

Alumni donate \$20K in scholarship funds to foundation

Baytown, TX — Many Lee College students will achieve their lifelong dream of higher education without debt thanks to the generosity of longtime Lee College supporters, Bennie and David Kadjar. Recently, the philanthropist couple gifted the Lee College Foundation with a total of \$20,000 in endowed scholarships including one endowed tuition scholarship and two endowed textbook scholarships.

“Lee College is extremely grateful to have the dedicated support of people like Bennie and David Kadjar who share our passion for education and our desire to make college more accessible to everyone,” said Lee College President, Dr. Lynda Villanueva. “It is evident the Kadjars give from their hearts, and this generous gift to the Lee College Foundation will make a lasting and meaningful impact on students and their families for generations to come.”

Bennie and David Kadjar have been avid supporters of the Lee College Foundation for many years and have contributed consistently to the annual Lee College Foundation fundraising gala in the form of sponsorships and items for the silent auction. They have also given to scholarship initiatives and capital campaigns.

“Lee College is part of us,” said David. “It’s close to our hearts because we both went to college here, and so did our children.”

Each year, Bennie and David attend the Lee College Foundation Scholarship Breakfast to meet the student recipients of the scholarships named in Bennie’s mother, Edna Gray’s memory, as well as the scholarships in honor of the Kadjar family and in memory of their son, Douglas Mirza Kadjar.

“In the past, we’ve had the opportunity to meet a lot of our scholarship recipients, and we know how much it means to each of them,” David said. “We feel it is absolutely a good return on our investment.”

Although it has been a tough year for traditional fundraising because of COVID-19 restrictions, David said that’s all the more reason to continue to give to such a worthy cause as the Lee College Foundation.

“Scholarships lead to completed education, which leads to better employment, and in turn, better lives for people and their families,” he said. “It’s just our little way of helping out.”

In addition to their continued financial support to Lee College, the couple also believes in donating their time to help the institution thrive. David served as an inaugural board member of the Lee College Alliance Alumni and Friends Association, and both he and Bennie are lifetime alumni association members.

Following in the footsteps of her mother, Edna Gray, who served three decades on the Lee College Foundation board and served as Chairman of the Board from 1987-89, Bennie has served on the Lee College Foundation Board for 21 years and as chairman of the board in 2012 and 2013. She has also served on fundraising and scholarship committees for the foundation board.

The Kadjar-Gray family fountain located at the center of the Lee College campus in Baytown was established in 2005 as a joint contribution from both families. The scenic fountain is still enjoyed today by faculty, staff, students, and visitors on campus.