



## Clemson Legacy Connection

PLANNED GIVING NEWSLETTER

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### Embracing the Seasons of Life: Reflections, Growth, and Renewal

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, nature decorates itself in a brilliant display of warm hues. Crimson reds, golden yellows, and rich oranges drift gently from the trees, transforming our surroundings and inspiring a season of reflection, gratitude, and fresh energy. Just like these falling leaves, we are embracing change, bringing you updates and highlights to celebrate the vibrant season ahead.

In this edition, we'll explore the latest happenings, share insights, and maybe even offer a little inspiration for enjoying these

beautiful fall days. So grab a cozy drink, settle in, and let's dive into this season together!



Autumn offers us a powerful moment of reflection. As the leaves drift to the ground and the trees stand bare, we're invited to gaze beyond the immediate and to explore what lies beneath. Observe the fallen leaves—each one a vivid reminder of life's fleeting beauty—and reflect on the tree that once nourished and held those leaves close. Now, in this season of transition, those same leaves return to the earth, enriching the soil and laying the foundation for new life.

Nature, in all its quiet wisdom, mirrors our own lives: each season has a purpose, its own beauty, a lesson, and a unique abundance to offer. Embrace these cycles, savor their treasures, and know that within each lies a gift to carry forward.

Last month I attended Dale Jaeger's celebration of life service. Funerals offer time for reflection as we seek to honor the person who has left us and comfort their loved ones. Unfortunately, I

never had the pleasure of meeting Dale; however, I had heard so much about her from my colleague and I learned more during the service. She had a contagious zest for life, unending love and devotion to her family, and a passion for landscape architecture. Dale discovered Clemson through her father, a proud member of the Class of '47, and her passion for the Tigers began during athletic events on campus with her sister.

During the celebration, held in the Georgia Botanical Gardens, Rev. Stuart Higginbotham, read a poem that he composed in Dale's honor. With his permission, we would like to share it with you. I was inspired and uplifted by his words, especially knowing that our annual Fort Hill Legacy Society Memorial Ceremony would be held the following week.

### **The Leaf**

What is it that holds the last leaf on the tree,  
the redbud, the Judas tree, whose wood you cannot trust  
but whose wisdom whispers beneath the chaos of life?  
Or the maple with its edges and boldness of being,  
with the tilt of the earth and the waxing moon watching all?  
There in the starlight, the single leaf dances in the bright darkness.  
It is not fear that holds the last leaf on the branch  
when all the others rest on the ground beneath the silent sky.  
The maple leaf does not grip what it has known for fear of what it does not.  
It turns its face toward the promise of a touch,  
waiting for the ineffable moment, the brush of heaven.  
In the end, it is joy that holds the last leaf on the sparse tree,  
joy at the opportunity to see it all unfold,  
to taste the sweetness of life, to feel the kiss of a soft breeze and know,  
in its body, that release is the doorway to eternity.

Dale's husband, Rob, his daughter, Garland and her son-in-law, Jordan, all spoke about Dale's passion for life, her family, and love of nature. She was a bright light that will continue to shine brightly through all who knew and loved her.

It is just that kind of awe-inspiring legacy that prompted the university to create the [Clemson Legacy Society](#), an honor bestowed upon all members who have made the decision to include Clemson in their estate plan through their last will and testament, as a beneficiary of a revocable trust, retirement account, life estate, brokerage account, or life insurance policy.

Seventeen years ago, we enhanced the Clemson Legacy Society to unveil the *Fort Hill Legacy Bronze Leaf Dedication* ceremony, which honors individuals who have ensured that Clemson receives a minimum of \$1 million or more upon their death. Fort Hill, the beloved home of Anna Calhoun and Thomas Green Clemson, was bequeathed to the people of South Carolina, along with \$80,000 in cash, 814 acres of land and \$15,000 in artwork. Today, the Fort Hill Mansion is located in the heart of Clemson's campus and the personal signature(s) and names of Fort Hill Legacy Society members are displayed on customized bronze oak leaves affixed to the hallowed ground where the original life trustees met to discuss Thomas' LW&T. They convened to persuade the state of South Carolina to approve his bequest and create a high seminary of learning, which was approved on November 27, 1889. Clemson Agricultural College began her



journey to improve the lives of the citizens of this state and our roots have reached almost all corners of the earth. Each bronze leaf represents a legacy of support that will continue to inspire, uplift and expand the Clemson Family in perpetuity.

Two weeks ago, Clemson University dedicated bronze leaves in honor of the new members of the [Fort Hill Legacy](#)

[Society](#). At a special ceremony, hosted by our students under the historic Second Century Oak, we honored these alumni whose vision and generosity will shape the University for future generations.

### **Robert “Bob” Bruce Fickling II ’39 and Louise “Weesie” Holland Fickling**

For Bob Fickling, Clemson University was more than an alma mater; it was the starting point of a life committed to service and leadership. A 1939 agronomy graduate, Bob stood out for his academic success along with his dedication to his hometown of Blackville, S.C. After graduating second in his class, Bob served with distinction in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, later returning to Blackville to build a flourishing career in agriculture and real estate.

Bob used his natural leadership and magnetic personality to uplift the local community, serving as Chairman of the Blackville Public Schools Board and establishing the Blackville Farmers Market and the Blackville Country Club. With his beloved wife and best friend, Louise “Weesie” Holland Fickling, Bob created the *Robert B. and Weesie H. Fickling Unrestricted Endowment for Excellence*—a gift that will provide critical support to address the University’s greatest needs. For the Ficklins, philanthropy was simply a way of life, with Bob’s generosity woven into countless lives through both his community and Clemson University.

