Paris’s Bequest Reflects Love For Students, SHSU

During her lifetime, Jan Paris frequently talked about teaching and working both in public schools and at the university level. She spoke about being fulfilled when a student was successful. Those who knew her remember her as someone with a good heart. “She was one of the most respected professors in our program,” said Bonnie Thorne, retired chair of the Department of Library Science. “She was dedicated to her profession, and her students loved her.”

Even though she died earlier this year, Jan’s “good heart” continues to beat within the Department of Library Science through a gift she bequeathed to Sam Houston State University. That gift will provide scholarships in perpetuity for graduate students majoring in library science.

When Jan came to Sam Houston State in the late ’70s to teach a summer class, she already was known as an outstanding librarian. “Her students told me, ‘She’s a marvelous teacher! You need to hire her!'” said Lesta Burt Johnson, another retired library science department chair. “I did, and she began work on her doctorate at Texas Woman’s University,” said Johnson. “She obtained her Ph.D. and contributed many years of devoted service to the Library Science Department and Sam Houston State University.”

Among her colleagues, Jan is best remembered for her two legacies. “Whenever I think of Jan, the title of ‘Miss Bluebonnet Award’ comes to mind,” said Jimmy Merchant, professor emeritus of education.

In 1979 Jan approached her fellow librarians with her idea to create and implement a state program to encourage children to read more, explore a variety of current books, develop powers of discrimination, and identify their favorite books.

Jan’s dream became the foundation for what has come to be known as the Texas Bluebonnet Award Program. Jan felt so strongly about the program she directed it herself before it came under the direction of the
“She was much more than a teacher,” she said. “She provided a service to others in the field of library science as evidenced by her leadership in local, state and national organizations and her desire to establish an endowment that would assist others in the future. She was also my friend.”

“Her words (to her students) persuaded the class that children’s literature, libraries, and books were among the most noble artifacts of civilized society,” said former SHSU professor of library science Bill Bailey. “And of course, Dr. Paris imparted this belief with the utmost elegance.”

“Janelle Paris had so many wonderful qualities — perhaps the one which stands out the most in my mind is her deep sense of dedication to the university, to the profession, to students, and to colleagues and friends,” said SHSU professor of library science Frank Hoffman. “We at Sam Houston State University were enriched by her presence.”

When Jan retired, the Department of Library Science established a scholarship endowment in her honor. The endowment was named as a bequest recipient in her will. Her nephew, John Jones, said that she was very proud that a scholarship fund in her honor was set up to help library science students.

“She did not care if her name was on the scholarship — only that it helped students,” Jones said. “Very few of us find our true calling, but Jan did, and it was at Sam Houston State University.”
Leonard and Marlene Keeling Endowment Fund - KPMG

Len Keeling is someone who looked to his company’s matching gift program when he and his wife established the Leonard and Marlene Keeling Endowment Fund for scholarships for students in the College of Business Administration.

Not only do the scholarships from the endowment benefit students who need financial assistance to complete their education, they honor several individuals who are still alive and remember some who are no longer living.

The scholarships honor the memory of Len’s mother, Eloise Hall Keeling who was widowed at an early age yet found a way to see five of her children receive their degrees from Sam Houston State, and Elwood Parkhill and Rita B. Huff who were Len’s principal accounting professors and mentors.

They also recognize Wayne Rainwater, Len’s employer while he was a student, and President and Mrs. Jim Gaertner for their leadership and goodwill ambassador roles.

“A company’s matching gift program allows someone who wants to support his or her university to stretch their own ability,” said Len. “It’s also a positive thing for the company because they multiply valuable resources to keep our society strong. A matching gift program benefits an individual, the company, and the university, all at the same time.”
Friday Night’s Celebration in Johnson Coliseum

5. Charlie & Sherry Cox, Bobby Lane and Jerry Stephenson  6. Judy & Sam Burris, Ruth Lynn Parker, Chancellor Charles Matthews, Jack Parker and Robert Hardy  

(Above left) Bill Byler; (above right) Gene & Ruth Sollock, Dr. Stanley Kelley, Dwayne Pavelock, Jacel Angel, Robert & Toni Bruner, Ronnie Corn, and Sonny & Joanne Sikes

(Above left) Keynote Speaker, Humorist Doc Blakely; (top middle) Nancy Gaertner, Randy & Trisha Pollard, Dr. Stanley Kelley and Dr. Jaimie Hebert; (above right) Department of Agricultural and Industrial Sciences Chair Dr. Stanley Kelley at podium (bottom middle) Department of Agricultural and Industrial Sciences faculty and staff members
The atmosphere was sprinkled with laughter, memories and applause as almost 600 Sam Houston State University alumni, friends, faculty, staff and students celebrated the 100th anniversary in September. Because of the generous support of event sponsors, more than $40,000 in net proceeds will provide for scholarships and department enrichment.
Former Sam Houston State University alumnus and agriculture professor Thomas Joseph “T.J.” Honeycutt, Class of ’48 and ’49, has been honored with an endowed scholarship established in his memory.

In addition, SHSU’s Agriculture Teacher Education Classroom in the Thomason Building will be named for Honeycutt, who also served as head teacher trainer.

Graham resident Glyn Gilliam, SHSU Class of ’56 and ’57, completed the agreement for the gift when he attended the Centennial Celebration of SHSU’s Department of Agricultural and Industrial Sciences in September. He said it was Honeycutt’s influence as a professor and life-long mentor that caused him and his wife, Martha, to establish the scholarship and provide funding for a classroom to be named in Honeycutt’s memory.

“Through the years, I grew to have great respect for him – not only as a friend, but probably as a mentor – and that contributed to my growth in the business world,” Gilliam said.

