

# TEXAS★LEADER

PLANNING TO CHANGE THE WORLD



## Finding My Voice

UT alumna helps the next generation of leaders find excellence within themselves

Summer 2021



**TEXAS**  
The University of Texas at Austin



# From the President

## Hello, Texas Leaders

It is a privilege to share my first message in Texas Leader magazine with this amazing group of alumni and friends of The University of Texas at Austin. On behalf of Longhorn Nation, I want to thank you for investing in the future of our great university. You make an impact every day across the Forty Acres and in the lives of our talented students.

Over this strange and difficult year, the pandemic has dominated our lives. But today we are starting to feel less burdened and more hopeful. Our university recently reached an impressive milestone: in April, UT administered its 100,000th dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. UT professor Jason McLellan was one of the recipients. Getting his dose was a historic, full-circle moment because Jason's research was instrumental in the development of the vaccine he received. That research was made possible by Texas Leader Betsy Sauer, BBA '66, whose estate funded the Sauer Structural Biology Laboratory where Jason and his team conducted their research.

Their work is an outstanding example of how the university's research and teaching missions serve our society. By fostering academic discovery and training students to drive knowledge, we're able to do our part in creating a more prosperous, just and sustainable world. This mission is more important than ever, and I truly believe we're at a special juncture in history where we can raise our sights even further.

As I shared earlier this year in the State of the University address, there is an intriguing parallel between recent events and what gripped the world 100 years ago. The so-called Spanish flu of 1918-20 ravaged millions globally. Here in Austin, everything was shut down, including the UT campus. When students did return, they had to make temporary sacrifices similar to those today.

But that's not where the story ends. The 1920s were a period of rapid social change, innovation, economic growth and cultural flourishing — both nationally and here on campus.

Now we have the opportunity to sail into our own roaring '20s and to lead a future already playing its hand. Practically, that means continuing to recruit a diverse array of outstanding faculty and outstanding students while curating an environment where they feel free to discover their passions, generate and disseminate knowledge, and debate important ideas. It also means playing to our unique opportunities for partnership because of our location — in Texas, at Austin. Your investment supports it all. I am grateful to you for making us not only the university that we are today, but the university we will become in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Hartzell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "J" and "H".

### Jay Hartzell

President

Ph.D. Finance '98

Ed and Carolyn Hyman Presidential Leadership Chair  
Trammell Crow Regents Professorship in Business

 @jchartzell



# Finding My Voice

A woman with short brown hair, smiling, stands in a field of dry grass. She is wearing an orange long-sleeved top with white decorative patterns and dark blue jeans. In the background, there are bare trees and a building with a tall, white tower with a green top.

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UT alumna helps the next generation of leaders find excellence within themselves



“I found my voice here,” Andrea Anderson, B.J. ’89 said when reflecting on her time at The University of Texas at Austin. A first-generation student from the Dallas suburbs, Andrea is now an entrepreneur helping UT students find their own voices through a planned gift.

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▲  
**In addition to being an entrepreneur, Andrea recently accepted a position as the Senior Director of Client Relations at Risch Results because she is passionate about helping small businesses find great diverse talent.**

**Photos: Sloan Breeden**

Andrea’s mother was valedictorian of her high school class, but decided to stay home and raise her daughters instead of finishing college. Her mother’s love of education never abated, though. “She wanted us to have the opportunities that weren’t available to her,” Andrea said. “She wanted us to go places.” Andrea’s mother and father, who worked at Kraft Foods in Garland his entire professional life, instilled in her a belief that anything was possible with hard work. “They always encouraged us to do whatever we wanted,” Andrea said.

Knowing that she wanted to move away to attend college and study journalism, Andrea applied to a variety of schools in Texas. When her acceptance letter to UT arrived on the same day as a scholarship offer, “Boom!” she laughed. “I knew in that moment that UT was the school for me. After that it was like I had blinders on. UT was the only school that I was going to attend.”

## Finding Her Voice

Despite some initial obstacles, like not having a permanent room assignment and her stepfather's hesitation to leave her to live on a co-ed floor of her dorm, Andrea immersed herself in the UT and Austin communities. In fact, her parents teased her when the first time they saw her in months was on TV as part of a peaceful protest at the Capitol.

She joined the African American Culture Committee and UT's Innervations Gospel Choir and wrote articles for the Daily Texan. "I also worked on and led the first MLK program that we had on UT's campus," Andrea said. "We started a tradition that has expanded beyond campus and into the Austin community."

In her sophomore year, Andrea started working in the Dean of Students' office through a work-study program. "I was very active on campus, which made a huge difference in my experience. And working in the dean's office gave me a variety of opportunities that I never would have otherwise had," she said.

