

The University of Texas System Administration



ENDOWMENT PROFILE

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Sharing a Passion for Giving

PATTY AND JAMES HUFFINES are proud graduates of The University of Texas at Austin (Patty graduated in 1977, James in 1974), and both credit the university with having changed their lives. The couple “share a real passion for all things UT-related,” says James.

Still, it wasn't until James was appointed to the UT System Board of Regents that both he and Patty would discover just how many lives are transformed, every day, at the places that bear the University of Texas name. As the couple traveled across the state to visit the nine universities and six health institutions that comprise the UT System, they met faculty and staff members who worked tirelessly to ensure that UT institutions were among the best in the United States. They resolved, then, to give generously to UT System, which James describes as “one of the most valuable

assets in Texas.” So, in 2004, the couple established the Patty and James Huffines Chancellor's Excellence Endowment.

“The UT System reaches all of Texas and touches so many people,” says Patty, whose own career and volunteer work reflect a deep desire to help others. Philanthropy, she says, “feeds my soul in ways that other things don't.”

Her altruistic bent, shared by James, has benefitted organizations in Austin for many years. Between the two of them, no fewer than 30 charities, museums, performing arts centers, and other educational institutions have claimed their time and financial support.

“I've always looked for a single cause. I haven't found one yet,” Patty muses. “When I feel I've done all I can do for an organization, I move on to something else.”



James and Patty Huffines describe themselves as “quiet” philanthropists. Still, they hope their example will speak loudly to the next generation of benefactors, including their own three children. “We are teaching our children to also give back,” says Patty. “We want them to do their own philanthropic work.”

The couple has relocated to Dallas, and Patty has become fascinated with brain health and is helping support the important work being done at UT Dallas's Center for BrainHealth. “The more I learn about it, the more I realize how vital it is,” says Patty of the center's mission to identify and treat brain injuries and diseases. “It's something all of us are concerned about.”

The Center for BrainHealth staff includes those who have graduated from a UT institution, and it's likely that James and Patty once watched one of those future researchers, communicators or doctors walk across the stage to receive a degree. “Attending commencement ceremonies was one of the most rewarding parts of my job as Chairman,” says James. “I liked being on the different campuses and watching students start out their careers.”

If his presence on UT System campuses was fulfilling for James, it was equally as worthwhile for each UT institution he visited.

“During his service on the Board of Regents, James was present at every important event in the life of our UT universities and health institutions. To be there, among our presidents, faculty, staff, students, alumni and donors, gave him joy,” recalls UT System Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa. “His presence at those events helped him to better understand our universities and the missions they serve. And James was tireless. Through his support and guidance, we became a stronger and better system of higher learning, and for that I am grateful.”

Continuing to support the UT System is something Patty and James Huffines will do for as long as they are able, and James asks others to do the same: “I encourage and challenge people to support the System,” he says. “Their money is used wisely. The System can make a difference in the lives of young people in Texas.”

If you would like more information about how to start an endowment, please contact: [Office of External Relations](#) | giving@utsystem.edu | (512) 499-4777