



Clemson Legacy Connection

PLANNED GIVING NEWSLETTER

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Celebrations Rooted in Clemson University's Oldest Tradition — Philanthropy

Greetings from Clemson!

As the golden hues of autumn settle across the foothills of the Blue Ridge, there is a certain magic in the air at Clemson. The campus glows under a canopy of amber leaves, the Tiger Band's notes drift through crisp air, and the familiar hum of students hurrying between classes reminds us of the rhythm of this special place.

It's a season of gratitude — a time to pause, give thanks, and remember the blessings that shape our lives. Thanksgiving isn't just a date on the calendar here; it's a spirit that fills our hearts. It reminds us that what we have, we share — and that what we build, we pass on.

At Clemson, this spirit of thankfulness is expressed through our oldest and most powerful tradition: the act of paying it forward. It's the heartbeat of our great University, begun long before the first Tiger ever set foot on campus.

The Original Clemson Tradition

More than 136 years ago, Thomas Green Clemson and Anna Calhoun Clemson planted the first seeds of generosity that would grow into the Clemson we know and love today. Their vision was grounded in service and fueled by faith in education's power to transform lives.

Thomas, inspired by his beloved Anna's passion for learning, signed his *Last Will and Testament* on November 6, 1886. With pen in hand, he entrusted to the people of South Carolina his home at Fort Hill — 814 acres of land, \$80,000 in cash, and \$15,000 in artwork — to create “a high seminary of learning.”

It was an extraordinary act of hope. And from that one gift, an entire University was born. O — one that continues to educate, inspire, and uplift generations.

Their legacy reminds us that true generosity doesn't simply give; it transforms. It turns gratitude into action and vision into something enduring.

Honoring a Tradition of Legacy

To honor those who carry that same spirit forward, Clemson created the **Clemson Legacy Society**, celebrating alumni and friends who include the University in their estate plans — through wills, trusts, retirement accounts, and other planned gifts that ensure our mission continues long into the future.

Eighteen years ago, this spirit of recognition grew into the **Fort Hill Legacy Bronze Leaf Dedication Ceremony**, which honors individuals whose planned gifts of \$1 million or more will strengthen Clemson’s foundation for years to come. Each bronze leaf, etched with a donor’s name and signature, is placed upon the hallowed ground where Thomas and Anna Clemson’s dream first took root — the very place where our founding trustees gathered to make his will a reality.

It was under the same large oak tree, on November 27, 1889, that his close friends and colleagues realized the Clemson’s dream for a new Clemson Agricultural College was approved by the legislature and signed by the Governor of South Carolina, marking the beginning of a journey that has since touched lives far beyond our imagination.

An Evening of Honor and Gratitude

Every fall, before the **Fort Hill Legacy Society** memorial celebration, and new inductees are enshrined, another tradition takes place — one that glows with the warmth of community and gratitude.

On Thursday evening, beneath the twinkle of lights at the Warren Owen Pavilion, we welcomed the newest members of the **Clemson Legacy Society**. The setting was elegant yet heartfelt — a night filled with emotion, gratitude, and reflection.

President Jim Clements and First Lady Beth Clements led the evening with grace and sincerity, inviting each inductee forward to receive Clemson’s deepest thanks. The words of our students who served as guest speakers — and the applause that followed each name — were reminders



that a legacy is not defined by wealth or recognition, but by *impact*: the lives touched, the dreams made possible, the belief in a brighter future.

Adding to the magic of the night were 34 of Clemson’s most outstanding students, who served as ambassadors and table hosts. They laughed, listened, and shared their Clemson stories with both new and longtime members of the Legacy Society. In their voices, our donors could hear the living proof of what their generosity makes possible — the future

they are helping to build, one student at a time.

The pavilion was filled with laughter, joy, and pride — a true Thanksgiving spirit shared among family.

Welcoming New Members of the Fort Hill Legacy Society

The next day, under the broad, sheltering branches of the **Second Century Oak**, we gathered again — this time for the **Fort Hill Legacy Bronze Leaf Dedication Ceremony**. There, surrounded by history and hope, we honored three families whose gifts will continue to shape Clemson's story: **David E. Smith, Arthur M. "Art" Spiro '45 and Joan G. Spiro, and William "Bill" Sturgis '57 and Martha Beth Sturgis.**

Each name, each story, is a testament to what it means to live with purpose and to give with heart.