But none of her moments at UT could compare to meeting her role model, journalist Ed Bradley, while attending the National Association of Black Journalists convention in New York. "It takes a lot for me to geek out over a celebrity," she said. "I have been blessed to meet some very interesting people throughout my career—I've had conversations with Oprah and worked for a past center of the San Antonio Spurs. But meeting Ed Bradley and taking a picture with him ... that wouldn't have been possible without UT."

► **The day Andrea interviewed for a position that would take her away from journalism, she drove to Austin to get advice from her favorite professor, Griff Singer.**

"UT really prepared me for success, especially from the standpoint of being a Black student," Andrea continued. "When I was a student and starting out in my career, it was not unusual to be the only Black person in the room. Being comfortable with that—and understanding that I deserved to be there, that I'm intelligent and I bring something unique to the table—I learned that at UT."



**“I wanted to give a gift that would create opportunities for students, particularly Black students, so that they could discover and define excellence within themselves, for themselves — just as I was able to do.”**



### **A Signature**

“I am a person who wants to leave my mark, leave a legacy,” Andrea said. Even her business, a marketing consulting firm, is called A Signature Group.

Though Andrea built her Longhorn legacy as an active member of the Black Alumni Network and the Black Studies Advisory Committee, it didn’t occur to her to support the university through her estate plan. “I don’t have any children and I’ve already set up a trust for my nephew, so even though I am not a multimillionaire, I have to think about where my assets are going to go when my time comes,” she said.

When a UT staff member approached her about making a larger impact, the solution seemed obvious: She decided to make the university the beneficiary of her life insurance policy. Andrea established a new scholarship,

the Andrea F. Anderson Endowment in Black Studies, to support students in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies. In addition to the new scholarship, she also decided to support the Brenda Burt Scholarship, a Texas Exes scholarship that supports Black undergraduates with financial need.

“I wanted to give a gift that would create opportunities for students, particularly Black students, so that they could discover and define excellence within themselves, for themselves — just as I was able to do,” Andrea said.

As a student, Andrea discovered that UT doesn’t just demand that students memorize facts in books. It teaches them to think critically, to find their voice, and to realize their worth and the unique insight they can offer. Longhorns like Andrea can then enter the world with confidence, knowing that they deserve a place at whatever table they choose. Her gift will help a new generation of leaders discover this for themselves—and go on to change the world. ■





# Keeping Texas on Top

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Lois and Richard Folger are committed to the 'burnt orange and white'

**Sometimes in life you just know.**

That's how it was for University of Texas alumni Lois and Richard Folger. While on their first date at Smuggler's Inn Restaurant in Austin, with a nightcap at Mike and Charlie's, Richard brashly proposed and Lois called his hand by accepting. The two student sweethearts have been in step ever since.



▲ **The happy couple on the evening of their engagement.**

Together they manage successful careers in energy and business, and they believe their degrees from the state's flagship university have opened doors for them along the way. The Midland couple, who have been dedicated volunteers for the university, have made it their personal mission—through thoughtful giving—to make sure Texas stays on top.

Lois, who set her sights on engineering while in high school, shared, "UT was the only school I applied to because it had a great reputation in engineering. My professors equipped me with the problem-solving skills I needed to succeed, even when faced with unknowns and complicated issues."

After graduation, Lois worked for Texaco and later joined the startup Concho Resources. She earned three more degrees—a master's in engineering from UT, an MBA from UTPB and a master's in finance from the University of Notre Dame. She now leads Folger Energy, LLC, which she founded in 2004.

After a stint "working in the oil patch," Richard earned both a BBA in finance and bachelor's in petroleum engineering from UT, as well as a master's in finance from the University of Notre Dame. He joined a Texas bank as an engineer and energy lender. He later led Warren Equipment Company as president and CEO for 16 years. Today Richard is managing general partner of Colbridge Partners, Ltd.

"UT credentials gave me great career opportunities," Richard said. "Having both engineering and business degrees from a top university gave me a leg up in an extremely competitive job environment. It's important to Lois and me to do what we can to help this university continue to deliver world-class education."

To do that, Lois and Richard have shared generously with the university they love. The couple initially endowed scholarships for engineering students, and then they did something above and beyond. They created endowed chairs—the dean's leadership chair at the McCombs School of Business and the

department leadership chair for petroleum and geosystems engineering at the Cockrell School of Engineering—to provide ongoing flexibility through unrestricted funds. With support from these chairs, the schools can quickly address urgent needs, such as hiring world-class faculty, expanding research and more.

"We believe in the idea that if you build it, they will come," Richard said. "If you continually develop the best programs in the country, then exceptional faculty and students will want to be a part of them and beat a path to your door. That idea was the foundation in creating these chairs."

Lois added, "We wanted to show our support for the university by setting up endowments at Cockrell and McCombs that provide resources every year for the recruitment of top teaching and research faculty. It was important to us that university leadership have the ability and discretion to address the most immediate needs at each school."