Known for his sunny outlook and generous spirit, Bob Fickling encouraged young people to aim high and offered guidance with warmth and humility. His family fondly recalls his view of each day as a gift, each interaction an opportunity to make a difference. In honoring Bob's memory, his family and Clemson University celebrate the legacy of a Southern gentleman whose kindness and commitment have left an enduring mark on Clemson.

There is an old adage that says a Clemson gentleman needs no introduction. Chip Hood, '85 Special Advisor to the Clemson Board of Trustees, General Counsel, and a close friend of Bob and Weesie Fickling reminded us of this when he said, "I only need one sentence to summarize all you need to know about Bob Fickling: He was a proud graduate of the Class of '39."

### **Dr. Richard "Dick" '54 and Mary "Dinky" McMahan**

Dr. Richard "Dick" McMahan '54 and his dear wife, Mary "Dinky" McMahan, of Deland, Florida devoted their lives to uplifting others through education and community involvement. A graduate of Clemson's School of Architecture, Dick combined his professional success with a commitment to giving back to his *alma mater*. Together, he and Dinky established the *Richard A. McMahan Presidential Scholarship* in 1993, supporting students across the University. In 2000, they expanded their giving to the *Clemson National Scholars* program, one of the University's premier scholarship initiatives, which has benefited over 70 outstanding students.

Dinky, an accomplished businesswoman, community leader and excellent golfer, was an active partner in all philanthropic efforts. Known for her keen business sense, Dinky managed Main Street Travel and served on boards for the Stetson University School of Music and the Florida International Festival, balancing her professional and volunteer commitments with a vibrant personal life. Her passion for helping others was evident in her involvement with Clemson's scholarship programs, where she worked closely with Dick to create opportunities for future generations of students. Together, the McMahans left a legacy of generosity and vision that continues to shape Clemson's academic community.

Beyond their scholarship initiatives, the McMahans generously supported Clemson's School of Architecture and other academic programs. Dick served on the Clemson University Foundation board. In recognition of his lifetime achievements and dedication, Clemson awarded Dick an honorary Doctorate in Humanities in 2006. Clemson's President Emeritus James F. Barker, FIA, '70 remarked, "Dick and Dinky embodied the spirit of giving. They uplifted everyone around them—at Clemson and beyond."

### **A Lasting Tribute**

The bronze leaves dedicated to Bob and Weesie Fickling and Dick and Dinky McMahan symbolize far more than financial contributions; they represent a legacy of kindness, vision, thoughtful generosity and service.

The Ficklins and McMahans, as well as all other members of the Clemson Legacy Society and the Fort Hill Legacy Society, remind us that planned giving is a bridge to the future, one that empowers new generations of students and strengthens the Clemson Family. Their legacies continue to build opportunities, inspire faculty, and support programs that elevate our great University. We are deeply grateful for their vision and commitment, and for the example they set for future generations of Tigers.

### **Leaving a Legacy for Future Generations**

As we admire the beauty of fall, each leaf reminding us of life's cycles, we are inspired to think about what we will leave behind. Leaving a legacy is more than a personal milestone—it's a way to support and shape the future. For those committed to public service, education and research, creating a lasting impact for Clemson means investing in the dreams and opportunities of future students, faculty, and communities.

This season, as we reflect on growth and gratitude, let's celebrate the meaningful impact that planned gifts, endowments, and scholarships make in ensuring a bright future for all who will walk in our footsteps through our university's doors and onto the fields and courts of competition. Together, we're creating a legacy of excellence, access, and possibility for generations today, tomorrow and forever.

### **Time of Reflection**

Think of the vibrant leaves on a tree: in spring and summer, they burst forth, lush and green, taking in sunlight, feeding the tree, and creating a beautiful canopy. And their role doesn't end when they fall. As the leaves drop to the ground, they nourish and enhance the soil, providing essential nutrients for the roots to draw on. This process strengthens the tree, ensuring it can thrive and bloom anew for future generations to enjoy.

Leaving a legacy works in much the same way. When we give back—through time, resources, or knowledge—we're nurturing the foundation that will support and uplift others long after we're gone. Just as fallen leaves enrich the soil to nourish the tree's growth, our contributions can create a legacy that sustains, inspires, and strengthens the community, ensuring it flourishes for those who come after us.

How can we help you create a current and lasting legacy? We have many resources available to share with you as you consider what your personal landscape may be in the future. How can you provide nourishment for others who will come after you, just as the leaves protect and nourish the ground for future leaves. Please reach out to our team at [giving@clemson.edu](mailto:giving@clemson.edu) or visit our [website](#) for information about general estate planning, including our free [Estate Planning Guide](#) to help you navigate the decisions ahead of meeting with an attorney or financial advisor. I also enjoy hearing from you (864.656.0663) or [jovanna@clemson.edu](mailto:jovanna@clemson.edu)).

As I sit here on the side porch of Fort Hill and watch the beautiful leaves falling to the ground under bright sunlight and a soft breeze, I am reminded of the beauty and uniqueness of each of our lives. Let us do good – and be the good – in our world, now and forever.

Gratefully Yours and Forever Loyal,

JoVanna J. King

Senior Associate Vice President for Development