In making the jump from McAllen High School to the 27,000-strong student body of Texas State, Anna Kennedy never expected to be anything more than a little fish in a big pond. The size and the numbers seemed so overwhelming that she never expected to develop an intimate connection with the campus community. That’s why the moment she knew she had become a Bobcat for life stands out so strongly for her.

“It was during the playoffs in 2005, when we did so well in football,” Kennedy said. “Coming from McAllen—my school wasn’t that big—I didn’t think I’d ever get that big a sense of community here. But up there in the stands, knowing that everyone was feeling the same emotions I was... I really felt the community.

“I feel now that I can talk to anyone I meet on campus even if I don’t know them,” she said. “I’ve started thinking, ‘This is my school’ rather than ‘I go to school here.’”

Kennedy was named the inaugural Mitte Laureate at Texas State by the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Foundation in 2006. The Mitte Laureate Scholars Program, the university’s newest and most prestigious scholarship, will award four undergraduate academic scholarships annually worth as much as $25,000 a year or $100,000 over the course of an undergraduate student’s four-year degree program.

Scholarship funds will pay for tuition and fees, room and board, books, study abroad, internships and other education-related travel. Students selected for the program are also eligible for other resources, including a personal faculty mentor, first choice of residence halls, office space in the Mitte Honors Program office suite, advanced class registration and membership in the Texas State Student Foundation.

Kennedy graduated in the top 5 percent of her high school class in 2005. To win the Mitte Laureate Scholarship, she also had to have an SAT/ACT score of 1300/30 and an unweighted high school grade point average of 3.5. She also impressed the selection committee with her involvement in high school and community activities.

Now a sophomore majoring in political science, Kennedy is weighing different career paths—considering the prospects of law school against her longtime love for journalism. As far back as junior high school, she’d aspired to become a sports reporter, but lately she’s given serious thought to becoming a family law attorney, specializing in children’s rights and abuse cases.

Kennedy counts her decision to come to Texas State one of the best choices she’s made, and she admits one aspect of the campus caught her completely off guard.

“I wasn’t an outdoors person in high school. Not at all,” she admits. “I did swimming for PE so I wouldn’t have to run around outdoors! Recently we had a Mitte retreat out at University Camp [on the Blanco River near Wimberley]. I really, really liked it. I didn’t realize before I came here all the outdoorsy stuff there is to do. Now that I’ve found all these things, I enjoy them.”

Find out more about the Mitte Laureate Scholarship: http://finaid.txstate.edu/scholarships/fresh/fcs.shtml