To further fund these chairs for generations to come, Lois and Richard have designated UT as beneficiary of their retirement accounts. It was a simple and tax-efficient way to support the university.



▲ **UT alumni Lois and Richard Folger pictured with Cockrell School of Engineering Dean Sharon Wood.**



“In our estate plan, IRAs were not the best financial asset to pass on to our children,” Lois said. “The IRS rules are complex and distributions can be heavily taxed. Our family feels really good about the decision to include UT in our estate.”

**“There’s really no better way to support Texas and our community than to keep UT great — to advance our state’s flagship university.”**

“I’ll add that the university’s Gift and Estate Planning team is a great resource for thinking through the process of where and how to give,” Richard said. “There was no pressure as Lois and I drove the conversation and they supported us along the way.”

Lois and Richard have stayed focused on the end game.

“Neither Richard nor I were born in Texas, but we both love this state,” Lois said. “There’s really no better way to support Texas and our community than to keep UT great — to advance our state’s flagship university.”

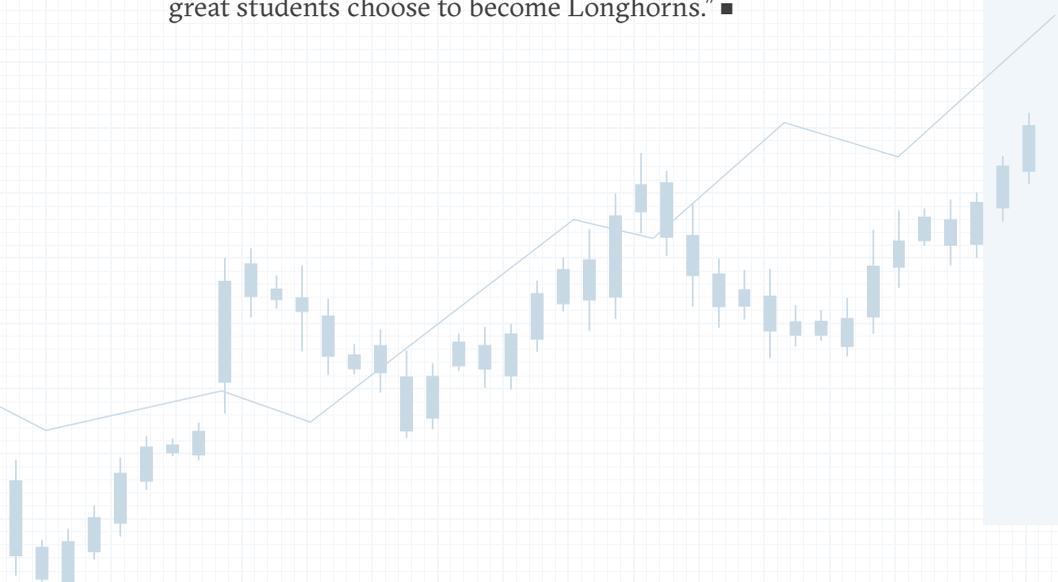
“It’s a tough battle to stay on top and I commend the university’s leadership,” Richard added. “We have confidence in giving to UT — an institution where great professors generate great research, and most importantly, where great students choose to become Longhorns.” ■



## Recruiting World-Class Faculty

The McCombs School of Business recently recruited Professor Jeff Hales as the Charles T. Zlatkovic Centennial Professor of Accounting. Recognized as one of the “Top 100 Most Influential People” in Accounting Today, Hales specializes in sustainability accounting, an emerging area of expertise that is rising in significance among scholars and practitioners worldwide.

Professor Hales’ recruitment to the university was supported by the Lois and Richard Folger Dean’s Leadership Chair, an endowment created by the Folgers that enables the dean to recruit and retain exceptional full-time faculty who will make a lasting impression on the students in McCombs.





# Gazing Upward

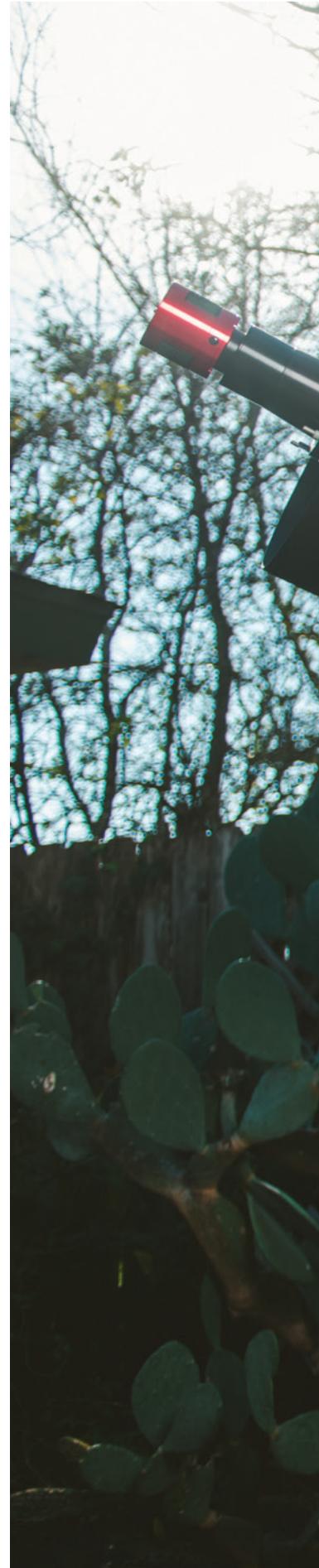
**“I can’t imagine  
a childhood without  
the night sky,”**

