



*Remembering
Mrs. Margaret McDermott*

1912-2018

MARGARET MILAM MCDERMOTT, whose philanthropic gifts made historic impacts on the educational and arts institutions of her native city of Dallas, has died at the age of 106. As the pre-eminent private benefactor of The University of Texas at Dallas, she made a sequence of major gifts to the University, starting in 1995 and continuing through this past autumn, that have profoundly transformed the human and physical dimensions of UT Dallas.

Remembering Mrs. Margaret McDermott 1912-2018

Margaret Milam was born on February 18, 1912. She grew up in Munger Place, now a historic district of Dallas, and graduated from Highland Park High School in 1929. After her college years, she spent five years as the society editor of *The Dallas Morning News*, describing the experience in her 2012 memoir *Reflections* as “equal to a PhD in living and learning.” In 1943, she joined the American Red Cross, serving in India at the air base from which American pilots flew supplies “over the hump” into China. She remained with the Red Cross after the end of World War II, spending three years in Germany and one in Japan, where the devastations left by the war made profound impressions on her.

She married Eugene McDermott and the couple made their home in Highland Park. McDermott, who was a pioneer in applying seismography to oil exploration, founded, together with partners Erik Jonsson and Cecil Green, the company that became Texas Instruments. Subsequently, these three partners also created a privately funded research institution, the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest, which in 1969 they gave to the state of Texas to become The University of Texas at Dallas. Eugene McDermott, who died in 1973, was a major supporter of education and research, and in addition to his role in the creation of UT Dallas was a major supporter of MIT, which he and his partners posited as the model for their fledgling university.

During their marriage, the McDermotts created a significant collection of French Impressionist art, a joint enterprise that Margaret McDermott has described eloquently in her memoir. Over the 45 years since Eugene McDermott’s death,

Margaret carried on and expanded, through the McDermott Foundation, now headed by daughter Mary McDermott Cook, and through personal gifts, the philanthropic leadership roles that she and Eugene had initiated. Some of the primary local beneficiaries of McDermott support have been the Dallas Museum of Art, the Dallas Symphony, the Dallas Opera, The Hockaday and St. Mark’s schools, and the UT Southwestern Medical Center. On a broader scale, the McDermott philanthropy has encompassed arts and educational organizations across the U.S. and internationally.

Margaret McDermott’s first transformative gift to UT Dallas, in 2000, established the Eugene McDermott Scholars Program with an endowment of \$32 million, along with endowed chairs for the president and provost, named in honor of Eugene McDermott and the McDermott’s longtime close friend, Cecil Green. In developing the details of her gift, she drew upon the advice of her longtime friends and colleagues Ross Perot, Peter O’Donnell, and Louis Beecherl.

Five years later, in 2005, highly gratified by the early success of the McDermott Scholars Program, Mrs. McDermott asked Provost Hobson Wildenthal what she could do next to further advance the University. He told her that a truly transformative impact could be made by contributing funds to improve the existing landscape of UT Dallas. (Years earlier, a national publication had characterized the campus appearance as resembling an abandoned warehouse.) She understood Wildenthal’s message, and solicited the advice of her friends Ray Nasher and Roger and Carolyn Horchow. This led to the selection

of famed architect Peter Walker to design and implement a total transformation of the University’s 500-acre campus. With her final gift of last autumn, the McDermott contributions to the widely acclaimed new UT Dallas campus have totaled more than \$50 million.

In 2009, after passage by the Texas Legislature of the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP), which provided matching funds for private donations to the University designated for research, she made the first major gift to UT Dallas that qualified for TRIP matching, with the resulting combined benefit to UT Dallas amounting to more than \$14 million. The latest fruits of that gift were celebrated this April 27 with the investiture of 10 early- and mid-career UT Dallas faculty leaders as Fellow, Eugene McDermott Professor.

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



Margaret and Eugene McDermott



Margaret McDermott with McDermott Scholars, Alumni Awards Gala, April 2016



The founders and their wives. From left: Ida Green, Cecil Green, Margaret Jonsson, Erik Jonsson, Margaret McDermott and Eugene McDermott.



Margaret and Eugene McDermott look at a model of the Phase II buildings of the UT Dallas campus including the Eugene McDermott Library with Bryce Jordan (right), first president of UT Dallas.

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

Finally, in support of newly appointed UT Dallas President Richard Benson, Mrs. McDermott made a culminating gift of \$25 million to UT Dallas to support the construction costs of the new engineering and science buildings now under construction and of the planned Wallace Athenaeum. In all, since 1990, the McDermott gifts to UT Dallas add up to more than \$154 million.

President Benson recognized Mrs. McDermott's unmatched role in shaping UT Dallas into the institution it is today.

