

TEXAS★LEADER

PLANNING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

The Hearts and Minds Behind AI

Alumni Seek Better World
through AI Research at UT

Fall 2020



TEXAS
The University of Texas at Austin



Getting to Know Jay Hartzell, UT's New President

President Jay Hartzell shares what it's like to lead the university during a pandemic, his priorities for the future, and his gratitude for the alumni and friends who generously support UT's mission.

You took over the presidency during challenging circumstances. What has kept you steady?

Even though we've faced many obstacles in recent days, I keep coming back to the students and their talent, our faculty and their amazing research and teaching, and our staff and their unparalleled commitment and dedication. I try to stay focused on what's best for the tens of thousands of people who call the Forty Acres home. That's our North Star — it's what helps me see the big picture and stay grounded.

What are your top priorities this fall and beyond?

In the short term, it's about doing the absolute best we can to deliver a Texas-quality education to all of our students this semester, regardless of how they are learning — in-person or online. And we must do this while focusing our resources and efforts on protecting the health and safety of our community, especially those who are likely to be at greatest risk.

Balancing these two things — academic excellence and health — is vital. But with that short-term focus in mind, it is also extremely important to zoom out and look at where we are headed. I want us to not simply keep our eyes down as a university, but to look up and identify the opportunities that will be there for us in a post-COVID-19 world and prepare to take advantage of them.

What has been a pleasant surprise in this new role?

I continue to be impressed by the way that, for the most part, COVID-19 has united Longhorn Nation. People have stepped up over and over again. Of course, our health care workers at every level have been heroic in serving our community and those in need of care. Our faculty members have worked hard to transform their teaching, and our students have looked out for each other in so many inspiring ways. Everyone has gotten involved.

Why is philanthropy important to the university?

There are three major things that philanthropy does for UT.

First, it gives us the freedom to innovate, experiment and take chances that lead to extraordinary breakthroughs, particularly in a resource-constrained environment. Without philanthropy, we would often not be able to realize our ambitious goals or explore an unknown or unproven kind of research or scholarship.

Second, it provides us with the resources to weather storms and get through hard periods while still keeping an eye on the long run. Philanthropy is the foundation that enables students and faculty to pursue their dreams even when there are temporary fluctuations in the economy, or when one might otherwise be tempted to become myopic.

Third, it is a signal of the commitment of our supporters to the university and our shared future. That signal resonates with faculty and students we are recruiting, with the universities we're competing with, and with the outside world, who is assessing our impact and shaping our reputation.

I am beyond grateful to all of the donors and friends of The University of Texas for making us not only the university we are today, but the university we will grow to become in the years ahead. Thank you!

The Hearts and Minds Behind AI

Alumni Seek Better World
through AI Research at UT

At the age of four Amir Husain fell in love with computers — in his words, he “became obsessed” with them. In his teens he began writing to his heroes, computer scientists like Niklaus Wirth, who created the Pascal programming language, and Nicholas Negroponte, a pioneer in the study of how humans interact with computers. They all wrote back. Amir left his home of Lahore, Pakistan to attend The University of Texas at Austin 8,000 miles away, drawn by the work of one of UT’s computer science labs. While at UT, he found a kindred spirit in his wife Zaib, who was also from Lahore and a student at the McCombs School of Business.

Amir and Zaib both come from a long line of adventurous intellectuals and have several authors in their families. Zaib’s grandmother studied with Dr. Jonas Salk and Amir’s older sister is a string theorist. They were taught to value education long before their paths met at UT. Together, these two entrepreneurs turned their creativity, intelligence and drive into successful companies.

▶ Austin tech entrepreneurs and devoted Longhorns Amir and Zaib Husain

Photos:
Sloan Breeden, Amir Husain



The couple credit UT for changing their lives, which inspired them to make a donation to support groundbreaking work through UT's new Machine Learning Laboratory.

"Zaib and I chose to make this gift because we believe artificial intelligence will one day help elevate the human condition, and that the research conducted here will pave the way for such a day," said Amir.



Amir is restless, but in a good way.

"My natural inclination with everything is 'how do you take it to the max and then some?' I'm focused on what can be done that others would consider impossible," he said.

As a result of that laser focus, Amir holds 34 patents with 29 more pending. He is the author of "The Sentient Machine: The Coming of Age of Artificial Intelligence" and founder and CEO of Austin-based SparkCognition, Inc., a machine learning and AI-driven cognitive analytics company. His work ranges from using AI to prevent equipment failures on oil rigs to making planes safer through predictive maintenance technology. Amir is as passionate about serving on the board of advisors for IBM Watson as he is about serving on the UT Department of Computer Science Advisory Council.

