Rancher’s Admiration For Education Strengthens SHSU Equine Programs

As soon as visitors drive through the Austin stone arch at the entrance of Champion Ranch in Centerville, they know they have entered a place where Texas and all things relating to Texas history and culture are revered.

Owner Richard “Dick” Wallrath loves Texas, and he has surrounded himself with icons that are well-associated with The Lone Star State — from the pictures of Texas heroes which line the walls of his office, to the crystalline stars in the panels of the doorways of all the buildings on the ranch.

Wallrath also has a passion for education, especially the education of those students who share his love of the land and of those creatures in Texas most closely associated with the land - livestock. Fortunately, Sam Houston State has quite a few students who love the land, too.

“I was a rural kid raised on a farm in the country,” Wallrath said. “After having success with my business, I wanted to go back to my roots.”

That business was Champion Windows Manufacturing, Inc., which he founded in 1974. When he became successful, Wallrath

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made a commitment to “give back,” starting with the stock shows in Austin, San Antonio and Houston, which provide scholarships. Not only did he support the programs financially, he gave his time by serving as a member of the board of directors of the organizations.

He then turned his support to the 4-H and Future Farmers of America organizations and became the largest benefactor in the organizations’ history.

“The benefits that those kids bring to society is unreal,” he said. “They have a strong work ethic, as well as honesty and integrity. I have found them to be a step above the average kid.”

He established the Dick Wallrath Educational Organization, and through the organization he gives $12,000 scholarships to 71 Texas FFA members and 71 4-H members each year who excel in academics and actively participate in their organizations.

Because of the admirable reputation of the kind of students that Sam Houston State University turns out, the university caught Wallrath’s attention.

He was familiar with SHSU because his close friend, Texas banker Robert Hutson, was a graduate. His grandson Aaron and Aaron’s wife Debra graduated from SHSU. In addition, Wallrath had a connection through his current ranch cattleman, Jarod Kilcrease, also a Sam Houston graduate. The more he heard about the university and things going on with the equine program in the department of agricultural and industrial sciences, the more interested he became in making a contribution toward its success.

Before long, he began to provide all the colts from his personal stock of horses and funded associated expenses needed for the equine classes at SHSU. He delivers the colts to the university at the beginning of each semester and pays for all the veterinarian bills and food associated with their care while they are on Sam Houston State property.

“Mr. Wallrath’s contribution to our program has made a significant difference in the level of our program in terms of success, growth and scholarships,” said Matt McMillan, assistant professor for animal science at SHSU.

“We have a great relationship with Champion Ranch,” McMillan said. “We provide the training, and they provide the opportunity for our students to have animals with which to learn.

“They have been happy with the way we’ve worked with their colts, and that is good,” McMillan said. “But what makes the relationship so great is that Mr. Wallrath is far more concerned about our students getting a quality education. As long as our students are getting a good education, that is what’s important to him.”

In addition to Wallrath’s support for the SHSU equine classes, his generosity includes contributions for the university’s Ranch Horse team. He provides funding for the team’s travel expenses, entry fees, shirts, vests, and miscellaneous expenses so that the team can participate in competitive shows against other universities.

In addition, he also established scholarships for the students in the ranch horse program.

“Last year, he provided a stipend for research for one of our graduate students,” said McMillan. “That student is now looking at continuing work toward a Ph.D.”

Wallrath’s involvement in SHSU’s equine programs is recognized and greatly appreciated by those who are working with the students and the horses.