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said Anne Marie Adkins, B.A. '75, amateur astronomer. Anne first peered through her Aunt Carol's telescope at Saturn's rings and Jupiter's moons at the age of six. In her aunt's backyard, nestled in the Alamo Heights neighborhood of San Antonio, Anne's love for the night skies and science took hold. That love would inspire her years later to establish a planned gift to support graduate fellows in astronomy at The University of Texas at Austin.

“In the 1960s it was unusual for a woman to have a professional telescope like my Aunt Carol had,” said Anne, who now treasures that telescope as part of her personal collection. “She was an adept amateur astronomer, and I would sit with her and watch meteor showers or locate the two satellites that were in orbit back then. I think it is so important for kids to get an inclination toward science at an early age, and my aunt as well as my parents fostered that in me.”

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▲  
Anne Adkins, B.A. '75,  
is supporting the future  
of astronomy.

Photo: Sloan Breedon



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Aunt Carol (left) with members of Anne's family at McDonald Observatory in 1952, Aunt Carol volunteering with the Red Cross, Anne atop a radio telescope dish in Australia, Anne (front center) at a star party in Australia.

BACKGROUND: Campsite and stargazing from Australian star party.

Anne was a star high school student and soon embraced the variety of offerings at UT. She excelled in a wide range of courses, such as pre-med sciences, real estate law, philosophy, political science and Spanish—and she ultimately earned her degree in government. Anne believes liberal arts taught her to think critically and truly prepared her for life’s journey.

“I consider myself a constant student, and that started at UT,” Anne explained. “When I cease learning, I won’t be alive any longer. I’m always reaching out to learn new things.”

After launching a successful career as an organizational development and management consultant, Anne had the time and resources to pursue her lifelong interest in stargazing. “I became a scope-toting amateur astronomer with dreams of imaging faint galaxies,” she said.

She was eager to learn and joined the Austin Astronomical Society, where she found a network of people just as eager to teach her. She traveled the state, country and even the world to attend star parties.

“Early on I realized that there weren’t enough women in astronomy. For example, I was only the third female member of the AAS in a group of 100 members. That was crazy to me. Why were there so few women? It reminded me of Beatrice Tinsley.”

Beatrice Tinsley is one of Anne’s heroes. In 1968 Dr. Tinsley earned her Ph.D. from UT, where she was the only female astronomy student. She published groundbreaking research on the evolution of galaxies that changed predictions about the future history of the universe. While some astronomers felt that the universe’s expansion would eventually slow down and then reverse itself, Dr. Tinsley concluded that the universe would expand forever. After her death, Dr. Tinsley’s ideas gained wide acceptance.

**“Graduate students are key to attracting world-class faculty, so my gift will help elevate education and research one graduate student at a time.”**

“I became so enthralled with her story,” Anne said. “And as I began thinking about leaving a legacy gift to UT, I wanted it to support the Beatrice M. Tinsley Graduate Fellowship in Astronomy—and my hope is that it will encourage more women into the field.” The first recipient of this fellowship will be named this year.

