



# MOMENTUM

## University Champion Leaves Enduring Legacy

Remembering  
Margaret Milam  
McDermott



Margaret Milam McDermott 1912–2018

At The University of Texas at Dallas, the McDermott name and legacy can be found in every corner of campus. Sprawling reflecting pools, flowering magnolia trees, leadership chairs and unrivaled educational experiences are but a few results that can be attributed to one individual, Margaret Milam McDermott.

Mrs. McDermott, whose philanthropic gifts made historic impacts on the educational and arts institutions of her native city of Dallas, died on May 3, 2018, at the age of 106. As the pre-eminent private benefactor of UT Dallas, she made a sequence of major gifts, starting in 1995 and continuing through this past autumn that profoundly transformed the human and physical dimensions of the University.

In 1952, she married Eugene McDermott, a pioneer in applying seismography to oil exploration. Together with partners Erik Jonsson and Cecil Green, he founded the company that became Texas Instruments. Subsequently, the entrepreneurs created the privately funded research institution the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest, which in 1969 they gave to the state of Texas to become The University of Texas at Dallas. Eugene McDermott, who

died in 1973, was a major supporter of education and research, and in addition to his role in the creation of UT Dallas was a major supporter of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which he and his partners posited as the model for their fledgling university.

For the whole of the University's life — and for half of her 106 years — Mrs. McDermott also devoted herself to helping UT Dallas take its place on the national stage. Her first significant gift, an endowment of \$32 million, was presented to the University in 2000 to establish the Eugene McDermott Scholars Program, along with endowed chairs for the president and provost. The program and chairs were named in honor of Eugene McDermott and the McDermotts' longtime friend Cecil Green. In developing the details of her gift, she drew upon the advice of her friends and colleagues Ross Perot, Peter O'Donnell and Louis A. Beecherl Jr.

"The success of the new McDermott Scholars Program was the foundation that inspired all of her further transformative support of the University," said Dr. Hobson Wildenthal, executive vice president at the University. Wildenthal collaborated with Mrs. McDermott

in implementing her visions for UT Dallas over the last 26 years.

In 2005, Mrs. McDermott, highly gratified by the success of the scholars program, asked then-Provost Wildenthal what she could do next to further advance the University. He told her that a truly lasting impact could be made by contributing funds to improve the landscape of UT Dallas. (Years earlier, a national publication had characterized the campus appearance as resembling an abandoned warehouse.) She understood and solicited the advice of her friends Ray Nasher and Roger and Carolyn Horchow. These consultations led to the selection of famed landscape architect Peter Walker to design and implement a total renovation of the University's 500-acre campus. With her final gift of last autumn, the McDermott contributions to the widely acclaimed new UT Dallas campus total more than \$50 million.

In 2009, after passage by the Texas Legislature of the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP), which provided matching funds for private donations to the University designated for research, Mrs. McDermott made the first

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"Margaret McDermott was a Texas icon. Her generosity, love of the arts and passion for students changed UT Dallas, UT Southwestern, the UT System and Texas forever."

— William H. McRaven  
Former chancellor of The University of Texas System



Margaret McDermott (front right) and Dallas real estate icon Ebby Halliday attended a special president's gathering at the Federal Reserve Bank in 2014. Standing behind the local centenarians are (from left) Dr. David E. Daniel, former UT Dallas president; Richard Fisher, former president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas; and Greg Delagi, senior vice president at Texas Instruments.



Continued from cover

**Left:** UT Dallas founders and their wives (from left): Ida and Cecil Green, Margaret and Erik Jonsson, and Margaret and Eugene McDermott. **Right:** Dr. Bryce Jordan (left), the University's first president, with Margaret McDermott (center) at the topping off ceremony for the Eugene McDermott Library on the UT Dallas campus in the 1970s.



major gift to UT Dallas that qualified for TRIP matching. The resulting combined benefit to UT Dallas was more than \$14 million. The latest fruits of that gift were celebrated this April 27 with the investiture of 10 early- and mid-career UT Dallas faculty members as Fellows of the Eugene McDermott Professorship.