“Mr. Wallrath’s generosity has brought our programs to a whole new level,” McMillan said.
The Samuel Houston Society commemorates Texas’ greatest hero and the university’s namesake. Members of this society, our major donors, receive invitations to a special event held annually. One hundred and sixteen members attended this year’s program on November 14. Bud Haney, President & CEO of Profiles International, Inc., and a member of the SHSU Capital Campaign Executive Leadership Council, was the featured speaker.
Share The Vision
In Dallas

Bent Tree
Country Club
March 5, 2009
Share The Vision
In Fort Worth

The Fort Worth Club
April 9, 2009

Rhonda Ellisor with Allen & Joanne Triplett
Glyn Gilliam with Thelma Mooney
Gib & Sandra Lewis with Bill Zedler
Randy, Kelli, Ann & Randy Stewart
Let’s Talk!
A Night of Conversation

Sam Houston State University brought together a group of widely renowned experts on a variety of subjects to discuss their areas during the second annual “Let’s Talk!” on March 19.

The event is held annually to benefit the Elliott T. Bowers Honors Program.

Twenty-five speakers from across the country, including many SHSU alumni and professors, led a wide-range of discussions, varying from serious national topics such as “Energy Sources—The Truth about Coal, Wind, Oil and Gas” and “The U.S. Banking Crisis” to more heartfelt topics such as “Words of Wisdom from a Real Tsunami Survivor” and “At the Death House Door” to lighthearted topics such as “Traditional American Cowboy Music: The Real Songs and Stories.”

Other discussions included “Investigating the Russian Mafia,” “A Historical Perspective of Walt Disney Records and the Future of Digital Sales,” and “Beyond the Headlines: Inside Broadcast News.”

The event this year raised $57,000 for the Honors Program, which uses the money for scholarships, instructional support and operational costs.
Alumni Share Expertise With Students

Among the SHSU alumni who came early to talk with Sam Houston State University students were T. Tolbert Chisum, chairman, president and chief executive officer of The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation in Springfield, Ill., and Russell Gordy, president of Gordy Oil Company.

Chisum brought authentic Lincoln artifacts to display and discussed “Looking at Lincoln After 200 Years — Our Greatest President” with a history class taught by Dr. Katherine Pierce, which covers the United States from the writing of the constitution until Reconstruction.

“The students loved his presentation!” Pierce said. “Some said they thought it was the high point of the semester.

“It was a nice, interactive event in that the students got to touch history as well as hear history,” she added.

“The students were also impressed because they had an opportunity to talk with a successful Sam Houston State University alumnus who shares their appreciation for the preservation of history through museums. It was wonderful for the university to offer Mr. Chisum’s presentation to them.”

Gordy was the guest speaker for an agricultural seminar and discussed alternative fuel sources.

“His experience and expertise of energy, energy resources and their impact on society and our environment was very informative for students that were majoring in agriculture and industrial technology, alike,” said Dr. Stanley Kelley, chair of the department of agricultural and industrial sciences.

“His global perspective provided students with facts about energy and alternative energy resources,” Kelley said. “He also addressed current issues and enlightened students with his opinion of future energy demands.”

Russell Gordy ’72 talking with an Agriculture and Industrial Technology class
Making A Difference Inspires Alum To Give Back

Tommy Metcalf is well known for his generous spirit. He is committed to improving the quality of life for individuals in his community, and he “walks the talk” through his civic involvement, his volunteer efforts in benevolent organizations, and his contributions to funds that help identify and respond to the needs of citizens in the Montgomery County area.

Fortunately for Sam Houston State University, Metcalf’s affection for his home extends to the place where he received his college education.

“I always want to give back to the community, and Sam Houston State University is a part of my community,” Metcalf said.

Metcalf is a 1971 graduate of SHSU, with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in general business.

A native of Conroe, Metcalf enrolled as a college student in 1967. His father became ill in March 1968, and at the age of 19, Metcalf, along with his mother, had to take over the family business, Metcalf Funeral Directors, which had been founded by Metcalf’s grandfather in 1938.

“My parents were adamant about me finishing college,” said Metcalf. “So I arranged my schedule so that I could take classes in the morning while my mother took care of the business, and I worked in the afternoons and evenings.”

Although Metcalf was busy commuting back and forth to college, taking classes and running a business, during the summer between his junior and senior year he noticed a coed who was taking classes.