Zaib earned a finance degree from Texas McCombs and a master's in financial management from the University of London. In 2015, she founded Makerarm, a personal fabrication system with interchangeable tools for 3-D printing, milling and more that mounts on a desktop.



Amir and Zaib
with their sons,
Asas, Murtaza
and Hyder

"My journey to becoming an entrepreneur really started in our garage," she said. "The lab workspace we have created there draws us all in at times—Amir, me and our three boys. We always find ourselves tinkering."

Problem-solving is in the Husains' DNA, especially problem-solving through computer science. The couple envisions the Machine Learning Lab accelerating the efforts of UT experts across campus to solve challenges in fields like energy and health care.

"Texas is at the nexus of energy and computer science because of UT," Amir said. "Artificial intelligence can make our existing energy sources more optimal—systems that consume energy can become more reliable and the whole process can be made safer."

"Zaib and I chose to make this gift because we believe artificial intelligence will one day help elevate the human condition." — AMIR HUSAIN



NSF Selects UT for New Institute

In August, the National Science Foundation selected UT to lead the NSF AI Institute for Foundations of Machine Learning, bolstering the university's existing strengths in this emerging field. The new institute will be headquartered in UT's Machine Learning Laboratory.

- Machine learning is the technology that drives AI systems, enabling them to acquire knowledge and make predictions to help solve many of the world's great challenges.
- The NSF is investing \$20 million in the project at UT to advance the foundations of machine learning.
- The vision and support of Amir and Zaib Husain helped position UT for this transformational investment from NSF.

"In health care research, there are professors at UT like Lauren Ancel Meyers, Jason McLellan and others who are doing excellent work related to COVID-19," added Amir. "It would be amazing to see cures for current diseases coming from a collaboration between UT departments. Zaib and I hope the Machine Learning Laboratory is going to play a big role in that."

Amir and Zaib also hope that the work of the new laboratory will be a driving force that takes the UT Department of Computer Science all the way to the top of global computer science rankings.

"It would be wonderful for UT to receive this recognition," Zaib said. "We're a family of Longhorns. Amir's brother and

sister both studied here, as did my brother. The university has been important to our success as entrepreneurs. We have hired top UT talent and have consulted with UT faculty, who are experts in their fields."

"With this new Machine Learning Laboratory, all the things we love come together—our alma mater, computer science, artificial intelligence and a path to a better world," Amir explained. Zaib whole-heartedly agreed, "Our gift will help support all of these."

"And, of course, there's our city," Amir said. "Austin's time has arrived. The tech scene is booming and is destined to be a major driver for the local and national economy for decades to come. UT is the heart of Austin and by far the most valuable institution in the city." ■

A Profound Promise

“I have a strong desire to make a difference in the world. It’s a way of expressing my gratitude. I would like my memorial to read *he made a difference, but not too soon*,” Mickey Klein, B.S. ’58, J.D. ’68, chuckled. Mickey and his wife, Jeanne Klein, B.S. ’67, are making a difference at The University of Texas at Austin through smart financial planning and by sharing their time and talents.

Jeanne, a third-generation Longhorn and College of Education graduate, always knew that UT was the only university for her. “I don’t think that I ever enjoyed life as much as I did when I went to UT. I learned a lot academically, but I also learned how I wanted to live my life and what values I wanted to live my life by,” she shared.

“It’s a greater thrill to give money, to see that we’ve improved the life of a person through education.”

Mickey’s path to UT wasn’t quite as clear. He had never been to Texas but was “charmed by the allure of the state. Everything is bigger and better in Texas.” So he declined a scholarship to Oklahoma University

and packed his bags for UT. When he had time, Mickey enjoyed cheering on Longhorns, attending games and open practices whenever he could. But as a student worker studying petroleum engineering, he didn’t have a lot of free time. “More than anything, attending and working at UT taught me discipline,” he said.

While Mickey and Jeanne both attended UT, it was their love of art that brought them together years after graduation, when a friend of Jeanne’s offered to introduce her to a man who loved art as much as she did. As their relationship grew, so did their art collection.

Mickey said, “I think that our passion for art has culminated with our interest in the Blanton Museum of Art and our desire to help build their collections. We were also fortunate to be able to participate on the ground floor of building *Austin* by Ellsworth Kelly.”

“Mickey and Jeanne have been extraordinary friends to the Blanton for more than 15 years,” said director Simone J. Wicha, “shaping this museum to the world-class institution we are today. Their passion for supporting artists and students comes together at the Blanton. They are a constant and beloved presence at the museum, always stopping by to tour the galleries, observe a class, spend time with the curators, or sitting in the front row listening intently any time an artist is giving a talk. It is inspiring to our staff to see leaders who care this much. The Blanton wouldn’t be who we are without Mickey and Jeanne.”