As her support of UT Dallas increased over the years, and the University's achievements and stature expanded in concert, Margaret McDermott recalled that her husband had prophesied that history would conclude that UT Dallas had been his most significant philanthropy. She derived tremendous personal gratification from the successes of the McDermott Scholars, and she and they enjoyed their meetings, both while the scholars were students and even more so as they became alumni passionately devoted to their alma mater and to the iconic human being who had greatly impacted their lives. Similarly, the universal enthusiasm of students, faculty and members of the larger community for the landscape creations of Peter Walker also provided her with continuing and intense satisfaction.

In the last several years of her life, feeling ever-greater enthusiasm for what she and her husband had created and nurtured over the years at UT Dallas, she created the Eugene McDermott Graduate Fellows Program in analogy with the McDermott Scholars Program. Her gift of \$14 million, matched by \$10 million in TRIP funds, will support in perpetuity a leadership cadre of doctoral students at UT Dallas. She also created endowments for the directors of the two McDermott programs and an endowment to honor her longtime friend Dr. Richard Brettell by creating the Richard Brettell Award in the Arts to be awarded every other year. This award is similar to the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT. Her last endowment gift of \$10 million, designated to support undergraduate research, was made with the condition of naming the UT Dallas Honors College in recognition of Wildenthal's efforts.

Finally, in support of newly appointed UT Dallas President Richard C. Benson, Mrs. McDermott made a culminating gift of \$25 million in 2017 to UT Dallas to support the construction costs of the new engineering and science buildings now under construction and of the planned Wallace Athenaeum.

"I believe that our founders would be proud of how the University that they envisioned has evolved, and for years, Margaret McDermott has been a driving force in fulfilling that vision," said Benson, who holds the Eugene McDermott Distinguished University Chair of Leadership. "She was the brilliant and benevolent philanthropist who challenged us to continuously reach new heights of success."

In 2004, The University of Texas System awarded Mrs. McDermott its highest honor, the Santa Rita Award, in recognition of her deep commitment to higher education and the University. Her husband Eugene McDermott received the award in 1969.

"Margaret McDermott was a singularly impressive human being in every dimension: indefatigably energetic and persistent, focused on and dedicated to lofty goals, and immensely elegant and gracious in her dealings with the total spectrum of her multitude of acquaintances," Wildenthal said. "She clearly took as her mission the continuation of Eugene McDermott's own dedication to benefiting humanity through research and education, and expanded that vision to include the benefits of great art and music. Everyone who interacted with her could not escape being inspired by her dedication to these goals and by the style and effectiveness with which she pursued them. The only simple word for her is 'noble'; she was a natural aristocrat, a Dallas and Texas patriot who was simultaneously an engaged and sophisticated citizen of the world." ■



Alumni from the Eugene McDermott Scholars Program received the Green and Orange Award for Alumni Service at the 2012 UT Dallas Awards Gala. Celebrating the occasion are (front from left) Andrés Correa BA'05, Michael Seeligson BS'06, Margaret McDermott and Dr. Hobson Wildenthal; and (standing from left) Emily Lichtenheld BS'12, Alex Garcia Topete BA'11, MA'17, Walter Voit BS'05, MS'06, Benedict Voit BA'08, Jessica Voit BS'09, Abraham Rivera Olguin BS'07 and Christina Wolfe BS'11, MS'12.



Cecil Green (left), Margaret McDermott and Erik Jonsson took part in a UT Dallas Founders Dinner in 1989.



Kyle Edgington PhD'13  
Vice president for development and alumni relations

## Leadership Message

**Momentum** regularly highlights individuals and corporations making a difference at UT Dallas, and this issue spotlights the enduring nature of their impact. While we mourn the loss of our longtime, arguably greatest champion Mrs. Margaret McDermott, we hope her generosity and devotion to the University inspires others. Instrumental in UT Dallas' growth from a small graduate school to one of the nation's top research institutions, her legacy will be celebrated for generations.

Indeed, the philanthropic efforts of many leave lasting impressions on the University. I am pleased to share stories of those whose commitment to realizing the potential of this young University transforms our campus, opens new avenues to success and inspires others to join the cause of promoting UT Dallas' mission of providing excellence in education and research. ■



Margaret Milam McDermott, UT Dallas' most steadfast champion, helped transform the University through her visionary leadership and financial contributions.

“Mrs. McDermott’s values will live on through her many contributions to education, philanthropy, the arts and the betterment of the city of Dallas. Her gift of education has changed my life in an extraordinary way, and I remain forever grateful.”