"I believe that our founders would be proud of how the University that they envisioned has evolved, and for years, Margaret McDermott has

been a driving force in fulfilling that vision," said Benson, who holds the Eugene McDermott Distinguished University Chair of Leadership. "She was the brilliant and benevolent philanthropist who challenged us to continuously reach new heights of success."

Executive Vice President Hobson Wildenthal collaborated with Mrs. McDermott in implementing her visions for UT Dallas over these last 26 years. Wildenthal, in reflecting about that long relationship, remarks "I first remember meeting Mrs. McDermott at the dedication of the Cecil and Ida Green Center in the summer of 1992, soon after my arrival in Dallas. I had the good fortune that she knew my name by virtue of her friendships with my brother Kern and with my first cousin, Carolyn Kellam Curtis, of Austin. As was universally the case with her, she was supremely gracious and friendly, but it appeared that she no longer was deeply involved in the affairs of the University that her husband had created."

"Over the 1990s we focused at UT Dallas on recruiting ever stronger freshman classes, and I took care to keep her informed of our growing success. After several years, I submitted proposals for funding of freshman scholarships to the McDermott Foundation, and received positive responses, with gifts that were at the time very important. Then, in the spring of 2000, she called and said that she wanted to do something of major significance for UT Dallas and wanted my advice on what it should be. I met her at her ranch on a very brisk, sunny and windy, Saturday

morning and we went for one of the hikes across her pastures that she so treasured. I told her that my vision was a McDermott Scholars Program at UT Dallas modeled on the Morehead Scholars Program at the University of North Carolina, and that I had a package of material for her describing that program. She replied, 'I don't need it, I know all about the Morehead Program.' The success of the new McDermott Scholars Program was the foundation that inspired all of her further transformative support of the University."

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

If you would like to share your memories of Mrs. McDermott, please email us at utdallasmagazine@utdallas.edu.

REMEMBRANCES OF *University Alumni*

MARCIA BEENE BA'96, November 30, 2017, Dallas, Texas. She earned a bachelor's degree in literature from the School of Arts and Humanities.



RODNEY BLAIR BA'06, October 16, 2017, Denison, Texas. A talented musician, Blair played guitar and keyboards in several North Texas-based jazz and rock bands.



LORENZO BOLDWARE EMBA'10, November 4, 2017, Garland, Texas. Boldware graduated with an executive master's degree in business administration.



GREGORY COMBS BA'03, MA'08, PHD'09, January 18, 2018, Austin, Texas. A former UTD professor, Combs later worked as a senior principal applications engineer at Oracle Corp.

AMANDA INGRAM CRISP

BA'79, October 2, 2017, Paris, Texas. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in art and later worked as a dental technician.



JOHN FELDER VI BS'86, September 18, 2017, Garland, Texas. Felder served in the U.S. Air Force and later became a private pilot. He graduated with a degree in marketing.



EUGENIA FURBER BA'77, October 30, 2017, Fort Worth, Texas. She earned a degree in psychology and later managed her husband's medical practice.



MICHAEL HAWKINS MS'86, September 13, 2017, Dallas, Texas. Hawkins worked as a certified public accountant for Texas Utilities for 30 years until retiring in 2016.



J.B. JENKINS BS'79, September 20, 2017, Waxahachie, Texas. Jenkins worked for Collins Radio in Richardson for many years. He earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics.



SONIA KELLEY BA'07, October 16, 2017, Denison, Texas. Kelley graduated with a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies.



JEAN L. KENNEDY MS'00, November 17, 2017, Fort Worth, Texas. Kennedy earned a master's degree in communication disorders and went on to work as a speech language pathologist.



CATHY LONG MS'87, November 1, 2017, Kerrville, Texas. Long worked as a speech pathologist for the Veterans Affairs hospital in Kerrville.



CADMUS "CADDY" MCCALL II MS'95, December 30, 2017, Carrollton, Texas. McCall served as president of Farmer & Merchants National Bank before later becoming a computer programmer and software developer.



EDWARD MCCAMEY BA'78, November 16, 2017, Wills Point, Texas. He graduated with a degree in anthropology.

MERCEDES PATTERSON BA'80, October 1, 2017, Benbrook, Texas. Patterson was a former director of the Dallas County Nursing Home ombudsman program and also worked as a research associate with the Dallas Geriatric Research Institute.



BRADLEY PHILLIPS BS'14, September 7, 2017, Charlotte, North Carolina. Noted for his good-natured and easy-going personality, Phillips worked in sales for Lennox.



CAROLINE ROBERTS MA'08, September 17, 2017, Richardson, Texas. Roberts graduated with a master's degree in studies in literature from the School of Arts and Humanities.



LAURIE SANDEFER PHD'07, January 23, 2018, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. With a doctorate in aesthetic studies in hand, she moved to Mexico, where she opened a community performance and event venue.