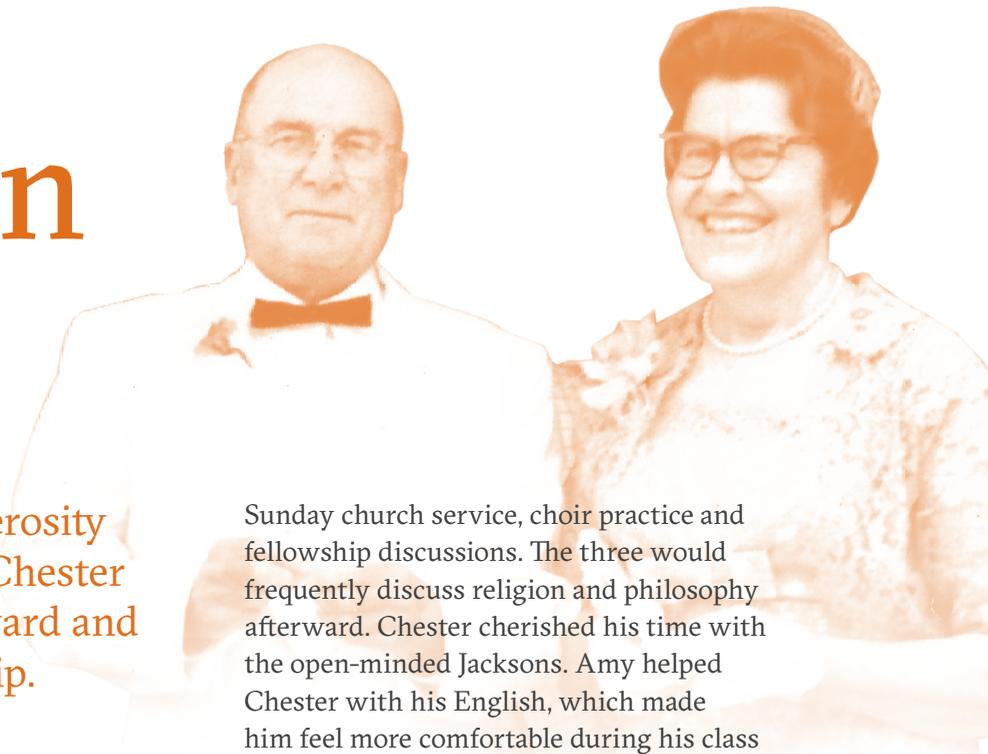
“Giving to an endowment for graduate students may not seem glamorous to some, but to me it is,” Anne said. “These are the kids who are doing the science. And UT faculty need talented graduate students to help conduct research and publish findings. Graduate students are key to attracting world-class faculty, so my gift will help elevate education and research one graduate student at a time. I think it’s one of the best paybacks on your expenditure.”

Today Anne looks forward to the world reopening for safe travel so she can attend more star parties. She lives in Fort Davis and can see the domes of McDonald Observatory from her house. Anne serves on the observatory’s Board of Visitors and supports efforts to have the Big Bend area designated as the largest Dark Sky Reserve in the world.

And she continues to do what she loves. Anne takes her newest telescope out to Big Bend-area parks to educate the public on the importance of dark skies, and to help visitors view what’s in the sky on that particular night.

“I consider myself very lucky to still be standing here, gazing upward,” she said. ■

# Longhorn Spirit



Inspired by the generosity of past Longhorns, Chester Liu is paying it forward and honoring a friendship.

**Not everyone would view a bag of peanuts as a life-changing welcome to The University of Texas at Austin.** But to Chester Liu, MBA '68, a first-generation student who had just arrived from Taiwan to study business, that is exactly what it turned out to be. Now Chester is honoring that memory through a planned gift that will welcome the next generation of leaders to the Forty Acres.

Chester arrived on campus in January 1967, just in time for winter registration, and found a bag of roasted peanuts and a note on his door. It was a gift from Amy and Darrell Jackson. The Jacksons volunteered as a host family for international students, helping them acclimate to the university and Texas. Amy had studied in Paris and knew what it was like to be a student in a foreign country.

It didn't take long for a friendship to blossom. Darrell and Amy invited Chester to join them at their

Sunday church service, choir practice and fellowship discussions. The three would frequently discuss religion and philosophy afterward. Chester cherished his time with the open-minded Jacksons. Amy helped Chester with his English, which made him feel more comfortable during his class discussions and presentations. One sunny afternoon she even taught him how to drive.

Chester remembers Darrell and Amy as “proud native Texans who embodied the culture and history of Texas, the spirit of the Alamo and, most importantly, what it means to be a Longhorn family,” he said. “They offered a welcome cultural orientation.” The relationship made such a difference in Chester’s life that he named his oldest daughter Amy.

UT provided the education and his professors, and the Jacksons provided the support Chester needed to leave the Forty Acres and go on to have a successful career, first as a management trainee for National Distiller and Chemical Corporation and eventually as a vice president at Automatic Data Processing.

Despite his short time in Texas—he and his wife, Susan, moved to New York after graduation—Chester carried UT, and the lessons that Amy and Darrell shared, with him. His daughters fondly remember the Longhorn that had a prominent spot above