— Nancy Fairbank BA’17  
Former Eugene McDermott Scholar



## New Fellowship Will Build the Next Generation of Nonprofit Leaders

The University of Texas at Dallas has received a grant from the Texas Instruments Foundation designed to help grow the pipeline of nonprofit professionals in the Dallas area. Together with the Dallas Museum of Art and United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, the University will share a total of \$2.1 million in grants from the TI Foundation.

At UT Dallas, these funds will be used to create the Texas Instruments Founders Leadership Fellows program. Coordinated by the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, the fellowship will be awarded annually to a promising UT Dallas undergraduate student, graduate student or recent graduate who wishes to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector.

Established in honor of Eugene McDermott, Erik Jonsson and Cecil Green — the shared founders of both Texas Instruments and the Graduate Center of the Southwest (which would become UT Dallas in 1969) — and Patrick Haggerty, the fourth founder of TI, this fellowship represents a mutual commitment between TI and UT Dallas to support philanthropic efforts in the Dallas community.

“Our founders created a legacy of deep community involvement and giving back,” said Andy Smith, executive director of the TI Foundation. “That legacy has strongly influenced our culture and has inspired decades of community service by Tiers around the world. We want to honor their commitment and celebrate the impact their generosity has had on our community.”

Fellows in the program will gain direct experience in relationship building and fundraising through a year-long internship with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations. Formal coaching in fundraising practices and donor-centric philanthropy will be provided through mini-residencies in annual giving, corporate relations, endowments, foundation relations, gift and database management, major gifts, prospect research and planned giving.

During the course of their internships, fellows will have the opportunity to attend local and national higher-education fundraising and philanthropy conferences and seminars. At the culmination of their internships, fellows will pursue focused projects tailored to their specific areas of interest.

In addition to supporting UT Dallas’ own fundraising and alumni relations efforts, fellows will gain the experience necessary to fill the growing talent gap in the nonprofit sector.

“Our founders created a legacy of deep community involvement and giving back.”

— Andy Smith  
Executive director of the  
Texas Instruments Foundation

“This program provides students with a pathway to careers that make a real difference in our communities,” said Shanon Patrick, assistant vice president for leadership and planned gifts at UT Dallas. “Our fellows will be prepared to take on leadership roles in a variety of nonprofit environments.”

Over 1.5 million nonprofits in the United States struggle to recruit experienced and qualified employees. This sector’s growth, coupled with generational retirement and limited education opportunities, has caused an increasing disparity between vacant positions and the number of available, skilled nonprofit professionals. Apprenticeships such as the Texas Instruments Founders Leadership Fellows can provide immersive training, hands-on exposure and transferrable skill sets beneficial for careers in multiple nonprofit professional roles.

The first Texas Instruments Founders Leadership Fellows internships will run from September 2018 through August 2019. ■

# Playing to Thrive

Dallas Foundation grant supports free program changing lives

Imagine a child entering kindergarten who has trouble communicating, controlling impulses and paying attention to teachers. Odds are slim that they will make the most of learning opportunities as they grow. Many toddlers are facing this situation today, due to myriad reasons related to poverty and its adversities. With grant support from The Dallas Foundation, a chance for more children to have a strong start in life is possible through the Juega Conmigo (Play With Me) program.

In December, The Dallas Foundation awarded the UT Dallas Center for Children and Families (CCF) a \$50,000 grant in support of Juega Conmigo, a 10- to 12-week free program for parents and children ages 3 and under. Designed to foster strong parent-child relationships and children's growth through semi-structured play sessions, the program currently serves five high-need areas of greater Dallas.

In 2011, CCF started Juega Conmigo at the Dallas Library's Bachman Lake branch. The Dallas Foundation was the first supporter that enabled development of the program that fosters playful learning interactions between parents and their young children.

"We know that high-quality, early learning today contributes to success in school," said Brittani Trusty, program officer for The Dallas Foundation, "so it's important for the foundation to support programs like Juega Conmigo that are making a difference in the lives of young children, which in turn, makes a difference for the DFW region as a whole."

"As with any grant recipient, we provide grant funding to help organizations implement their programming in the most successful way possible," she said. "And that's what we hope for the Center for Children and Families. We also hope that our grants provide help beyond the actual grant dollars by showing our donors and the community that The Dallas Foundation is proud to support effective programs like Juega Conmigo that result in greater school readiness and success."

Play, especially in the context of supportive relationships with caregivers, promotes children's learning and language skills and their social skills — all key to school readiness.

