with promise being taken from our midst before that promise can be fulfilled. This makes Gary's sacrifice even more precious, and nothing we can say today can add to the significance of his sacrifice.

"Those of us who remember Gary remember him for his enjoyment of life, for his zest in acting and singing in the productions here at Mercer. Watching him perform on the stage, we saw him place himself into the character of his role, with full confidence and enjoyment in what he was doing. Because of this remembered zest and vibrancy in his character and personality, those of us who remember Gary know that the gift of life was not taken lightly by him.

"He was of our generation, concerned - committed - and conscious of the great problems of our age; problems that offer no easy solution, and that each individual must seek to contend with on his own terms. It is our responsibility to try to understand and be tolerant of each man's decision of how to meet these problems. We respect those who dissent, and acknowledge their right to do so, and yet we also respect and honor those who follow the way of duty, honor, and country...And, who give their lives in pursuance of this devotion.

"Regardless of what our feelings are concerning this struggle; regardless of existing dissent and disagreement, we all join together to pay homage to the memory of our classmate who graduated with us three short years ago, and we mourn that he was not able to use the education he received at Mercer in furtherance of a long and happy life with those he loved.

"We dedicate this field and the memorial thereon in permanent tribute and homage to his memory as a person, and to the memory of his sacrifice. Let all those who pass this way in years to come look upon this memorial and remember Gary and what he did for us.

"No words of consolation can give solace to his wife and family. There can only be treasured memories of a good man who loved life -- cherished his family -- and who did his duty."
Dedicatory remarks by Mr. S. Davis Laney
DEDICATION

BY

RUFUS C. HARRIS

PRESIDENT OF MERCER UNIVERSITY

"By virtue of the authority vested in me by action of the Trustees of Mercer University, I hereby name this field Sikes Field, and I dedicate it to the glory of God and to the everlasting honor of Thomas Gary Sikes. This memorial will serve as inspiration to future Mercer students as the life and career of Gary Sikes inspired others before them. Amen."
BENEDICTION

BY

JOSEPH MILLARD HENDRICKS

DEAN OF MEN

Eternal and Almighty God:

We come now to ask thy blessing upon the dedication of this field. We would not claim thy grace, however, without confessing our sins. We still grope haltingly and blindly for that more excellent way revealed in the life and death of thy Son, while there hovers about us today the sad and heavy awareness that yet another young life has been required by the hostile strivings of thy children against one another.

The one whom we honor today reminds us anew of your precious gift of life. Gary Sikes lived abundantly and those around him found his song, his happiness, his warmth, and his love contagious. We are reminded of how emptily we sometimes live, that moments of opportunity, of service, of freedom are not ours - but a gift.

We pray that those who march here, who run and play here, who stroll here in the cool of the evening, who come to pause here a moment to remember - as they read this marker and see the flag flowing in the breeze - will find new resolve to answer the obligations of the gift of life as fully, as cheerfully, and as beautifully as did Thomas Gary Sikes.

It is in the name of Him who taught us both how to live and how to die that we pray -

Amen
Mercer ROTC Drill Field Has Dedication

Last Saturday morning, while rain fell most of the time, Mercer University’s ROTC parade ground and intramural field was dedicated to the first Mercer ROTC graduate killed in Vietnam.

Thomas Gary Sikes, who was killed in action in Vietnam December 20, 1968 was the man so honored. His widow, Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes, unveiled the granite marker bearing his name which is set at the base of a new flagpole at the north end of the field.

Dr. Rufus Harris presided over the ceremony, and Davis Laney of Columbus, president of the class of 1967, of which Sikes was a member, made the dedicatory remarks.

The impressive ceremony ended with the playing of taps and the raising of the flag to the top of the new 50-foot metal pole.

Following the benediction the notes of taps were sounded from the far end of the memorial field and precisely at 12:00 noon, the flag was briskly raised to full staff.
Mercer ROTC Field Has Dedication

At Saturday morning, rain fell most of the day. Mercer University's ROTC parade ground and paraplane field was dedicated to the first Mercer ROTC graduate killed in Vietnam.