JASPREET SIDHU BS'01, January 28, 2018, Dallas, Texas. Sidhu had a passion for medicine and helping people. He worked at Medical City Dallas and Arlington on high-risk obstetrics.



KATHLEEN JOHNSON SOARD BS'96, November 7, 2017, Plano, Texas. Soard had a longtime career as an accountant with Hewlett Packard.



GARY SUDER MS'94, October 25, 2017, McKinney, Texas. Suder worked for Texas Instruments in the defense group before later working in the space and airborne systems division of Raytheon.



ANDREA TRUE BA'91, November 15, 2017, Dallas, Texas. True had a long career in marketing and later in the hotel industry.



JEREMY WESTERMAN BS'17, January 2, 2018, Mesquite, Texas. Westerman pursued a passion for physical fitness as a fitness trainer.



Keep Us Informed

If you learn of the death of a UT Dallas alumnus, faculty, staff or friend, please send information to alumni@utdallas.edu or to

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800 W. Campbell Road, AD14
Richardson, TX 75080-3021

REMEMBRANCES OF

University Faculty, Staff and Friends

RUTH COLLINS SHARP
ALTSHULER, 1924-2017



Ruth Altshuler, long-time supporter of the University's Callier Center for

Communication Disorders, died in December at the age of 93.

Altshuler was known as a tireless volunteer and civic leader in Dallas. Over the decades, she raised millions of dollars for area charities.

Altshuler achieved many firsts in her lifetime, among which were becoming the first female chairperson of the SMU Board of Trustees and being the first woman to serve on a grand jury in Dallas (the one that indicted Jack Ruby for killing Lee Harvey Oswald).

In 1987, she married Dr. Kenneth Altshuler, former chairman of the department of psychiatry at UT Southwestern Medical Center. They enjoyed a long marriage filled with happiness and humor, celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary just two days before she died.

The Callier Center for Communication Disorders annually presents the Ruth and Ken Altshuler Callier Care Award to an individual or group who has contributed significantly to the betterment of the community and to advancing the care of patients with communication disorders.

RITA CLEMENTS, 1931-2018



Rita Crocker Clements, former vice chair of The University of Texas System Board of Regents, died in January at the age of 86. She served on the Board of Regents from 1996-2007.

Widow of Texas Gov. Bill Clements, she is remembered by family and friends for her dignity, elegance and exquisite style, which combined with her tremendous intellect allowed her to assume leadership roles in political, community and philanthropic causes.

Clements attended high school at the Hockaday School in Dallas and attended The University of Texas at Austin.

Her multitude of volunteer activities extended to the Salvation Army, the United Way of Dallas, Southwestern Medical Foundation and trusteeships at St. Michael and All Angels School and the Hockaday School. One of her proudest contributions was serving as a director of the O'Donnell Foundation from its inception in 1957 until assuming her director emeritus role in 2016.

Her many projects as Texas' first lady included promoting volunteerism, tourism, public education, and job training programs for women on welfare, the latter inspired by her earlier volunteer work with the Salvation Army.

ADAM MARIAN DZIEWOŃSKI, 1936-2016



Adam Marian Dzięwoński died in 2016 at the age of 79. He was born in Lwów,

Poland (now Lviv, Ukraine). After earning degrees in seismology, he moved to the United States in 1965 to work as a research associate in the geosciences division of the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest in Dallas — UT Dallas' precursor institution. He became an assistant professor in 1969 before joining the faculty of Harvard University in 1972.

Dzięwoński was born in the year in which the Earth's inner core was discovered. He went on to be involved in major discoveries about this deepest layer of Earth, highlighted by providing the first direct evidence that the inner core is solid, settling the debate over its nature.

He was instrumental in the founding of the Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology, a U.S. research consortium with more than 100 university members, and of the Federation of Digital Seismic Networks, an international organization that supports seismological research.

CAMERON OWEN
ZIMMERMAN-RANDLE, 1983-2017



Cameron Zimmerman-Randle, an extended hours

supervisor at the Eugene McDermott Library, died in November at the age of 33. An avid cyclist, he was hit by a car while riding his bike.

Zimmerman-Randle began working at the McDermott Library as a library assistant in fall 2015 and was later promoted to supervisor.

Dr. Ellen Safley, dean of the McDermott Library, said, "Cameron was a valued member of our team. We will remember his professionalism and his kind and generous personality and his great smile."

Born in Waco, Texas, Zimmerman-Randle grew up in North Texas. He spent several years in Tampa, Florida, where his father, Ervin Randle, played in the NFL. Zimmerman-Randle joined the Army in 2003, serving in South Korea and Egypt. He was honorably discharged in 2007.

In 2015, Zimmerman-Randle earned a bachelor's degree in history with a minor in journalism from Texas A&M Corpus Christi. He is survived by his wife, Lindsey.