"Most of our kids are between 2 and 3 and haven't been to other programs. Many have limited social skills with peers, and the semi-structured, playful learning activities the program offers provide positive experiences preparing them for school," said Margaret Owen, Robinson Family Professor and director of the Center for Children and Families. "In our program, they are acquiring early socializing and listening skills, with good support from their parents. We've heard from others saying they love having kids from Juega Conmigo because they are ready to learn."

Adriana Baird, a licensed counselor and developmental specialist, has been with CCF since its inception and was instrumental in developing the Juega Conmigo curriculum as the program expanded. One objective of this grant is to grow the program from serving 499 children and parents to 561 children and parents annually.

The program curriculum also gives parents new tools through weekly guided conversations in the playroom with the program facilitators, including open-ended questions about what is working and what is not working.

"Families tell us this is helpful and grandparents say, 'Why didn't I know these things when I was raising my children?'" Baird said. "We are teaching parents that every interaction with their children is building their foundation for life. The parents gain confidence and the support of new friends."

"We've been called a learning laboratory. Parents can apply what they're learning in the communities where they live. It's a win-win," Owen said. The foundation grant will help CCF maintain and grow the program, but Owen said more financial support is needed to expand services in existing and new areas, such as Pleasant Grove and the southern sector where CCF is receiving requests. "We've discovered a hunger for this program," Owen said. ■

To find out how you can make a difference in changing more children's lives through Juega Conmigo, visit [ccf.utdallas.edu](http://ccf.utdallas.edu) or call 972.883.3938.

## Jindal School Alumnus Leverages Corporate Matching Gifts

**R. Carter Pate MS'03 helped secure UT Dallas' eligibility** for matching gifts from PwC. Using this support, he helped fund the first scholarships for accounting students in the Naveen Jindal School of Management.

During the planning phase of the inaugural Comets Giving Day in 2017, Pate realized the importance of inspiring greater participation from his fellow alumni and forging stronger connections with the University's corporate partners.

"Alumni giving is important to the rankings — even if it's \$20 a month or whatever you can afford," said Pate, a 2015 UT Dallas Distinguished Alumnus.

As a retired PwC executive, Pate is well aware of the decades-long relationship between his former employer and the Jindal School. PwC has hired student interns and over 100 graduates from UT Dallas, supported

University programs and provided expert speakers for campus events. Thanks to Pate's lobbying efforts with the company, PwC is now extending their support by matching donations to the University from current and retired employees, up to \$10,000.

Pate was quick to put these new matching funds to use in helping make the first Comets Giving Day a success. By offering a challenge to his fellow alumni with a personal gift matched by PwC, Pate was able to secure \$50,000 in new donations. Those donations formed the bedrock for a 1-to-1 match by the Jindal School Dean's Fund, creating a \$100,000 endowment that will provide up to five \$1,000 scholarships annually for Jindal School accounting students.

As alumni and corporate sponsors come together on behalf of UT Dallas, Pate sees a reciprocal benefit for those who participate in partnerships aiming to build the University's success.

"You've paired yourself up with the UT Dallas brand, so it elevates your own personal achievement to be an alumnus of this school," he said. ■



Dr. Hasan Pirkul (left), Jindal School dean and Caruth Chair, and R. Carter Pate MS'03

# Callier Center Honors The Meadows Foundation, Celebrates a Longstanding Relationship



On behalf of The Meadows Foundation, Bruce Esterline (left) accepted the 2018 Ruth and Ken Altshuler Callier Care Award from Tricia George, Dr. Ken Altshuler and Dr. Tom Campbell (right), executive director of the Callier Center.

**The Meadows Foundation and the Callier Center for Communication Disorders share a personal, enduring relationship** that dates back to the formation of both organizations. The Callier Center celebrated this bond at the seventh annual Callier Cares Luncheon on April 17 by honoring The Meadows Foundation with the 2018 Ruth and Ken Altshuler Callier Care Award.

The award is given annually to an individual or group that has contributed significantly to the betterment of the community and to advancing the care of patients with communication disorders. The luncheon was created to raise resources for the Callier Care Fund to benefit children and adults who otherwise could not afford clinical care necessary to overcome speech, language or hearing disorders.