Being involved with the colleges and programs that they support is important to Jeanne and Mickey which is why they moved to Austin in 2004. “We didn’t want to just give





financial support. Anyone can write a check. We want to be active in the organization that we're supporting," Mickey said.

One college holds a special place in Mickey and Jeanne's hearts, the College of Education. Jeanne has been on their advisory board for almost 30 years, and they have left their Austin home to the college. "We will live in the home for the remainder of our lives and then it will go to UT to support scholarships for students preparing to be teachers. I don't know how many people think about it but gifting one's home is an easy way to give to the university."

Mickey and Jeanne also established endowed scholarships to support students who are studying education and nursing. "We want to make sure that they get a great education so they can be great teachers and nurses and not graduate with debt that may force them to take a different path," Jeanne said.

"The Kleins' estate gift benefitting undergraduate scholarships in the College of Education is a legacy gift that bridges their love for UT and their longstanding commitment to children, equity and education," said Charles Martinez, Jr. the dean of the College of Education. "They understand the profound promise of education to transform lives and work directly to strengthen our systems of support for educators, schools and students. In addition to their efforts in education, Jeanne's and Mickey's philanthropy has touched, enriched and strengthened nearly every corner of the Forty Acres. They are the epitome of engaged philanthropy, and among the closest friends and most enthusiastic ambassadors of our College of Education."

Mickey and Jeanne also support the School of Nursing, Harry Ransom Center, the Butler School of Music, Texas Athletics, the UT Press and UT Elementary.

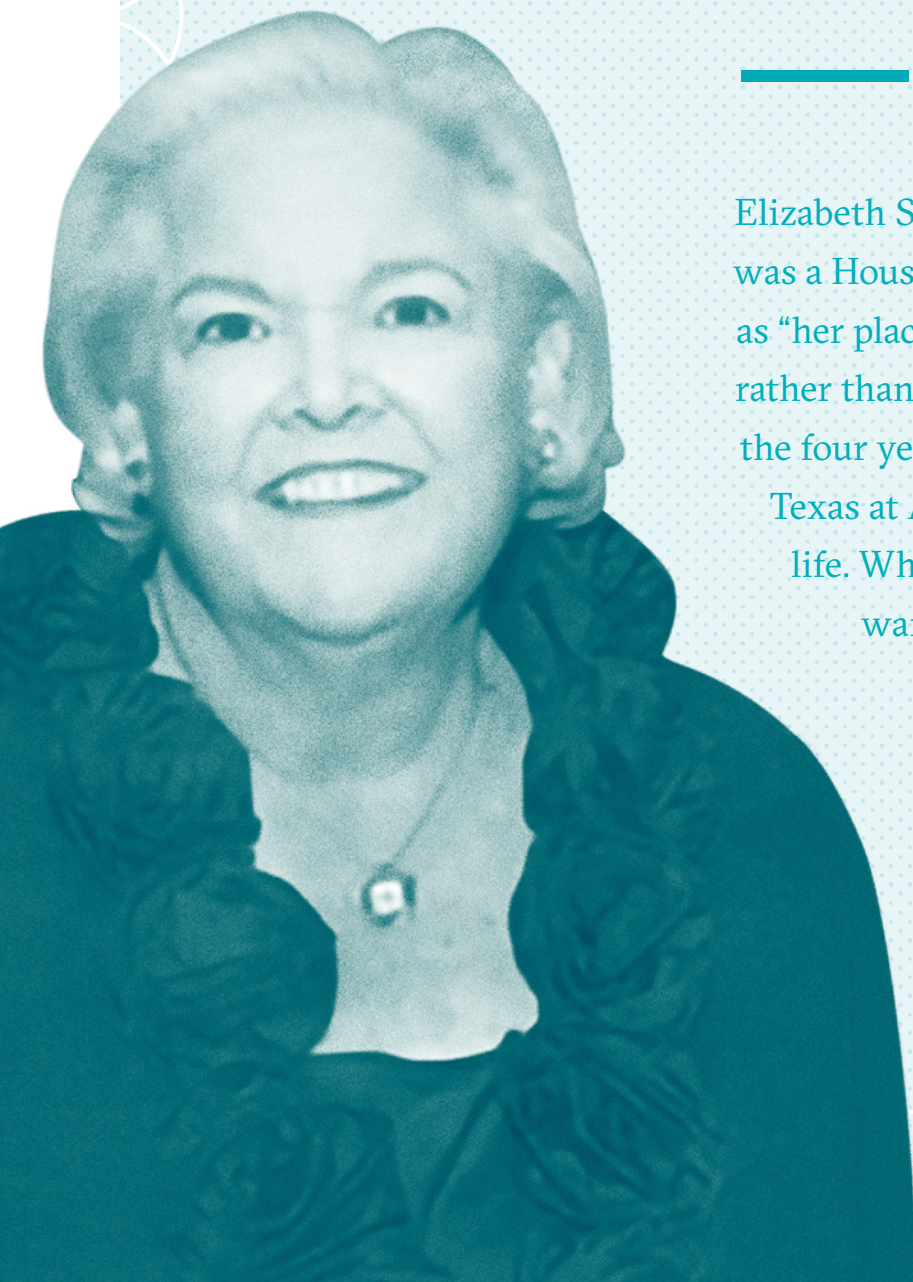
Mickey shared, "I think that the first part of my life was focused on making money. The second part has been devoted to giving money away intelligently. It's a greater thrill to give money, to see that we've improved the life of a person through education." ■