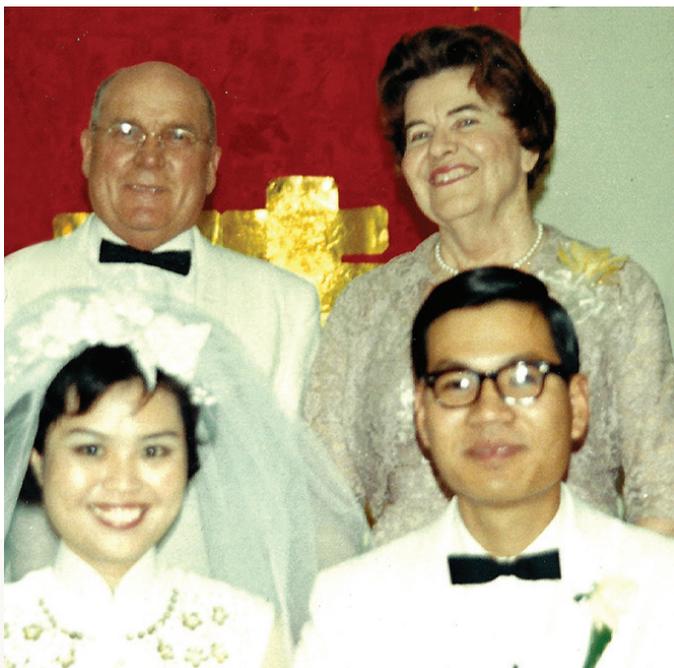
**“I want students to be able to broaden their horizons and further their educations just as I was able to.” — CHESTER LIU**

the fireplace and the cowboy hat he often wore while they were growing up. When it was time for them to select a college, Chester took great pride in showing them around the Forty Acres and pointing out his favorite places, including the Tower and the chapel where he married their mom and attended services with Amy and Darrell.

To honor his family and his friendship with the Jacksons, Chester decided to establish an endowed scholarship by directing the required minimum distribution from his IRA to the university. The Liu Family Scholarship in Memory of Amy and Darrell Jackson will support high-potential students from middle- and low-income families enrolled in the McCombs School of Business. "I want students to be able to broaden their horizons and further their educations just as I was able to," Chester said.

His gift will help even more students because it is part of the Texas Challenge, a program that matches new endowed scholarships dollar for dollar.

Amy and Darrell were an important part of Chester's life at UT and beyond. "I believe that Amy had higher expectations of me than my mother did," he shared. "Oh, how inspiring it was that she believed in me." And now Chester will provide that same inspiration to future Longhorns. Sometimes a gesture as small as a bag of peanuts can transform lives for generations. ■



▲ The watercolor Amy Jackson painted for Chester represents governing and leadership, compassion and love, and academic endeavor.

◀ Wedding photo of Chester and Susan Liu with Amy and Darrell Jackson.

# RENAISSANCE MAN

## A love of Texas inspires a gift to UT

**As a fourth-generation Texan, Dachiell Rowdon has always had a special place in her heart for the state.** However, it was her late husband Maurice Rowdon's connection with the Lone Star State that inspired her estate gift to The University of Texas at Austin.

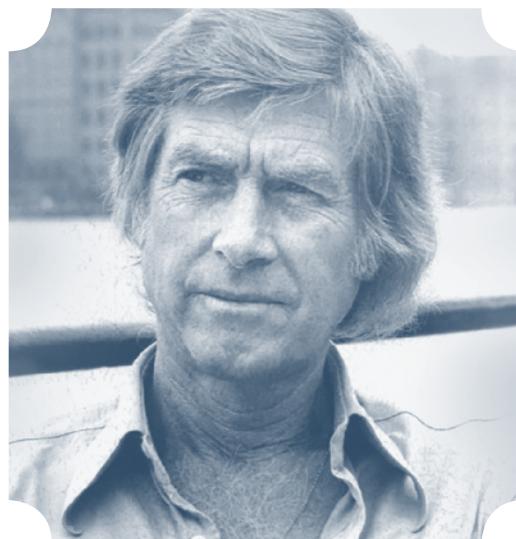
Dachiell spent two years as a fine arts major at the university. "I enjoyed UT immensely, all the more because as a sophomore I met and fell in love with a young Austinite, Matt Berry. We became engaged. But family intervened, and I ended up continuing my education at the University of Poitiers in France."

Dachiell would later meet a new love named Maurice Rowdon. He was a philosopher, author, playwright and poet, and his peers hailed him as a true Renaissance man. He wrote on many topics—from investigative history to animal and human intelligence to social and environmental issues.

Born into a working-class London family in 1922, he was awarded a scholarship to Oxford University, where he earned a degree in modern history. He then entered World War II as a forward observation officer in the Italian campaign.

As part of the British infantry assigned to the United States Fifth Army, Maurice crossed paths with the Texas 36th Infantry and his heart went out to them—and theirs to him. Maurice never forgot their humor and soft drawls, nor did he forget their tragic Rapido River crossing, in which so many were lost during their failed push to Rome.

After the war, Maurice embraced life and the endless opportunities it held. He earned a second degree at Oxford in modern greats, specializing in philosophy, and taught at



Baghdad University. He became an expert in Italian civilization and wrote several published books on the subject, as well as a guidebook on Umbria. He also created writings on 18th-century Venice that were commissioned by the BBC for a television special.