David E. Smith



A native of Chesterfield, South Carolina, David Smith's life was defined by service, faith, and generosity. From his years in the Merchant Marines, completing 64 ocean voyages, to his leadership in maritime operations and real estate, David lived with a quiet strength and a generous heart.

He and his wife, Esther Rae, shared a belief in the transformative power of education — a belief that led to the creation of the **David E. Smith Sr. Scholarship Fund**, supporting Chesterfield students pursuing their dreams. His legacy continues to empower others, proving that a life rooted in giving leaves ripples that never fade.

Arthur M. "Art" Spiro '45 and Joan G. Spiro

Few partnerships have embodied creativity and entrepreneurship like Art and Joan Spiro.



Married for 59 years, they built a life grounded in innovation, learning, and love.

Art, a proud Clemson alumnus, served as a U.S. Navy officer during World War II before earning his master's degree at MIT and rising to leadership in the textile industry. Joan, a gifted interior designer, brought beauty and artistry into every project she touched.

Together, they established the **Arthur M. Spiro Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership**, igniting innovation and opportunity for students and future leaders. Their gift — and their example — remind us that true legacy is not born upon success, it is grounded in the desire to inspire and uplift others.

William "Bill" Sturgis '57 and Martha Beth Sturgis

From childhood classmates to lifelong partners, Bill and Martha Beth Sturgis built a 62-year marriage defined by faith, love, and loyalty — especially to Clemson University.

Bill's remarkable career with W.R. Grace and Co. was matched only by his service to Clemson,



where he helped shape the packaging science program and guided countless University initiatives through his leadership and vision. The Sturgises' generosity — including the largest gift ever to the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering — continues to strengthen the University they loved so dearly.

Their story is one of devotion: to each other, to their family, Clemson; and to the generations who will follow in their remarkable example.

A Legacy That Lives On

Under the Second Century Oak, the bronze leaves glistened in the sunlight — symbols of dreams made real through faith, generosity; and love. Each leaf tells a story of gratitude turned into action, of lives dedicated to something larger than themselves.

That is what legacy truly means. It's the bridge between what we've been given and what we choose to give forward. It's how we ensure that our blessings outlive us, touching hands and hearts we may never meet.

Through their generosity, David Smith, the Spiros, the Sturgises — and every member of the Clemson Legacy Society — remind us that legacy is not built in a moment. It is built in every act of giving, every word of encouragement, every dream we help another achieve.

How Will You Leave Your Legacy?

As Thanksgiving approaches, I hope you will take a moment to reflect on your own Clemson story — on the people and experiences that shaped you, and the ways you might pass that spirit on.

Planned giving is more than a financial choice; it's a statement of gratitude. It's a way to say, *"Clemson made a difference in my life — and I want to make a difference in return."*

Our talented team is here to help you explore the many ways to create a lasting impact — through your will, a trust; or an endowed scholarship. You can reach us anytime at giving@clemson.edu, or visit our website to peruse various planned giving options. You can also download or request our **free Estate Planning Guide**.

We encourage you to let us know when you have included Clemson in your estate plan. It would be our great honor to celebrate with you privately or anonymously.- Please allow us to make sure your wishes can and will be carried out as you envision. We can ensure your gifts will be placed into a permanent named endowment or used for operational needs within your favorite college or program.

And if you would like to share your story or talk about how you would like to shape your own Clemson legacy, we would love to hear from you. You may reach me at 864-656-0663 or jovanna@clemson.edu.

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This Thanksgiving — and always — my heart is full of gratitude for you, your loyalty, your passion, your thoughtful generosity, and for your passionate belief in all that Clemson can become. Together, we are building something timeless — a legacy of excellence, access, and endless possibility.

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Wishing you and your family a joyful, grace-filled Thanksgiving.

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Gratefully yours and forever loyal,
JoVanna