

Hendersons make historic donation to Lee College

Donation of \$900,000 of ExxonMobil Stock Establishes Student Scholarships

Lee College has received a substantial gift from the estate of the late John P. and Charlotte Henderson. The Hendersons, who were longtime supporters of the college, bequeathed 10,000 shares of ExxonMobil stock which was sold for approximately \$900,000. Their gift is the largest estate donation in the institution's 89-year history.

The Lee College Scholarship Committee recently voted to use the money to establish the Henderson Family Trust, which will create over 20 scholarships annually. Recipients of the Henderson Family Trust will be known as The Henderson Scholars.

"Uncle John and Aunt Charlotte always valued Lee College and its impact on the Baytown community," said Jason Free, great nephew. "They made Lee College a priority in their charitable work and charitable giving during their lives, and they were excited to help future students receive a much-needed education through their estate plan."

The Hendersons have been associated with Lee College since the late 1960s. John served as a regent on the Lee College Board and was a charter member and board member of the Friends of Lee College.

"The visionary gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henderson will support our students for generations to come. Their legacy and that of the Henderson Family Trust will live on through the success of the Henderson Scholars in perpetuity," said Patricia Ranzini, vice president of College Advancement and executive director of the Lee College Foundation.

John passed away at the age of 107 in October 2020. Charlotte was 106 years old when she died exactly one year later. They were married for 80 years, and in 2019, the Guinness World Record recognized them for setting the then all-time world record for the oldest living couple of aggregate age.

"This exceptional donation will truly be transformational for our students and for the future of our college," said Dr. Lynda Villanueva, Lee College president. "We are extremely honored and thankful that John and Charlotte cared so much for the betterment of Lee College and future generations of Lee College students."

For years, Lee College has benefited from the Hendersons' generosity. In January 2021, shortly after John Henderson's death, an endowment scholarship was established in his name to support tuition and books for a deserving Lee College student who is planning to transfer to the University of Texas at Austin where Mr. Henderson was a letterman on the Longhorn football team.

Mr. Henderson began his career in 1939 at Humble Oil and Refining Company, which is now ExxonMobil. After 34 years and various assignments, he retired as department head of business services. Henderson was extremely active in the Baytown community – having spent decades as a board member with the Community Resource Credit Union, formerly known as Humble Employees Baytown Federal Credit Union. Mr. Henderson was also a member of the Baytown Chamber of Commerce, past president, life member and treasurer of the Kiwanis Club, and past board member of Baycoast Hospital.

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Photo: Charlotte and John P. Henderson at their home in the Longhorn Village Retirement Community, Austin (c. 2019). Photo courtesy of the Henderson family.