



### Greetings from Tigertown!

Most of our Clemson students are away for the summer, and their brief departure allows thousands of campers to participate in academic and athletic camps. Summer camp is an impressionable experience, and there are incredible benefits, including fostering emotional intelligence and building self-confidence, independence, healthy living, environmental awareness, leadership and so many other skills that shape and enhance our journey to adulthood. As I see these groups of young students, I often wonder how many of them have begun their love affair with Clemson, building a life-long connection to this special place. Watching these bright young learners embark on new opportunities for research and discovery is truly inspiring. They are the future of this great University — and our world — and we anticipate extraordinary achievements in the years to come. Your thoughtful and generous support of these summer programs are helping us prepare and engage these future leaders.



### SHAPING THE FUTURE OF HER BELOVED CLEMSON

Susie Adams '83 grew up in Seneca, South Carolina — just a few miles from Clemson. Her parents taught her the importance of doing what is right, and it is a lesson she has carried with her throughout life. She says, “The diversity of people at Clemson exposed me to different life experiences, opened doors to new opportunities and ultimately changed my path in life.”

Clemson was the obvious choice. Like many of her classmates, Adams dreaded enrolling in the required course of public speaking. However, an uplifting voice put her nerves at ease. Adams had the honor of learning public speaking under the guidance of a Clemson legend, Col. Ben Skardon '38, who transformed her fear of public speaking into a passion. Col. Skardon was a prisoner of World War II, who survived the Bataan Death March. A gifted orator and writer, he taught English and public speaking at Clemson for decades. His coaching and encouragement led Adams to pursue and attain a master’s degree in speech communications at the University of Georgia.

After completing her education, Adams followed in her father’s footsteps at Duke Energy, where she served as the vice president of marketing and customer experience. She also dedicated herself to giving back to Clemson, providing support to current and future students to ensure they have the same wonderful experiences she enjoyed. She is now an adjunct professor at Winthrop University and serves as a consultant to nurture and coach people to reach their full potential.

Adams' success in life and business has made her an inspiration to generations of Tigers, especially women. Susie used her talents to serve on the advisory board for Clemson's Pearce Center for Professional Communications, and her dedication to the future of Clemson and our Tigers has been instrumental in helping grow [IPTAY's Hear Her Roar](#) campaign, which empowers female student-athletes through facilities, scholarships and leadership programs.

Adams has been especially supportive of POWER: Women's Leadership Academy. The POWER program helps female student-athletes develop skills they need to succeed on and off the field or court. Adams has been a generous supporter of the program, which she believes can serve as a model for other universities across the country. To participate in POWER, student-athletes must be selected to participate in the year-long program focusing on identity, professional presence, self-leadership and community, along with an annual experiential trip and culminating with a summer leadership summit for all female student-athletes.

Former star volleyball player for Clemson, [Colleen Finney '22](#), was part of the first POWER cohort. Last summer, Adams participated in a Summit, attended by Finney and her fellow POWER participants, to discuss leadership experiences and network opportunities with women leaders across various industries.



In reflection, Finney said, "POWER was something that we were really excited for. We felt like all the hard work and efforts we had done throughout the school year paid off. It was an empowering feeling to be surrounded by a room of career-driven women who are highly successful." As a Clemson graduate and a current graduate student at the University of Missouri with her sights set on law school, Finney will one day be among the career-driven Clemson women inspiring the next generation — just like Susie Adams.

Through her support of Hear Her Roar, especially the POWER program, Adams is ensuring that future star athletes like Finney have exceptional opportunities that will inspire them to be great leaders.

Support from University leaders, IPTAY leadership and dedicated Tigers like Adams has given Clemson the momentum for substantial growth in athletic opportunities for women. Within the last decade, Clemson Athletics has added women's golf (2012-13), softball (2019-20), lacrosse (2022-23) and gymnastics (2023-24). In the spring of 2022, POWER: Women's Leadership Academy was launched.

"Support of these initiatives is an investment in the future of Clemson Athletics, and an investment in the future of our society — by elevating and providing financial assistance to these initiatives, we are empowering our female student-athletes to become leaders who will inspire and make a positive impact in their communities," says Stephanie Ellison-Johnson, executive senior associate athletics director/senior woman administrator.

The future for women's athletics at Clemson has never been brighter. We will continue to work together to elevate all female athletes so we can **Hear Her Roar!**



Serving as a champion for our female student-athletes is only part of Adams' numerous contributions to Clemson. Adams has been an outstanding leader in Clemson's fundraising efforts, serving on the board of the Clemson University Foundation and as a lead sponsor for the [Women's Roundtable](#), a developmental and networking opportunity for participants to acknowledge, explore and invest in the promotion of the experiences of girls and women, particularly in STEM fields. The Women's Roundtable brings approximately 500 participants together to emphasize the importance of education, self-care and preservation. It also focuses on the tools and skill sets necessary to cope with and navigate exclusionary educational and professional environments that many girls and women encounter.



Adams' commitment to Clemson is driven by her belief in the University's potential to positively impact society. "Clemson has grown in very positive ways, and I don't just mean numbers. I mean strategically, the quality of the faculty and students, the quality of the administration, the decisions that the University makes. Clemson is a place that I love and a place that I believe in," says Adams.

Adams has made plans to leave a significant estate gift that will further enhance the University and expand her legacy at Clemson. Her investment will ensure the University continues to provide students with transformative experiences, in perpetuity. Adams and other generous

donors like her will serve as a catalyst to propel Clemson forward. Through their intentional commitments and dedication, they are shaping the future of our University and inspiring future generations of students.

I hope donors like Susie Adams and students like Colleen Finney inspire you to consider what type of legacy you would like to leave for others. When you invest in our amazing students, faculty and programs, your legacy becomes much more than simply monetary; you become part of the DNA of Clemson — our human chain of philanthropy that pledges to serve as Guardians of our beloved Clemson traditions and change-agents to ignite, enhance and improve the quality of the Clemson Experience for future generations. Adams reflected, "Legacy giving is an important way to leave behind something you're proud of."



There are a variety of ways in which you can begin or amplify your legacy at Clemson. We are here to assist as you explore the best way for you and your family to give back to Clemson. You may visit our [website](#) or send a personal email to us at [giving@clemson.edu](mailto:giving@clemson.edu). You can also find information about IRA Charitable Qualified Distribution (QCD) benefits [here](#). Our [free Wills Guide](#) is designed to help you navigate your thoughts and plans before you visit with your attorney and/or financial advisors about general estate planning.

In closing, I have reflected on my summer camp experiences, which super-charged me mentally and physically. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting new friends and participating in various challenges. The best camp programs filled our days with adventure and discovery, and while having fun, they taught us how to prepare for life's journey. Listed below are few reflections of the cornerstones from summer camp. Not surprisingly, many of these qualities and aspirations should be practiced daily:

- Build up those around you.

- Teamwork.
- Be enthusiastic and develop passion.
- Have integrity.
- Be respectful and empathetic.
- Maintain a positive attitude and outlook.
- Stand your ground on personal values, ethics and beliefs.
- Practice gratitude.
- Set clear goals, and strive to achieve them.
- Champions *always* seek new challenges.



Our trip around the sun seems to be moving much faster! Let's make sure we take the time to enjoy the journey a little bit more. Best wishes to you and your family for a safe and happy summer. Please let us know when your travel plans bring you back to campus — we always enjoy seeing you! And don't forget, '55 Exchange is open, and our students are eager to serve you our treasured Clemson ice cream. It is such a welcome and refreshing relief to the summer heat!

As always, THANK YOU for everything you have done for our great University!

GO Tigers,

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