▲ Mickey and Jeanne Klein (pictured here with Dean Martinez) have both been recognized with a UT Distinguished Alumnus Award.

◀ Students in front of the Ellsworth Kelly Austin

Photo: Sloan Breeden

Gifts from the Heart



Elizabeth Sauer, BBA '66, known to all as Betsy, was a Houston native. She referred to Austin as “her place” and was known to say “hook ‘em!” rather than hello or goodbye. She considered the four years she spent at The University of Texas at Austin to be the best years of her life. When Betsy wrote her estate plan, she wanted to help others experience their own life-defining moments at UT.



The three endowed scholarships that Betsy Sauer established through her estate plan have been awarded 13 times since 2017.

Betsy knew from a young age that she wanted to attend UT. Smart and independent, she was one of only two women in her business school's graduating class and a lifelong Longhorn. Her brother, Henry Sauer, Jr., BBA '62 and J.D. '64, reflected, "If you ever saw a crowd of people in burnt orange with horns up, odds were that Betsy was in that crowd."

Betsy's generous support established two endowed presidential scholarships for McCombs School of Business undergraduates. One of the recipients is Morgan Grosch, BBA '21, Canfield Business Honors and Plan II. "As one of five children in my family to attend college, the Elizabeth A. Sauer Endowed Presidential Scholarship has eased the financial cost of my education," Morgan said. "I have been able to fully embrace all of the opportunities available to me at UT, from conducting research to joining on-campus

organizations. Because of the support, I have been fortunate enough to follow my academic passions wherever they lead me."



◀ **Morgan Grosch,**
BBA '21



◀ **Paul Goldbart,**
dean of the College
of Natural Sciences,
and Judy Sauer.

One of the only things that Betsy loved more than UT was her family. She honored her brother and sister-in-law, Judy Sauer, B.A. '64, with gifts to fields of study she knew meant the most to them.

In honor of Henry, she established an endowed scholarship with the School of Law. The scholarship is awarded to students with strong academic performance and has been given to five students since it was established in 2018.

Her gift to honor Judy was directed to the College of Natural Sciences and helped set up the Sauer Laboratory for Structural Biology. "The generous gift from the Sauer family enabled UT to acquire two state-of-the-art cryo-electron microscopes and recruit David Taylor, assistant professor of Molecular Biosciences and co-director of the Sauer Lab, and Jason McLellan, associate professor of

"The gifts from Betsy are more than we could have imagined. They have given Henry and me a meaningful new connection to the university."

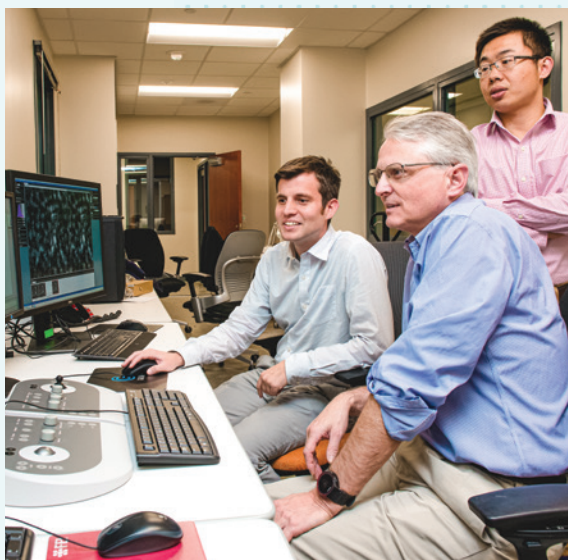
— JUDY SAUER

Molecular Biosciences and the Robert A. Welch Chair in Chemistry,” said Dan Leahy, co-director of the Sauer Lab. “David’s work has illuminated new mechanisms underlying gene-editing that could help overcome obstacles to treating life-threatening disorders such as cancer, HIV and Huntington’s disease. Jason’s lab created the first 3D atomic-scale map of the part of the COVID-19-causing coronavirus—the spike protein—that is essential for infecting human cells. The spike protein is the basis for multiple COVID-19 vaccines in late-stage clinical trials.”

