

The University of Texas at Tyler



Harold and Juanita Smotherman

Hoping to Inspire Future Philanthropists



Juanita and Harold Smotherman with grandchildren.

The Smotherman's own oil production allows them to give generously to UT Tyler.

Seeds of generosity and a connection to The University of Texas were planted in the hearts of Harold and Juanita Smotherman a long time ago. Graduates of the University of Oklahoma and Southern Methodist University respectively, both keenly understood the importance of higher education, stating that “the gift of an education is something no one can take from you.”

In 1956, while working as a petroleum engineer for Cities Service Oil Company in Upton County, Texas, Harold was assigned to the University of Texas leases, upon which wells that have generated important Permanent University Fund (PUF) royalty income for generations were operating.

Harold, a petroleum evaluation engineer, moved to Tyler in 1964, where he worked for Citizens 1st National Bank. His responsibilities included assisting board member H. J. McKenzie, president of the Cotton Belt Railroad. Harold, along with Senator Peyton McKnight, attorney Harry Loftis, and other community leaders, began working with the Texas Legislature to establish a university in East Texas, which was formed as Tyler State College and eventually The University of Texas at Tyler.

As Chairman of the Temporary Site Selection Committee, Harold negotiated a lease with the local school district for the first University location at the Roberts Junior High. With the site determined and plans finalized, Juanita manned the admissions table to enroll the first Tyler State College student in 1971. The Smothermans have been giving their time and treasure to UT Tyler ever since.

Juanita explains, “It’s been so exciting to be a part of what has happened over the last 40 years at UT Tyler.”

In 2007, UT Tyler’s inaugural College of Engineering and Computer Science External Advisory Council was formed with Harold Smotherman as Chair. Harold worked hard to recruit stellar members of the committee and encourage others to give to UT Tyler, resulting in a number of important gifts to the College of Engineering and Computer Science.

Just as Harold had helped in the production of PUF wells in Odessa for the University of Texas, many years later the Smothermans were able—through their own oil production—to provide generous gifts to The University of Texas at Tyler. They are now gold level members of Presidents Associates, Cowan Center Circle of Friends members, and contributors to the High School Seniors Engineering and Science Academy Scholarship. In 2008, the Smothermans established their first endowment, the *Harold and Juanita Smotherman Engineering Scholarship*. In addition, they have established three charitable gift annuities at UT Tyler. The most recent of these planned gifts is to fund the first-ever endowed scholarship for the new Ben and Maytee Fisch College of Pharmacy. The Smothermans believe the UT Investment Management Company provides a secure environment for investment.



One of the joys of philanthropy for Harold and Juanita is to plant seeds in the hearts of others. “We hope our gifts will encourage others to give,” Harold explains, just as that connection began in them both many years before.