According to Gilliam, Honeycutt’s influence began when Gilliam entered SHSU as a freshman. Although he did not become acquainted with Honeycutt until several years later, Gilliam said he looked up to Honeycutt, who was then in his senior year and the president of Sam’s Collegiate Chapter of FFA.

Honeycutt began his career as a school teacher the next year. About the same time Gilliam served for four years in the Air Force during the Korean conflict before returning to SHSU to complete his degree. They were reunited when Gilliam was assigned for student teaching in the Marlin School District where Honeycutt was the agriculture teacher.

“By the time I got to Marlin, it was in the fall of 1955, and T.J. Honeycutt had already established a good reputation as one of the outstanding vocational ag teachers in the Vocational Educators Association,” Gilliam said.

Although the men’s careers went in independent directions in different towns, Gilliam said they remained friends.

“He was an excellent supervisor,” Gilliam continued. “Once we reviewed the lesson plans, etc., he got out of the way – satisfied that we knew what we were doing.”

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP HONORS BELOVED PROFESSOR

Glyn Gilliam

T.J. Honeycutt

SHSU Agriculture Alumni Association
Thomas J. “Tommy” ’63 & Pat Frank

GOLD
Agricultural Workers Mutual Auto Insurance Co.
Doc Blakely ’60
Donald F. “Sonny” Dean ’62
Russell D. ’72 & Glenda J. ’73, ’77 Gordy
Landmark Nurseries, Inc., Jim ’64 & Paula ’63 Prewitt
Edgar A. ’56 & Carolyn L. Reeves
Nolan Ryan’s All Natural Beef
Joe B. ’56 & Winnie M. ’56 Sandel

SILVER
Joseph A. “Joe” Amato ’72
Aramark Classic Fare Catering
William T. “Bill” ’88 & Kerri D. Byler
The Gallery, Paul Olle ’75
Dr. David & Jane Moorman
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo
Sam Houston Foundation
J. Byron ’82 & Charlene D. ’83 Sandel

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“He was an excellent supervisor,” Gilliam continued. “Once we reviewed the lesson plans, etc., he got out of the way – satisfied that we knew what we were doing.”

Although the men’s careers went in independent directions in different towns, Gilliam said they remained friends.

“When I went into the commercial banking business, it was in Marlin, and there was my friend Mr. T.J. Honeycutt,” Gilliam said. “We renewed our acquaintance and became close friends.”

Gilliam’s commercial banking career continued in Marlin, Eastland, Ranger and finally, Graham, and Honeycutt eventually left the public school’s classroom for the university, joining the Bearkat faculty in 1964, where he taught until his retirement in 1985.

Both men earned multiple degrees from SHSU. Honeycutt earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agricultural education. Gilliam earned a bachelor of science degree in agricultural education and a master of education degree.
“Patrick was always concerned with the welfare of others,” Pat said. “When he was killed, my family was left with a gaping, emotional hole. His smile, his good humor, his energy and, most of all, his love were gone.

“The scholarship fund gave both his family and his friends a way of filling that emotional hole. By giving, we were both remembering him and honoring him,” Pat said. “The recipients of assistance from the fund would know, in some way, Patrick’s concern for others. I wanted the fund to be an endowment so that it would live on long after we are gone.”

Roland Hendricks - Department of Accounting and College of Business - Dow Chemical

Roland Hendricks (BBA ’80) is responsible for cost accounting leadership for Dow Chemical Company in Freeport and for manufacturing operations in the Houston area. He is also the finance diversity champion for Dow and actively recruits for the company.

“For over 20 years I’ve utilized Dow Chemical’s matching gift program to partner with me as I made donations to various programs at Sam Houston State University,” he said.

“The matching gift program allows more SHSU accounting students to receive scholarships, the Department of Accounting to receive more funding for research, the College of Business to obtain more room sponsorships and much more,” he said.

“Many companies have an educational philanthropy program designed to match the personal financial contribution of their employees and retirees. Since Sam Houston State University is an accredited four-year institution recognized by the U. S. Department of Education, it will qualify for most company-sponsored matching gift programs.

“I would encourage all alumni and donors to inquire about the matching gift program at your company,” Hendricks said. “This makes a big impact on Sam Houston State University and the students.”
It is in recognition of the valuable education that I received at Sam Houston State — academically and in life — that I am involved in the university’s Share the Vision Capital Campaign. I also am pleased to support the capital campaign as a tribute to the leadership of SHSU President Jim Gaertner, who has been a personal friend of mine for more than 20 years.

I was a first-generation college student who had the privilege of attending Sam Houston State on a small academic scholarship.

My early experiences on campus gave me an opportunity to meet several administrators, including George Morton, Elliott Bowers, and Arleigh Templeton who helped me get on the right track and who were interested enough in me as a student to provide continuous encouragement to do well throughout my academic career.

In addition to the lessons I learned in the classroom, I was provided the opportunity to benefit from leadership experience through a variety of campus activities, including my fraternity and the Student Senate.

My education at Sam Houston State prepared me well. With the support and encouragement of Sam Houston administrators, I applied for and obtained a scholarship to attend law school at Southern Methodist University.

I grew up in a small town, and it is my hope that through gifts to the campaign, the university is able to do such things as provide scholarships to successfully attract the best and brightest students from small towns who could benefit from economic support to help them achieve their academic goals.

It has been my pleasure to support the Share the Vision Capital Campaign because it has given me the opportunity to give back to Sam Houston State so that others might receive the benefits of a valuable education that I did.

Phil Pfeiffer (BS’69) is Of Counsel/Retired Partner in Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P.’s San Antonio office where he was Partner-in-Charge for 25 years.