“Meeting Mary Ann is my fondest memory of college,” said Metcalf. “She was attending SMU, but went to summer school at Sam Houston that year.”

Metcalf started dating, and the following April they were married. Mary Ann completed her bachelor’s degree in education at SHSU and taught third grade until their children, Will, Emily, and Rachel, came along.

Metcalf recognized the value of giving back from an early age, and for many years, he has supported Montgomery County with his involvement.

He was elected mayor of Conroe in 2004 and served a four-year term. He is a past president of the Conroe Rotary Club, the Montgomery County United Way, the Conroe High School Ex-Students Association, the Montgomery County Hospital District, and was a founding member and first board chairman of the Montgomery County Crime Stoppers organization. He was also president of the Embassy Club of the Greater Conroe Area Chamber of Commerce, former district chairman for the Sam Houston Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and was a founding board member of the Library Friends of Conroe.

He is a lifetime vice-president of the Montgomery County Fair Association, former board member of the Conroe Chapter of the American Red Cross, Greater Conroe Area Chamber of Commerce, Montgomery County Emergency Assistance, and Lake Conroe Rotary Club.

He is also a past president of the Texas Funeral Directors Association and represented Texas as the policy board representative with the National Funeral Directors Association. He and Mary Ann are also members of the First Baptist Church of Conroe.

“I’ve always felt that it is important to do whatever you can to make a difference in your community,” Metcalf said, “and I have tried to volunteer as much as I could. Now that my children are grown, I can do more than volunteer. I am at a great point in my life to be able to give back financially as well.

In addition to establishing four endowments through the Montgomery County Community Fund, Metcalf has been a generous benefactor to Sam Houston State University.

After establishing an endowment with an initial commitment of $40,000 to provide scholarships for Conroe students in good standing at SHSU with a financial need, Metcalf recently adjusted the terms of the endowment to utilize planned giving.

“I realized that by taking advantage of the benefits of planned giving, the scholarship amounts that come from the endowment could be greatly increased in future years,” Metcalf said.

“I worked all through college, and I understand the challenges that students face when they are trying to balance...
Successful Bearkat Businessman Provides Scholarships For Baseball Program

Even though SHSU alumnus Jerry Streater of Conroe is a civic leader, businessman, patron of the arts, and a proponent of education, he still finds time to support his alma mater.

A former athlete, he remains one at heart and in spirit. He enjoys watching sports and has a special fondness for the SHSU baseball team.

Not only does he follow the team year after year, he and his wife, Sandra, have established an endowment fund to provide scholarships for Bearkat baseball players majoring in any discipline at SHSU.

“If a young man wants to play baseball in college and needs support in doing so, we want to help him accomplish his goals,” said Streater. “Scholarship money is always needed for the baseball program.”

The endowment provides one or more annual scholarship awards, a minimum of $1,000 each.

“Jerry Streater has been very important to our baseball program,” said Bearkat baseball coach Mark Johnson. “His scholarships have helped our guys not only play baseball, but get a college education at Sam Houston State University as well. We are very indebted to him.”

Before enrolling in Sam Houston State as a business major in the late 1950’s, Streater was a pitcher and played baseball and football at Navarro College on a scholarship. However, because he had to work in order to put himself through school, he had to give up sports.

His father owned a Texaco gas station in Huntsville, and Streater worked there while attending classes. During the summer months, he worked on pipeline x-ray trucks, and delivered equipment. He also worked on a ranch in north Harris County.

He met Sandra at Sam Houston State, and they got married and moved to Houston in 1959. Streater had not quite completed enough hours for a degree at that time, but he had been offered a good job with Cameron Iron Works and felt it was too good an opportunity to pass up.

“I started in their missile plant and was placed in their executive training program,” he said. “I moved to the main plant and worked in several different departments during my 12-year career with them.”

He was determined to graduate, however, and he took night classes while working. He graduated from Sam Houston State in May 1961 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in general business.