“The gifts from Betsy are more than we could have imagined. They have given Henry and me a meaningful new connection to the university,” Judy said.

Betsy’s forethought and support will continue to change the lives of students through scholarships. It will also impact science and medicine today—through groundbreaking COVID-19 discoveries and future innovations for generations to come.

Hook ‘em! ■



◀ David Taylor and Aguang Dai show Daniel Leahy how to collect cryo-EM data

Photos: Vivian Abagiu



▶ Jason S. McLellan (left), the Robert A. Welch Chair in Chemistry, and graduate student Daniel Wrapp



“The Henry A. Sauer, Jr. Endowment for Excellence in Law meant the freedom to pursue my dreams of a legal education without the fear that financial barriers would get in the way. Instead of having to worry about paying for law school, I could now spend my time focusing on my legal education, and this has certainly contributed to my current success.” — **Austin Hubbert, J.D. ’21**

Texas Leader SPOTLIGHT

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

Terry Startzel, B.A. Government '76 and M.S. Social Work '85,
and **Jeanne Startzel** | Keystone, CO



What are your favorite UT memories?

During my tenure at UT, I had many fantastic opportunities. I provided an overview of geographic information system mapping techniques to the Mexican government in Mexico City. At IBM's invitation, I demonstrated PC-based mapping techniques at an international sociology convention in New York City and I presented Texas-Mexico border GIS maps at an international symposium hosted by UT at the LBJ Presidential Library.

How did UT prepare you for success?

At UT I was able to explore and discover myself academically as an undergraduate and graduate student. The Center for Social Work Research gave me my start in information technology at a time when the field was evolving. I learned how to work with personal computers, took advantage of every opportunity that came my way, and developed the skill set that propelled me into a successful IT career.

Why did you decide to include UT in your estate plans?

I felt deeply moved to give back to UT and the Steve Hicks School of Social Work for everything these institutions gave me. While pursuing my graduate degree, I was awarded the Charles W. Laughton Endowed Presidential Scholarship, an honor I still highly value. Earning this scholarship inspired Jeanne and me to create our own fellowship to support outstanding graduate students. Giving through our estate enhances our ability to provide financial support to our recipients and increase the number of scholarships we can award annually.

What impact do you want your gift to make?

I can never repay UT and the Steve Hicks School of Social Work for the life-enhancing opportunities I was provided as a student. Jeanne and I want to pay it forward by financially helping social work graduate students complete their educations and enter the work force ready to help individuals, families, groups and communities enhance their well-being.

Jim Connell, B.A. Liberal Arts '65, J.D. '69 | Houston, TX



What is your favorite UT memory?

The day I received my undergraduate degree from UT still stands out in my memory after so many years. After four years of hard work, I felt both proud and humbled to assemble with my twin brother, John, and the other graduates beneath the Tower to celebrate commencement. It was a special joy to share the occasion with my parents, who had sacrificed to make that day possible.

How did UT prepare you for success?

My professors taught me to think critically in an organized, logical way and to communicate clearly and effectively. I learned that education is a lifelong endeavor of continuing personal growth.

continued on next page

Texas Leader SPOTLIGHT

Why did you choose to give to UT through your retirement assets?

I believe in supporting upward mobility. I chose to help students by creating two UT scholarships in large part through direct distributions from my Individual Retirement Account. These distributions are not taxed, so UT receives the entire value. And through the Texas Challenge one-to-one gift match, the impact of my donation is doubled.

What impact do you want your gift to make?

I've been concerned about college affordability, especially for promising students from low- and middle-income families. I want my gifts to give more students the opportunity to attain a world-class education, so they are able to change their lives and the world.

For more information on the Texas Challenge gift-matching program visit giving.utexas.edu/challenge.

Dudley Oldham, B.A. History '64, J.D. '66,
and **Judy Oldham**, B.A. History and Government '63 | Houston, TX



What is your favorite UT memory?

The relationships that we built at UT, relationships that still exist today, helped to shape us. The student organizations—like the Texas Orange Jackets, sororities and fraternities—the people we met in class and the professors, the wonderful professors, were our fondest memories. And of course, if it hadn't been for UT and Plan II, we never would have met.