At the luncheon, Tricia George, president of the Foundation for the Callier Center, introduced The Meadows Foundation, and Dr. Ken Altshuler presented the prestigious award. Prefacing the presentation, Dr. Tom Campbell, executive director of the Callier Center, unveiled the naming of two wings that are located inside the Callier Center Expansion on The University of Texas at Dallas campus. Each wing is dedicated to patient care and the clinical training of graduate students.

The wing in which audiology services are administered, as well as adult speech and language services, will be named "The Altshuler Wing." The wing in which speech-language therapy programs and individual services are conducted for children will be named "The Meadows Foundation Wing."

"I am honored to represent The Meadows Foundation today on this special occasion and particularly to see that the foundation's name will be associated with the Altshulers and with Callier forever in this wonderful new facility," said Bruce Esterline, senior vice president for strategic initiatives and grants at The Meadows Foundation.

In his acceptance speech, Esterline shared a moving story about a family whose son was born with congenital heart defects and had significant developmental delays. The family moved to Dallas unaware of the resources available for him, but was told about an organization called Callier.

"They enrolled their son, and over the next two years, he made significant progress," he said. "I know this, because that was my son."

When The Meadows Foundation board members met to discuss the naming opportunity in the Callier Center Expansion, they were asked about their relationships with Callier.



Al and Virginia Meadows

Esterline conveyed that two board members raised their hands and told personal stories about how Callier had served their children.

"You have created an institution that's renowned for its academic credibility and its cutting-edge research, but more importantly, you have reshaped how those with communication disorders are treated and served in our community," Esterline said. "We are incredibly lucky to have you in Dallas, and we thank you for your dedication to the families you serve, and thank you for this award."

In 1948, Al and Virginia Meadows established The Meadows Foundation, a private family philanthropy, to benefit the people of Texas. Since its inception, the foundation has disbursed more than \$1.1 billion in grants to more than 3,500 Texas institutions and agencies. One of the first two grants bestowed by The Meadows Foundation was for \$500 to the Pilot Institute for the Deaf in 1950. The Pilot Institute was the first center for deaf children in Dallas and later merged with the Dallas Speech and Hearing Center, the Dallas Council for the Deaf and the Callier Hearing and Speech Center to form one cooperative program, now known as the Callier Center for Communication Disorders.

"Al Meadows invested in Callier from the beginning, and The Meadows Foundation followed his lead."

— Linda Perryman Evans  
President and chief executive  
officer of The Meadows Foundation



In 1998, The Meadows Foundation contributed funds for the construction of the Callier Advanced Hearing Research Center in Dallas. Their transformative gift allowed the Callier Center to significantly expand its research laboratories, which are devoted to the study of hearing aids, speech and language of children and adults using cochlear implants and central auditory system processing.

Recently, the foundation helped make the expansion of the Callier Center on the UT Dallas campus a reality, providing additional facilities to conduct research, educate students and care for patients in Collin County.

The foundation's support of the Callier Center over the years has helped shape the future of care for patients with speech, language and hearing disorders in North Texas and beyond.

Through the leadership of Beth Thoele, luncheon chair, and Joyce and Larry Lacerte, honorary chairs, Callier Cares Luncheon benefactors contributed more than \$300,000, the largest amount raised in the luncheon's history. All proceeds will be used to provide clinical care for children and adults in need through the Callier Care Fund. ■

**If you would like to be a part of this movement, please visit [utdallas.edu/calliercenter/give](http://utdallas.edu/calliercenter/give).**



# University Recognizes Distinguished Alumni, Supporters at Awards Gala

UT Dallas alumni and friends recently gathered to celebrate the distinguished accomplishments and dedicated service of six award recipients at the 2018 UT Dallas Awards Gala on March 24. During the ceremony, the University's inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Dr. Aziz Sançar, Sarah Graham Kenan Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, who earned his PhD in molecular and cell biology from UT Dallas in 1977 and won the 2015 Nobel Prize in chemistry.

"UTD is really the cause and the source of my success in science," Sançar told the audience at the Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center. "My mentor, Dr. Claud Rupert, is the man who made me a scientist."

After graduating at the top of his medical school class in his native Turkey and serving as a physician there, Sançar came to the U.S. to learn more about the underlying mechanisms of disease, including the field of DNA repair. He said the research he pursued with Rupert, one of the pioneers in the field, provided the foundation for his life's work.

"UTD is home for me," said Sançar, who presented the 2018 Anson L. Clark Memorial Lecture on campus the day before the Awards Gala.

