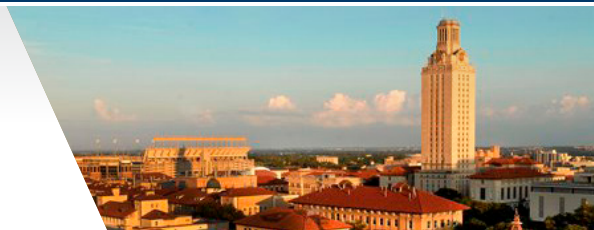


# The University of Texas at Austin



## A Hand Up

*Planned Gift to Supplement the Don and Katy Houseman Endowed Presidential Scholarship in Business*



When Don Houseman returned to UT Austin from a Nazi POW camp, he had earned the Combat Infantry Badge, two Purple Hearts, and a Bronze Star. But could he still earn his degree?

A manual typewriter could be a formidable device to operate, even for someone with fully functioning hands. But in the fall of 1945, a student at The University of Texas at Austin had an extra degree of difficulty: In order to graduate, Don Houseman had to pass a letter-writing class. Never mind that his arm was in a cast above his head.

Less than a year earlier, Houseman's infantry unit had been overrun during the Battle of the Bulge. His right forearm was shot full of shrapnel, and later that day he took a machine gun round in the leg and was captured by the Germans. They eventually sent him to a hospital, where his arm became so painful he asked for an amputation. Fortunately, another American prisoner, a doctor employed by the Nazis, was able to secure the new antibacterial drug sulpha, which saved Houseman's arm.

Upon liberation, Houseman returned to Texas and spent 19 months undergoing treatment, his right arm immobilized. During this time he also made two important reconnections. He married the UT Austin girl he'd left behind to fight in the war, Katy Buckley, and he re-enrolled in the business school during a 90-day leave following a bone graft.

But there was a hitch. No business major could graduate without taking Professor Bill Boyd's exacting class. "He was famous because he was so tough," Houseman says.

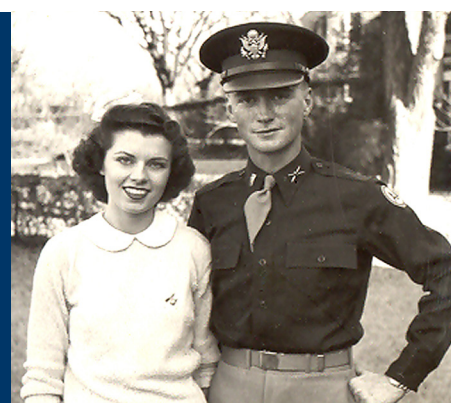
"Everything had to be fitted perfectly in proportion to the page."

Houseman's typing proved so slow that he simply could not do the work. But Boyd, who had also served in the military, took a liking to the young vet and allowed him to write the letters longhand—with his left hand. Though difficult for a natural right-hander, he wrote the letters and graduated.

Houseman joined his father's insurance company in Dallas and built on its success, never forgetting the hand up his professor had given him. In 2003, then 80, he named the McCombs School of Business as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy. This planned gift will be added to the Don and Katy Houseman Endowed Presidential Scholarship in Business, which the Housemans have already begun funding.

After serving his country, Don Houseman returned to Texas and reconnected with the girl he would marry, Katy Buckley.

He also re-enrolled in UT Austin's business school.



Now 92, Houseman says, "I'm very proud to have graduated from The University of Texas, and if I can help others get an education and have opportunities I've had, I'll do it."

As he slowly regained limited use of his right hand, Houseman lost the ability he acquired at UT to write with his left, just as the German he learned as a POW faded as the decades rolled by. But when he wrote a memo describing his scholarship, the formatting was perfect.