How did UT prepare you for success?

Our time at UT was one of growing up. UT taught us to balance work and school. Learning that balance has carried over into the rest of our lives. It also helped with relationship building skills.

Why did you choose to give to UT through your retirement assets?

State appropriations for higher education continue to decrease so UT depends more and more on donors to support its programs. After we graduated from UT, we wanted to stay connected to the Forty Acres. Over the years I was a member of the College of Liberal Arts and School of Law advisory councils, the Chancellor's Council and the President's Associates. Volunteering on the advisory boards allowed us to see where we could make a difference.

What impact do you want your gift to make?

While the amount that we give may not result in university announcements or buildings being named we know that our gifts—no matter the size—make a big difference to the programs and deans who receive it and to the students who are part of those programs.



Change-Maker

Alumna's gifts
to LBJ School
boost public
service education

Rachel Dunlap learned to embrace change as a young girl. She was the daughter of a career naval officer who moved his family often to assume new duties. Rachel learned from her father the importance of integrity and leadership. And through his example, she developed a strong belief in public service that led her to The University of Texas at Austin's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs.

“The LBJ School prepares bold, fearless leaders and scholars who are able to adapt well in the face of adversity to improve their communities.”

As an LBJ School alumna, Rachel believes wholeheartedly in the school's mission and has coordinated the establishment of an endowed scholarship and set up an estate gift to support the school and its students into the future. This year the LBJ School celebrates its 50th anniversary and a half-century of impact on public service.

“The LBJ School prepares bold, fearless leaders and scholars who are able to adapt well in the face of adversity to improve their communities,” she said. “I was a student during the '80s, and many faculty tied back into President Johnson's administration. I was surrounded by strong mentors who helped me understand the importance of collaborative work.”

Rachel received a fellowship to attend the LBJ School. To pay it forward, she helped spearhead the Class of 1983 Fellowship Endowment (see related story), assembling a steering committee of alumni to grow a fund that will support students in perpetuity.

“Gratitude is a driving force for the fund because most of my classmates received financial aid that made their education possible,” Rachel said. “Public servants tend to be grateful people because they understand sacrifice. They work in the public sector not to earn a high income, but because they believe in the value of service.”

After earning an MPAff from the LBJ School, Rachel began her career with the Texas Department of Community Affairs under the administration of Governor Mark White. She served as a grant specialist with the Community Development Block Grant program and was assigned to work on public facilities provision to colonias along the border—a role that gave her the opportunity to help change lives for the better.

She then spent 10 years with Texaco, where she was responsible for a range of legislative issues, and later joined Moody's Investors Service in New York as a vice president and senior analyst. Over the long arc of her career—she is now retired—Rachel was also responsible for media management in both the public and private sectors.

For Rachel, service never ends. She continues to change lives by promoting causes dear to her heart, volunteering on numerous boards and fundraising for nonprofits across the nation. She also recently created a gift through her estate, to be used at the dean's discretion to support the LBJ School.

“I'm a big believer in unrestricted gifts,” said Rachel. “The dean and decision-makers at the LBJ School know best what the needs are, and I know they will put the funds to good use. It's not about me; it's about the mission.”

When she's not volunteering, Rachel enjoys working on projects with Jim, her husband of 20 years, who is a former president of Texaco USA and senior vice president of Texaco Inc. They divide their time between Santa Fe, Nantucket and Washington County, Texas. Together they have restored five historic homes dating from 1755 to 1932 and currently enjoy hiking the mountains of New Mexico and eating roasted green chile on everything. ■

Rachel and her husband, Jim, at their home in Nantucket.

Photos:
Cary Hazelgrove





MEET NICOLAS VANDER MEER

Recipient of the
LBJ School Class
of 1983 Fellowship

When Nicolas graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in economics, he took a somewhat unconventional next step. He joined Teach for America and landed a position teaching algebra at Kealakehe High School in Hawaii. During those two years in the classroom, he found his calling in education.

“I really loved it. But I realized that a lot of the good I was doing wasn’t having an effect on the education system as a whole,” said Nicolas. “Once I decided to devote my life to education public policy, I knew the LBJ School was the place I needed to be.”



Nicolas was accepted to the LBJ School, but money was tight. “I wanted to go to graduate school, but the expenses were a huge factor in my decision,” he said. “The fellowship I received from the school’s Class of 1983 changed everything.” Nicolas is one of six students so far to receive support from the endowed fellowship, which was created by alumna Rachel Dunlap and her fellow graduates.