In the late 1970s, Maurice developed his own breathing system, Oxygenesis, based on his studies of Eastern philosophy and yoga. He established a thriving practice in California. This breathing system brought him and Dachiell together.

She reflected, "My emphasis in life had switched from art to health because mine was declining. I had gone to California looking for new ways to cope and was introduced to Maurice. Under his guidance, both through his breathing technique and his original thought, I received the tools I needed—not only to manage my illness, but also to change my life perspective."

▲ Maurice completed "The Ape of Sorrows" weeks before his death. The following year, Dachiell shared his book with the public.

Maurice and Dachiell's relationship grew until the two were married. Dachiell jokes that part of the reason he was attracted to her was because she was a Texan, and as much of an animal lover as he was. The couple spent 25 years together before Maurice passed away in 2009.

"I remained in London and set about organizing his archive," Dachiell said. "Maurice had some 40 years of writing before we met.

"I wanted to ensure that his archive was safeguarded. His thought about our species remains avant-garde now, given the state of the planet and the discord on it due to human activity. His last work, 'The Ape of Sorrows,' was the culmination of his lifetime inquiry into what we human beings are as a species."

**"I feel so fortunate to have found these wonderful people at The University of Texas to help my dream for Maurice come true."**

As much as Dachiell wanted to preserve his work, she wasn't sure how to go about it. That is when her Texas past came into play through Matt, BBA '68, her once-upon-a-time UT fiancé.

"He found me in London. We hadn't seen or spoken to each other in 49 years. Matt had enjoyed a successful career and happy marriage with a wonderful woman, and together they raised four lovely children. When his wife passed away, he put out a



search for me. And when we finally met, it was like we were kids again—only now we both had white hair and wrinkles," Dachiell said.

Matt knew it was important to Dachiell to preserve Maurice's work, and encouraged her to reach out to the university. "At UT I was introduced to David Sosa, the chair of the philosophy department, who took me on a tour of Waggener Hall. The whole atmosphere seemed a perfect fit. I established an endowed excellence fund to support the department, and hope to eventually create a distinguished professorship. The university is also digitizing Maurice's archive. That is hugely important to me and, I hope, to others," Dachiell shared.

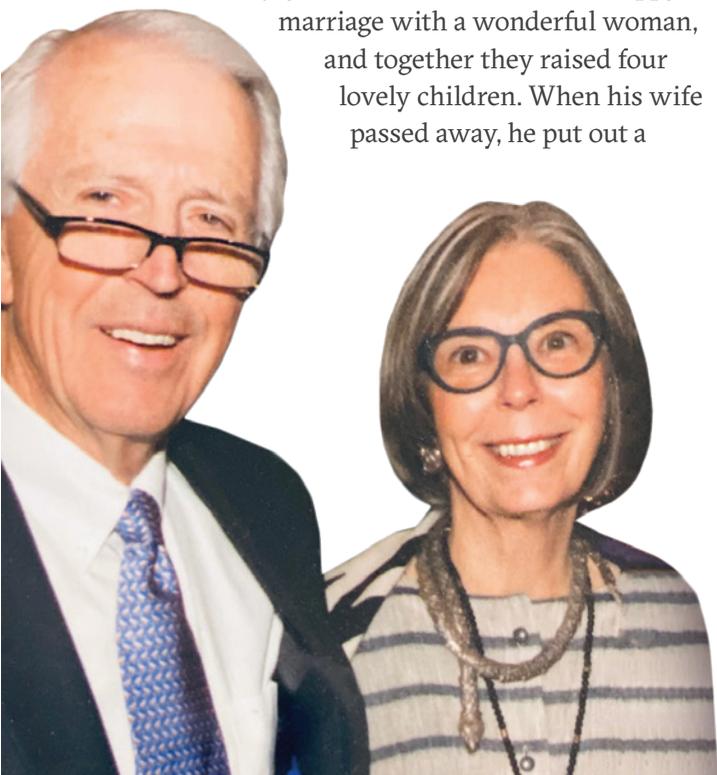
"I feel Maurice would be delighted about how I am honoring him. The existential questions the department is asking and studying are so vital to this troubled epoch. The students are learning how to think well outside of any boxes. Maurice, a hugely inquisitive thinker, would like that. I feel so fortunate to have found these wonderful people at The University of Texas to help my dream for Maurice come true." ■

▲ **Maurice loved animals and his study of animal communication, including his time with Koko the gorilla, led him to redefine human intelligence.**

Make an impact today and a lasting one in the future by participating in the College of Liberal Art's Legacy Challenge. Document a new planned gift and an immediate donation will be made to the department, program, project or area of your choosing within the college.