Streater started in the automobile business in 1972 selling Chevrolets and later became involved in the motor home business. In 1981, he bought a 25 percent ownership of a Nissan store.

Several years later, he left the motor home business and moved to Conroe. The Streater family and the Smith family became partners and acquired the Honda dealership, later expanding the business to include Nissans and Mitsubishi’s. They sold the Mitsubishi part of the business approximately four years ago.

Streater has remained connected to Sam Houston State University through the years, serving as a board member of the SHSU Alumni Association for two years and serving as a host of the Share the Vision Capital Campaign event in Montgomery County in 2007.

He also tries to make it to campus as often as he can, especially during the spring, to watch his beloved Bearkats play ball.
Private gifts are crucial to the continued academic and athletic success of the Sam Houston State University men's basketball program. Funds from the contributions are used for summer school, facility upgrades in Johnson Coliseum, and recruiting opportunities. Without monies from private gifts, our program would not be able to compete and keep up with other Southland Conference schools.

Bob Marlin
SHSU Head Basketball Coach

Leverage your Gift

Ron Mafrige challenges Bearkats to support the growth of the men's basketball endowment and will contribute $1 for every $2 given by others. Please send your gift today.

Ron Mafrige Basketball Challenge
c/o SHSU University Advancement
Box 2537
Huntsville, TX 77341-2537
936-294-4050 or rhondaellisor@shsu.edu
I believe in Sam Houston State University and the value of the education that the university provides for its students. Many SHSU graduates have enhanced the quality of life not only for those living in Texas, but in the United States as well.

We live in a time when great universities have to seek outside funding in order to accomplish their goals. I don’t know of any major institution of higher education in the state or nation that can achieve momentous accomplishments without private funding. In order for Sam Houston State University to continue toward greatness, it is going to take a united effort to support its people and programs.

One of the ways I have supported the university is by establishing an endowment that provides scholarships for students in the College of Business Administration. I am a businessman, and I know how important it is to be able to recruit and hire individuals who have been trained and educated to be good entrepreneurs. The contributions that these knowledgeable young people make are vital to the success and growth of our economy. I am certain that my gift to the College of Business Administration is being used to recognize students for their hard work as well as help them achieve the education that will make them valuable assets to our society.

I would like to urge those who are considering a gift to the Share the Vision Capital Campaign to go ahead and make a commitment. I have great respect for the leadership at SHSU, and this is a wonderful time to be a part of the growth and excitement at the university. Not only will you be helping to mobilize efforts at Sam Houston State University, you will be ensuring the future of higher education.

Gibson (Gib) D. Lewis is a member of the class of 1962. He served a total of 20 years as a Texas legislator including five terms as Speaker of the House, which is the longest tenure in Texas history. He continues to operate his company, Lewis Label Products in Fort Worth, Texas and serves as a lobbyist. Gib is a recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award, a member of the President’s Circle, and serves on the COBA Advisory Council.
Memorial services for Professor Emeritus and former biological sciences department head James D. Long, 83, were held in Huntsville on March 7.

Long retired from Sam Houston State University in 1999, at which time he was named Professor Emeritus for his many accomplishments in the biological sciences and in science education.

The James D. Long Biology Endowment Fund was established in 2001 by Long's friends to honor him and his contribution to Sam Houston State University and the profession of biology as an educator, researcher and professional biologist.

Funds from the endowment continue to be used to provide scholarships and support for student research projects.

Long also encouraged his two close friends, Pauline Rea Woods and Merry Mary Berry, who had served many years as public school teachers, to remember Sam Houston State University in their giving plans.

As a result, the Woods and Berry estates donated $1.1 million to the university in 2007. The funds were divided between the biology and sociology programs at SHSU to support undergraduate and graduate scholarships.

A Sam Houston State graduate, Long was employed in 1959 as an associate professor of biology at Sam Houston State Teachers College, and later served as department director from 1961 to 1972.