“Because the funds are from a group of alumni, I felt supported by the LBJ School community. There’s a strong sense of legacy — to be supported by LBJ grads and to be a student here during the 50th anniversary of a school that’s had such an impact.”

One of Nicolas’ favorite moments was orientation. Walking into the LBJ School, he saw the framed pictures of all the classes that had come before him. “I felt a connection to them. We all want to make the world a better place through policy and we all chose the LBJ School for that. I can’t thank Rachel Dunlap and the Class of 1983 enough for giving me this opportunity. I want to follow their lead and give to future generations of this community.”



Bridging the Past and the Future

Bowden Professorship helps prepare next generation of iSchool graduates

Virginia Massey Bowden and Charles Lee Bowden share a deep passion for empowering others to expand their knowledge and strengthen their minds. Helping others achieve these goals became their life's work. But they were inspired to do even more. They established the Virginia & Charles Bowden Endowed Professorship in Librarianship in 2020 through a securities gift to the School of Information (iSchool) at The University of Texas at Austin.

“Academic libraries are essential to the success of faculty and students at institutions of higher learning,” Virginia said. “As the iSchool continues to grow and change, we hope this professorship will open windows to the world for students and help create a new generation of leaders in information science.”

Charles added, “Professorships are crucial for recruiting and retaining scholars with the best and brightest minds. Our gift will add a dedicated subject matter expert to the iSchool faculty who can develop new research ideas and advance their scholarly work. We hope our gift will help UT continue to excel as a top-tier university.”

Virginia and Charles credit UT as the university that changed the course of their lives. The Bowdens both entered UT in 1957, coming from very different parts of Texas — Virginia from Houston and Charles from the Central Texas town of Brady. Their love story began while studying in a departmental reading room and continued in the main reading room of the Tower. Virginia graduated in three years with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics. After they married in 1960, Charles earned his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, interned in Chicago, completed medical training in psychiatry in New York City, and served two years in the Public Health Service in Lexington, Kentucky. While moving around the country, Virginia worked as a computer programmer for various companies and transitioned her computer knowledge to the library science profession, earning a master’s degree in library science at the University of Kentucky.

Then Texas called them home. Charles joined the faculty at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio as an assistant professor in psychiatry. During his distinguished 50-year career, he became an internationally recognized authority on bipolar disorder and mood-stabilizing medications.

Virginia was excelling in her own field, and her career flourished when the Texas legislature approved funding for a new library building

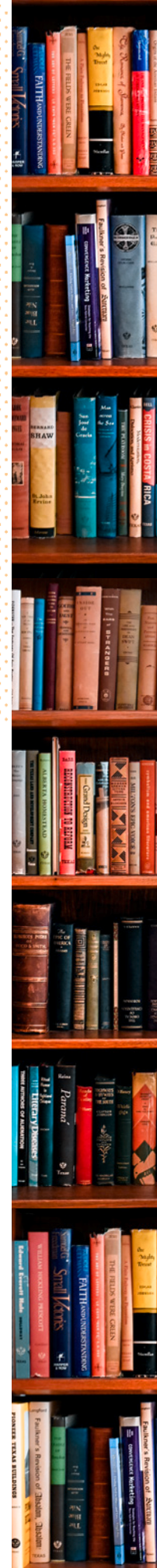
on the UTHSCSA campus in 1979. At the time she was associate library director and had been awarded a Council on Library Resources fellowship to study current trends in managing book collections at academic health science libraries across the U.S. Many of the libraries she visited had recently completed construction of new buildings, so the knowledge she gained was invaluable.

“As the iSchool continues to grow and change, we hope this professorship will open windows to the world for students ...”

“In part because of my fellowship experience, I was invited to participate in developing the plan for the new library at UTHSCSA,” said Virginia. “This experience turned out to be one of the highlights of my career.”

Virginia earned her Ph.D. in library science at UT’s iSchool in 1994, commuting to Austin while working full-time. Throughout her 33-year tenure at UTHSCSA, including 18 years as library director, she led the transformation of library services into the digital world, creating an innovative space that supported the curriculum and research of UTHSCSA faculty and students and the establishment of the Regional Academic Health Center Medical Library in Harlingen.

The Bowdens are enjoying retirement in San Antonio and celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in July. Virginia is a member of the iSchool’s Advisory Council and is library director emeritus at UTHSCSA. Charles is professor emeritus at UTHSCSA. Through the Bowden-Massey Foundation they established in 1992, they continue to support each of their passions — psychiatric research and library and information science research. ■





! B. L. Turner 2009

Power Plants

Professor Billie Lee Turner supports his passion for botanical research

In 1953, Billie Lee Turner began his career at The University of Texas at Austin with a dream to make significant contributions to the study of plant life.