JOIN THE CHALLENGE TODAY  
[www.giving.utexas.edu/legacychallengecola](http://www.giving.utexas.edu/legacychallengecola)

◀ **Dachiell and Matt married in 2017 and split their time between Europe and Austin until the pandemic, when they decided to stay in Austin.**



# Texas Leader SPOTLIGHT



**Brenda Rickert, B.S. Education '62  
and George Rickert | Austin, TX**

## **What are your favorite UT memories?**

I loved meeting new friends—and we are still friends decades later. When we see each other, it's like we're still together on campus. I'm a big Longhorn fan and I converted my husband, a University of Indiana graduate, into one. My goodness, he was the biggest fan of all before he passed away. I also fondly remember the day I was inducted into the College of Education's honor society.

## **How did UT prepare you for success?**

My professors taught me how to think, rather than what to think. I can proudly say I never had one professor who told me what to think. It helped me become a good teacher and a successful management consultant in my second career.

## **Why did you choose to include UT in your estate plans?**

When we got to a certain age, George and I began to look at the people and places that meant a great deal to us. We loved living in Lakeway and were always proud of the Lake Travis High School students, and we loved the College of Education. In our estate plans, we were able to set up an endowed scholarship for those high school students who wanted to pursue an education degree at UT.

## **What impact do you want your gift to make?**

George and I always believed in paying it forward and helping others. Our hope is that this gift will make a difference in students' lives. For me, personally, I also wanted to support the College of Education as a way to say thank you for all they have given me.



**Ann Howie, B.S. Kinesiology '68,  
Jan Howie, B.S. Kinesiology '68  
and their mother Ruth Howie | Cedar Park, TX**

## **What are your favorite UT memories?**

Our dad attended UT, so in our minds there wasn't any other place to attend. We felt that a degree from UT was very important. Beyond the classroom, our experiences with living at Scottish Rite Dormitory (the delicious food!), sorority life and UT athletics were all part of the fun that we had on campus. We met many wonderful people from different backgrounds and made lasting friendships.

## **How did UT prepare you for success?**

The guidance, knowledge and care of our professors in the College of Education, especially in physical education, gave us the confidence that we would be prepared for the next step in life. After we graduated, we both taught physical education in the Austin Independent School District for 34 years. The organization and time management skills we learned at UT definitely prepared us for the classroom.

## Meet University of Texas at Austin alumni and friends who are changing the world through philanthropy and careful estate planning.

### Why did you choose to include UT in your estate plans?

We're still huge UT athletics fans and Mom is the biggest fan of all. We wanted to give back to student-athletes for all the fun, enjoyment and entertainment that they've given us over the years. Together, we established a gift through our estate to support scholarships for student-athletes in women's volleyball and basketball, and men's baseball.

### What impact do you want your gift to make?

Knowing how hard it must be for student-athletes—studying, practice schedules, traveling, community service and the games—we wanted to create scholarships to reward their dedication to their school and their sport. It's our joy to help them on their journey. We've enjoyed seeing them grow from their freshman year to their senior year. We feel like we're all a family.



**Max Snodderly, Ph.D.**

Professor, Neuroscience | Austin, TX

### Will you share a little about your research?

I study visual neuroscience to understand how the eye and the brain work to create visual experience and how it is used in the natural world. I used to do laboratory research in this area, but my recent research focuses on the visual ecology of monkeys with different types of color vision. I am doing field work in the monkeys' natural habitats to study their behavior as well as measure optical properties of their environment and their food sources to determine how these things are related to the evolution of their vision. I am also participating in studies to determine how the monkeys disperse or destroy the seeds of the large trees in an Amazonian forest, which is important for the ecology of the forest and its resilience in the face of climate change. In future work, my collaborators and I will seek to work with indigenous people to promote sustainability of this critical ecosystem.

### What experiences have you appreciated at UT?

I try to absorb what I enjoy most in an environment. UT has certain things that other places don't have. I think the Butler School of Music is wonderful and I have enjoyed going to many performances there.

### What do you admire about your students?

For me, the word I think of is "empathize," rather than "admire." When I first began teaching, I was surprised to learn how much time students worked outside of class to make ends meet. Some students continued to work for a family business that required spending time away from Austin. It's a great burden that I think needs to be taken off of students so they can focus on their studies.

### Why did you choose to make a gift to UT?

While working at UT I have accumulated retirement assets, and I wanted to use them to make a difference. I set up Opportunity Scholars, a scholarship to relieve students of educational debt and encourage recipients to contribute when they graduate and are making money. These scholarships have made a big difference for the students who have received them, and I hope those students will help make a big difference for those who come behind them.

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## Cover

Photo by Sloan Breedon

## Submissions

TEXAS LEADER is published for members of the Texas Leadership Society and other alumni and friends of The University of Texas at Austin. To submit story ideas, comments, questions and address changes, please use the enclosed envelope, call us at 800-687-4602 or email [giftplan@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:giftplan@austin.utexas.edu).

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