Thomas Gary Sikes, who died in action in Vietnam December 20, 1968 was posthumously honored. His widow, Judy McGarity Sikes, unveiled the granite marker bearing his name which is set at the base of a new flagpole at the north end of the field.

Rufus Harris presided over the ceremony, and Davis Laney of Columbus, president of the 1967 class of which Sikes was a member, made the dedicatory remarks. He said, "The tragedy of war is the tragedy of young men with promise being taken from our midst before that promise can be fulfilled." Laney pointed out that Lt. Sikes "was of our generation, concerned, committed, and conscious of the great problems of our age... that each individual must seek to contend with on his own terms."

Calling for understanding by those who seek solutions to these problems, Laney said, "We respect those who differ, and acknowledge their right to do so. Yet we also respect and honor those who follow the way of duty, honor and country, and who give their lives in pursuance of this devotion."

Following the benediction the notes of taps were sounded from the far end of the memorial field and precisely at 12:00 noon, the flag was briskly raised to full staff.
SIKES FIELD

IN MEMORY OF
THOMAS GARY SIKES
CLASS OF 1967
KILLED IN ACTION IN VIET NAM
DEC. 20, 1968
17 April 1970

Mrs. Judy McGarrity Sikes
Daville Apartments, Apt. B-2
136 Grady Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601

Dear Mrs. Sikes:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 15th concerning the planned dedication ceremonies of Sikes Field. Work is progressing satisfactorily on the preparation of the memorial.

I will be in contact with you periodically between now and 29 May to arrange final details; however, I have already entered that date on my calendar as you requested to have whatever discussions you may desire and review the final arrangements.

In reference to the invitations, we plan to prepare invitations here and mail to the organizations listed in my previous letter, unless you object, and would like to be able to forward the invitations from the University to persons you desire to have attend. If it would not be too much trouble, I would appreciate having their names and addresses so that an invitation can be mailed; however, please feel free to ask, personally, anyone you wish and also those whose names you send to us. We will send you a copy of the mailing list and the date that the invitations are mailed when this is accomplished.

Please do call on us anytime we may answer any of your questions or assist you in any way. You may call collect to Area Code 912-745-0674.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH H. JONES
Colonel, Infantry
Professor of Military Science
22 May 1970

Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes
Deville Apartments, B-2
136 Grady Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601

Dear Mrs. Sikes:

The plans for the dedication ceremony are continuing to progress satisfactorily. I will be looking forward to hearing from you on the 29th.

As I mentioned to you earlier, plans are being formulated for some function immediately following the ceremony. President Harris has planned a luncheon for you and others attending the dedication ceremony to be held in the Connell Student Center. I'm forwarding invitations to all who have accepted the invitation to attend the ceremony to also attend the luncheon. It would be helpful if you could let me know if you expect others to accompany you who might not be on the invitation list and whom you would like to go to the luncheon. Please use the inclosed self-addressed envelope, or call me collect at Area Code 912-746-0674.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

JOSEPH H. JONES
Colonel, Infantry
Professor of Military Science

1 Incl
Self-Addressed Envelope
17 April 1970

Dear Mrs. Sikes:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 15th concerning the planned dedication ceremonies of Sikes Field. Work is progressing satisfactorily on the preparation of the memorial.

I will be in contact with you periodically between now and 29 May to arrange final details; however, I have already entered that date on my calendar as you requested to have whatever discussions you may desire and review the final arrangements.

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Please do call on us anytime we may answer any of your questions or assist you in any way. You may call collect to Area Code 912-745-0674.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

JOSEPH H. JONES
Colonel, Infantry
Professor of Military Science
13 April 1970

Mrs. Judy McGarrity Sikes
Deville Apartments, Apt. B-2
136 Grady Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601

Dear Mrs. Sikes:

Inclosed is the design for the Sikes Field memorial and flagpole, which I mentioned in my previous letter would be sent to you for your review and approval, should you desire.