The Honorable Helen Giddings, who represents District 109 in the Texas House, received the Gifford K. Johnson Community Leadership Award, a recognition named for the one-time president of the Southwest Center for Advanced Studies, the precursor to UT Dallas.

"I have worked alongside my UTD family for the advancement of the University and creating a better state for students, and I think we've made great strides," Giddings said. "When we improve education, we improve lives."

Over the course of her 13 terms in office, Giddings says

education has been her highest priority. Her advocacy was crucial to the development of the University's Academic Bridge Program, and she has been instrumental in securing continued state funding. "Each of us has a responsibility and an obligation to pay some rent for the space that we occupy on Earth," she said. "None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something."

A dedicated supporter of UT Dallas, Jerry L. Comer MS'77 received the Green and Orange Award for Alumni Service. Comer, a retired project manager and engineer, said he was both honored and surprised by the award. He has donated a number of photographs from his personal collection to the University and sponsors an annual guest photographer program to enrich academic experiences for graduate students.

"Just recently, the school has seen fit to dedicate a special space on the north end of campus for the Comer Photography Collection, and we're looking forward to great things coming out of that," he said.

Distinguished Alumni Award recipient Gabriel Dawe MFA'11 recognized his professors, many of whom were in attendance, for their support and influence during his years as a student, as well as after graduation in his career as a visual artist.

"My time at UTD was particularly special because of my stay at CentralTrak," said Dawe, who was a part of the University's former artist residency program. "It was really fundamental in my development, and it really holds a dear place in my heart." Dawe initially created pieces from his Plexus series while studying at UT Dallas, and his work can be found on campus in the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History.

Chuck Butler BS'91, a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, reflected on the path set before UT Dallas graduates.

"I don't think I'm any different than any of the people I graduated with," he said. "We were all looking for an opportunity like the school gave to me. When you take opportunity and preparedness and put them together, greatness will happen."

Butler, founder and managing partner of Palomino Capital LLC, credits a successful career with enabling him the time and resources to support causes near to his heart, such as cancer research, his temple and his children's schools.

"My career isn't what I do — these activities and nonprofits and mission-based organizations are who I am," he said. "Without this University, I would never have been able to take this path."

The University has continued to play a prominent role in the life of Distinguished Alumni Award recipient Satyajit P. Doctor after he earned his master's degree in 1991. Co-founder and president of Award Solutions Inc., Doctor launched the company with UT Dallas classmate Ramki Rajagopalan; it now employs 20 University graduates.

"A good university actually helps somebody achieve far more than what they could on their own. That is exactly what UTD has done for me," he said. "Now, UTD is giving me opportunities to pay it forward." Passionate about encouraging young people to develop interests in science and business, Doctor serves on the executive council at the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science.

Sponsors of the 2018 event were Award Solutions, Axxess, the city of Richardson, Highland Capital Management and Palomino Capital. ■

[See a video from this year's event and learn more about previous honorees at utdallas.edu/gala.](https://utdallas.edu/gala)



Dr. Aziz Sançar (right), the University's first alumni recipient of the Nobel Prize, was honored with the inaugural UT Dallas Lifetime Achievement Award. As a special surprise for the longtime Dallas Cowboys fan, Sançar was also presented with a commemorative UT Dallas football by former Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Drew Pearson.

## 2018 Awards Gala Honorees

### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

- **Aziz Sançar, MD, PhD'77**  
Sarah Graham Kenan Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics, University of North Carolina School of Medicine

### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

- **Chuck Butler BS'91**  
Founder and managing partner, Palomino Capital LLC
- **Gabriel Dawe MFA'11**  
Visual artist
- **Satyajit P. Doctor MS'91**  
Co-founder and president, Award Solutions Inc.

### GIFFORD K. JOHNSON COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

- **The Honorable Helen Giddings**  
Texas House of Representatives, District 109

### GREEN AND ORANGE AWARD FOR ALUMNI SERVICE

- **Jerry L. Comer MS'77**  
Retired project manager and engineer

# A Celebration of Comets



Margot Lee Shetterly, author of *Hidden Figures* and featured speaker at The University of Texas at Dallas Distinguished Lecture sponsored by Texas Instruments, encouraged the audience to tell the stories of other unsung heroes.



