Clemson Legacy Connection

PLANNED GIVING NEWSLETTER

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Doing the Most We Can With What We Have – Ron ’73 M’76 and Debbie Addis, January 2026

Ron Addis ’73, M ’76, and his wife, Debbie, remind us that generosity and wealth are never measured by excess; instead, they are accumulated with thoughtful intentions, heartwarming gratitude, and a strong desire to give back and lift others up along the way.

The Addis’s story is one of lifelong connections, thoughtful service and a quiet, powerful commitment to ensure that Clemson remains accessible for everyone.

A Clemson Bond That Began Early

For Ron, Clemson was never *just* a college — it was a very special place. Raised in nearby Seneca, South Carolina, he grew up knowing he would one day wear orange and purple.

“I was told from an early age that I would be a Clemson Tiger,” Ron says with a smile. “I even wore a Clemson sweatshirt in my first-grade school photo.”

That childhood certainty became reality, though not without interruption. During the Vietnam War, Ron was drafted into the U.S. Army. When his service concluded, Clemson welcomed him back home. Supported by the G.I. Bill, Ron re-enrolled in January 1970 and graduated in 1973. He went on to earn a master’s degree in English while teaching freshman English courses as a graduate assistant — an early sign of his lifelong dedication to students and learning.

Careers, Commitments and a Lifelong Partnership Solidified

Ron’s professional journey eventually led him into higher education advancement, including a position at Coker College (now Coker University). However, the most meaningful chapter of his life wasn’t written in an office — it was written in partnership.

While working at Coker, Ron met Debbie, who was then employed in operations at Johnson Controls in Columbia. After three years of dating, they married in 1985 and celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary last year.

When Ron’s dream job opened at Clemson in 1986, the couple faced the challenges of a dual-career move. They had just purchased a home in Lugoff, perfectly situated between their two

workplaces. Miraculously, almost unbelievably, Debbie's exact position opened at Johnson Controls in the Greenville office.

"We literally switched locations, and I kept the same job," Debbie recalls. "New faces, same responsibilities. Ron and I took it as a sign — that our move to Clemson was meant to be."

Serving Clemson from the Inside
Ron served as a publications editor in the Department of Agricultural Communications, where he helped usher the University into a new era. "It was the beginning of desktop publishing," Ron explains. "One of my first goals was to digitize our publications — moving from paper to digital formats."

His service extended well beyond his job description. From 2001 to 2006, Ron served on Clemson's Staff Senate and was elected president in 2004-2005. One initiative stood out above all others: much-needed scholarships and financial assistance for the children of Clemson staff.

"As a former staff member myself, that mattered deeply to me," Ron says. "It still does. I want staff families to know their children can dream of attending Clemson, and it can become a reality."

He fondly recalls the camaraderie of organizing the annual Staff Senate Scholarship golf tournament, where staff members from all over the University came together, year after year, to invest their time, talent and treasure in the future of their own community.

Retirement and a Renewed Sense of Purpose
Ron retired in 2013; however, retirement didn't alter his commitment to Clemson. Instead, it sharpened it. "If I were graduating from high school today," Ron reflects, "I'm not sure I could afford a top-ranked university like Clemson."

That realization prompted deeper reflection. Together, Ron and Debbie took a thoughtful look at their finances and their future. "We asked ourselves what we truly needed, and we realized — we could do more for others," Debbie explains. "We want to be good stewards and do the most we can with what we have," Ron adds.

That simple philosophy became the foundation of their legacy.

Investing in People — and Passions
Ron and Debbie endowed a **Classified Staff Scholarship**, ensuring that children of Clemson staff members have access to the same transformative education that shaped Ron's life. And their love for animals led them to also support a **founding scholarship** for the soon-to-open **Harvey S. Peeler Jr. College of Veterinary Medicine**.

"We've supported the Pickens County Humane Society for years," Debbie says. "We see the need for animal care across our community and our state. Supporting the new veterinary college just felt right."

They are further extending these commitments through a generous gift in their estate plan — quietly, intentionally and with lasting impact.

What Does "Doing the Most You Can" Mean to You?
Ron and Debbie's story invites us to pause and reflect on the following:

- Where are your passions?
- Who or what has shaped your life in a meaningful way?
- How might your values continue to thrive through the causes and programs you care about the most?

Just as Ron and Debbie chose to invest in opportunity, education and compassion, your current and legacy gifts — no matter the size — can and will open doors for others as we strengthen the Clemson Experience for future generations.

Every life is shaped by moments, mentors and places that leave a permanent mark. Clemson is one of those places: a home that forms character, ignites purpose and changes lives. When you choose to include Clemson in your gift and estate plans, you are making a significant investment that will propel your influence forward, ensuring that opportunity, hope and excellence continue today, tomorrow and forever.

If you feel a quiet nudge to explore how your legacy can be enhanced, we are here to walk alongside you. Whether you are just beginning to think about the future or redesigning and/or refining plans you already have in place, our talented team of professionals would be honored to help you shape a plan that reflects your values and creates extraordinary meaning — for you, your family and our beloved Clemson University.

To learn more about crafting a legacy through a current or planned gift, we invite you to visit our website or contact the Office of Trusts, Estates and Gift Planning at ***giving@clemson.edu***. We also invite you to download our complimentary **Estate Planning Guide**, a helpful resource designed to guide thoughtful conversations with your attorney and financial advisers.

Please feel free to reach out to us directly at ***jovanna@clemson.edu*** or 864-656-0663. It would be our privilege to listen, to learn what matters most to you, and help you turn your thoughts and aspirations into a meaningful legacy.

Ever loyal and forever grateful,
JoVanna King