Because of the time element involved, we would appreciate any early response. Perhaps you would find it convenient to call us collect - AC 912-746-0674 or 743-1511, Ext. 214.

A copy of this letter, with inclosure, is being sent to Commander and Mrs. Sikes for their information.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

JOSEPH H. JONES
Colonel, Infantry
Professor of Military Science

Cy Furn:
Cdr. (Ret.) and Mrs. Sikes
SIKES FIELD

IN MEMORY OF
THOMAS GARY SIKES
CLASS OF 1967
KILLED IN ACTION IN VIET NAM
DEC. 20, 1968
Mercer University
Department of Military Science
Macon, Georgia 31207

10 April 1970

Mrs. Judy McGarritt Sikes
Deville Apartments, Apt. B-2
136 Grady Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601

Dear Mrs. Sikes:

You have been advised that at their last meeting of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University recently approved naming the R.O.T.C. parade ground and intramural field for your husband, First Lieutenant Thomas Gary Sikes.

The Scabbard and Blade Military Honor Society at Mercer has prepared plans for a memorial and dedication ceremony. It has been recommended that a medium-sized, pyramidal, granite memorial and flagpole be placed at the north end of the field. A design for this will be submitted within the next few days for your review and comment should you desire. It is considered appropriate to hold dedication ceremonies on Memorial Day, May 30, 1970, at 11:30 A.M. We hope this will be agreeable to you, as well as to the parents, who also are being advised. A tentative list of organizations and groups which will be invited to send representatives to the dedication is attached, together with a proposed program. Please feel free to add to this any individuals you would like to have receive an invitation and to comment on the program.

The Society will reimburse you for transportation costs to and from Macon for the dedication or furnish you tickets, whichever you desire. Lodging here in Macon will be arranged for you and an escort will be provided while you are in the city.

You are invited to indicate your desires or suggestions. I shall look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Joseph H. Jones
Colonel, Infantry
Professor of Military Science

1 Incl
As stated
Representatives invited from:

Board of Trustees
Office of the President of Mercer
Mrs. Judy McGarity Sikes
Deville Apartments, Apt. B-2
136 Grady Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601

Mercer University
Macon, GA 31207

American Legion
Student Government Association

Dear Mrs. Sikes:

You have been advised that at their last meeting of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University recently approved naming the R.O.T.C. parade ground and intramural field for your husband, First Lieutenant Thomas Cary Sikes, Class of 1967.

The Scabbard and Blade Military Honor Society at Mercer has prepared plans for a memorial and dedication ceremony. It has been recommended that a medium-sized, pyramidal, granite memorial and flagpole be placed at the north end of the field. A design for this will be submitted within the next few days for your review and comment should you desire. It is considered appropriate to hold dedication ceremonies on Memorial Day, May 30, 1970, at 11:30 A.M. We hope this will be agreeable to you, as well as to the parents, who also are being advised. A tentative list of organizations and groups which will be invited to send representatives to the dedication is attached, together with a proposed program. Please feel free to add to this any individuals you would like to have receive an invitation and to comment on the program.

The Society will reimburse you for transportation costs to and from Macon for the dedication or furnish you tickets, whichever you desire. Lodging here in Macon will be arranged for you and an escort will be provided while you are in the city.

You are invited to indicate your desires or suggestions. I shall look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

1 Incl

As stated

JOSEPH H. JONES
Colonel, Infantry
Professor of Military Science
SIKES MEMORIAL DEDICATION, 30 MAY 1970

Representatives invited from:

Board of Trustees
Office of the President of Mercer
Faculty of Liberal Arts College, Mercer
U. S. Army
American Legion
Student Government Association
Inter-fraternity Council
Alumni Association
Class of 1967

Tentative Program:

Prelude
Hymn
Opening Statements
Unveiling by Mrs. Sikes
Dedicatorary Remarks (Eulogy)
Hymn
Silent Prayer
Dedication Prayer
Raise the Colors
Benediction
Muted Taps