After receiving their UT Dallas rings during the annual spring ceremony, more than 100 students and alumni took part in the Comet tradition of dunking their rings in the reflecting pools on the University mall.



Charles Gillis MBA'04 sponsored a group of students and mentors from the nonprofit Year Up, which helps youths reach their potential, at the UT Dallas Distinguished Lecture. From left: Gillis, mentor Liya Getachew, staff member Julian Mensah BA'10, Brionna Brown, Edna Rojas, Ayan Ali, Janette Lara and Daniel Lugo.



A growing number of alumni and friends are leaving their marks on The University of Texas at Dallas by making planned gifts that will impact the University for years to come.

"I've been involved with the University since 1984, both in a personal and professional capacity," said Dr. Robert J. Potter, president of R. J. Potter Co. and a member of the University's Development Board. "Even though I am not a graduate of UT Dallas, I am proud to have watched this institution grow to be a strong and diverse university."

Potter is a new member of the Legacy Society, a group of generous individuals who have made gifts via their wills, stock contributions or other planned gift commitments to the University.

"In my desire to continue strengthening UT Dallas indefinitely, I made a planned gift to support the Institute for Excellence in Corporate Governance in the Naveen Jindal School of Management, which allowed me to leave a legacy contribution without giving up assets during my lifetime," Potter said.

Planned gifts do not have to cost anything today and might include gifts that name UT Dallas as a beneficiary of retirement accounts or a life insurance policy. Donors may choose gifts that pay them income for life, with rates ranging from 4-9 percent, and they can designate contributions for either specific areas or unrestricted support. Such gifts are invaluable to UT Dallas and provide the University with the opportunity to plan for future growth, knowing these philanthropic commitments will be realized in years to come.

"Though I am philanthropically supportive of other organizations within our community and elsewhere, UT Dallas remains a strong priority for me," Potter said.

The Legacy Society members — now numbering more than 100 — are recognized annually at a private luncheon, as well as invited to other special campus events and seminars. ■

Visit [utdallasgiving.org](http://utdallasgiving.org) to learn more, or contact Anna LeBlanc, director of gift planning, at 972.883.6023.



During the 2018 Investiture Ceremony, the University formally recognized the appointments of 20 distinguished UT Dallas faculty members to endowed chairs and professorships.



Dozens of Dallas ISD high school students visited the University for the launch of the Jindal Young Scholars Program, an effort to support the academic, social and emotional development of high school students and increase their chances of postsecondary success.

# Mark Cuban Invests in Computer Science Outreach for Local Children

Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks, recently made a significant gift to The University of Texas at Dallas to support a series of coding camps for Dallas-area students.

“Students who are given early exposure to computer science have a significant advantage in driving future social and economic development,” said Cuban, a local businessman and investor. “I am proud to help UT Dallas grow the next generation of local entrepreneurs, inventors and business leaders.”

Although the Texas state curriculum for K-12 students contains basic STEM courses in math and science, many schools do not offer educational opportunities related to computer programming. The Center for Computer Science Education and Outreach (CCSEO) in the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science aims to fill this gap through after-school camps within Title I elementary and middle schools in North Texas. These initiatives expose students to logical thinking and programming, with a specific emphasis on supporting schools with a high concentration of minority students underrepresented in STEM fields.

The University currently hosts programming sessions in 20 schools, reaching over 400 children. Cuban’s \$50,000 commitment allows the program to reach an additional 2,500 students by defraying participation costs.

“We were already providing coding clubs at a reduced cost to Title I schools during the past few years,” said Dr. Jey Veerasamy, director of the CCSEO. “With Mark Cuban’s gift, we were able to make them free. More than 10 new schools came on board in the Dallas and Garland ISDs, which indicates that there is a real need for this kind of program, and that a significant percentage of Title I families cannot pay even the reduced fee.”

Coding camps open a horizon of new opportunities for students. “As technology continues to drive innovation, it becomes even more critical for today’s youth to be empowered with knowledge and skills aligned with the future,” said Dr. Janell Straach, senior lecturer in the Department of Computer Science and director of the Center for Engaging Women in Cyber Security.

“As a public university, we should do public good,” Veerasamy said. “Without these coding clubs, those students may never get introduced to the world of coding.” ■



Top: Young summer coding camp participants gain exposure to computer programming. Above: Mark Cuban (center) visits the Department of Computer Science at UT Dallas.

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Send comments or questions to  
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