He was eager to elevate UT's botany program to world-class stature, and his heart was set on further developing UT's herbarium, a scientific library of dried plant specimens used in research. Throughout Billie's lifelong career at UT, he supported this passion and ultimately established generous gifts through his estate to ensure it would thrive for future generations.

Billie's desire to do something meaningful with his life grew out of his humble beginnings. He was born in Yoakum, Texas, on February 22, 1925. During the height



***Ageratina havanensis* — Found near the cliffs of the Guadalupe River. Image from the Billie L. Turner Plant Resources Center.**

of the Great Depression, his family settled in Galveston, where his father struggled to find work and feed his family. Despite obstacles, Billie excelled in school, graduating as his high school's valedictorian in 1943.

Billie enlisted in the Army and was promoted to officer in the Army Air Force. The G.I. Bill ignited his yearning to learn. His goal was to become a lawyer, until a botany class changed his career trajectory forever. He amassed three degrees in six years—bachelor's and master's degrees in biology and a doctorate in botany. Once he arrived in Austin to begin his career, he never looked back.

"My father pulled himself up by the bootstraps," said Matt Turner, Billie's son. "He never really cared about being rich, but he wanted to be important and give back to the world."

While at UT, Billie rose in ranks, chairing both the Department of Botany and the Division of Biological Sciences during the late '60s and early '70s, an era in which UT became a prominent center for botanical research. He emerged as one of the nation's foremost plant taxonomists and propelled biochemical systematics—using chemistry to classify plants—to the forefront of the field. He also authored more than 700 scientific reports and articles and named more than 1,400 plant species and varieties.

One of his proudest accomplishments was quintupling the size of the UT herbarium to 1 million holdings from Texas, Mexico and northern Central America. Today it is one of the largest herbaria in the southwestern U.S. and the twelfth largest in the nation.

"He was magnanimous to his students with his time, support and pocketbook to ensure their success in what he thought was the best profession in the world."



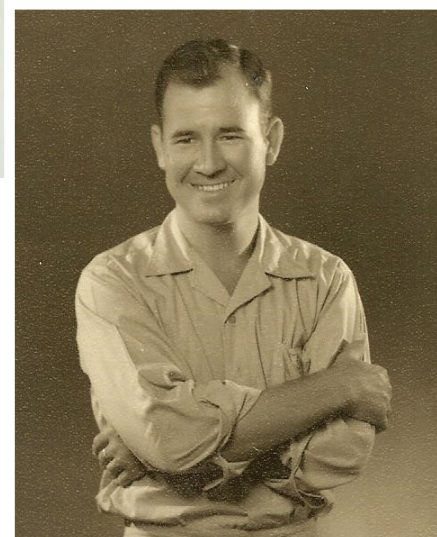
After his retirement in 2000, Billie was named professor emeritus of the Department of Integrative Biology, but his academic life continued with daily trips to campus for almost two more decades. In 2020, he died at the age of 95 after years of declining health and contracting COVID-19.

His estate of charitable gift annuities and gifts of real estate will support the herbarium named in his honor, the Billie L. Turner Plant Resources Center.

Matt was moved by the tributes that poured in from colleagues and students who witnessed his father's sincere devotion to his work.

"He was a character," said Matt. "Naturally cheerful, optimistic and gregarious, my father was welcoming to anyone who showed the slightest curiosity in the world, and even to those who did not. He was as interested in people and their quirks as he was in plants. He was magnanimous to his students with his time, support and pocketbook to ensure their success in what he thought was the best profession in the world."

Matt added with a grin, "But he also did everything his way, mocked the status quo and social mores, and was honest to a fault. His attention to uniqueness, whether in plants or humans, left the world a brighter place." ■



▲
Beloved professor Billie Turner helped UT become a prominent center for botanical research.

Photo:
Amalia Diaz



Cover

Photo by Sloan Breeden

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.

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TEXAS LEADERSHIP SOCIETY EVENT

Friday, April 9, 2021

The Texas Leadership Society honors the remarkable generosity of 1,500 alumni and friends who are giving nearly \$1.3 billion in lifetime and future support for UT's mission. The event is a chance to hear from outstanding faculty and students and learn about the latest happenings on the Forty Acres.

While we hope that we will be able to safely meet in person, the format of the event (in-person or virtual) will be determined closer to March, with everyone's well-being our highest priority.

It's not too late to become a Texas Leadership Society member and join us for this special event. For more information, please email giftplan@austin.utexas.edu or call 800-687-4602.