

The University of Texas Pan American



Carrying on a Family Tradition

Support Education, Support a Community

Finding the balance between a demanding career and home life poses a major challenge for most people. For Dr. Carlos Manrique de Lara, however, managing a household of eight, seeing 40 patients per day, pursuing continuing education, attending conferences, serving as a professor and giving back to the community is considered, “just another day at the office.”

Raised in South Texas and still a resident of the Rio Grande Valley, Dr. Manrique developed great respect for the largest university in the area, The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA).

The love he has for the university and his community inspired him to create the *Dr. Carlos and Stephanie Manrique de Lara Endowed Professorship in Science*.

To honor his mother, Dr. Manrique also established the *Helena Urbina Manrique de Lara Endowed Scholarship in Science*.

The principles of hard work and dedication were engrained in Dr. Manrique at an early age. His father graduated from dental school during World War II. His mother earned her teaching certificate from a convent in Monterrey, Mexico in the 1930s, and his grandfather served as dean of the dental school in Mexico’s National University in the early 1900s. Education was the family tradition. As a result, Dr. Manrique and his siblings were encouraged to pursue careers in the fields of medicine, engineering and education.

By the age of 35, Dr. Manrique was a certified Ophthalmologist. He is the founder of Manrique Custom Vision Centers in McAllen, Harlingen and San Antonio. Specializing in refractive surgery, he is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American College of Eye Surgeons.

Dr. Manrique began his training at Harbor Hospital Center-Baltimore and The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. He also trained in Neurology at Vanderbilt University and in Neuro-Ophthalmology at Michigan State University, as well as at Stanford

University. Dr. Manrique served as Chief Resident at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga and he has served as a professor at The University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University College of Medicine and the Scott & White Clinic.

It was during the course of his studies that Dr. Manrique found his soul mate, Stephanie Brooks. They married and now have six children: a set of six-year-old twins, along

with four children ranging in age from eight to 22.

Despite the pressures of his thriving business, Dr. Manrique manages to be an outstanding family man. “I’ve never once felt like he’s put us second,” said Stephanie. “When he’s home he lets everything go and is focused completely on his family. So, he can separate his professional life and become dad and husband, and that’s a hard thing to do.”

After a career that took him across the country, Dr. Manrique returned to his foundation and community. He wanted to give the people of the Rio Grande Valley a medical service that had been unavailable. “During my first year, I was starting my practice from ground zero and worked hard to become known in the community. In the first three months I saw 40 patients. Now I see that many in one day. It was hard!”



Robert Nelsen, former president UTPA, with Dr. Carlos Manrique de Lara & Family
Despite the pressures of his thriving business, Dr. Manrique manages to be an outstanding family man.

The University of Texas

Pan American



In addition to opening his practice, moving to the Rio Grande Valley gave Dr. Manrique access to UTPA. He began a partnership with the University through the President's Circle, a giving society comprised of University supporters. His partnership with the University continued to grow, as did his friendship with former UTPA President, Dr. Robert Nelsen.

"I met him [Dr. Nelsen] at a gathering at his house, and from the beginning he was just tireless in wanting to make [UTPA] grow and wanting to create an image that this is Bronc Country," said Dr. Manrique, who added that his family tradition made his involvement in education inevitable. "I have always had an interest in helping higher education . . . I eventually got to the point where I felt like I could make an impact."

The Dr. Carlos and Stephanie Manrique de Lara Endowed Professorship in Science will be matched by UT System through the UT System Research Incentive Program, significantly increasing the value of their gift.

"It is a good way to leverage the dollars, so the professorship will be even stronger," stated Dr. Robert Nelsen, who added that he delights most in the scholarship. "It is about our students," he said. "It is about the kids in the Rio Grande Valley. The scholarship will enable more kids to go to college without going into debt. The scholarship allows young people to be successful. That's real generosity."

With a daughter attending UTPA and studying to be an Optometrist, Dr. Manrique says that he lives through her experience and has been very satisfied with the University. He also employs numerous UTPA graduates and says that he has had an excellent experience with each one.

Dr. Manrique's philanthropy extends beyond UTPA. He has served as the President of the Boys and Girls Club and has volunteered with the organization for nearly nine years. He also encourages his children to give back. The family volunteers with local hospitals and the RGV Food Bank, and they have helped clean up the beach at South Padre Island.

"One of the things that I saw throughout my educational career is how many philanthropic individuals we have in our country. I myself benefitted along the way," he noted. "The only way that you can grow as a community is through education."

Through his work, volunteerism and philanthropic practices, Dr. Manrique has dedicated his life to helping people. UT Pan American considers him a shining partner who will continue a miraculous journey to improve the Rio Grande Valley through the foundation of education.