



Clemson Legacy Connection

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Greetings, Tigers!

As spring arrives in the Upstate, the world seems to come alive with color—dogwoods bloom, azaleas unfurl in a symphony of hues, and tulips and daffodils race to catch the eye on front lawns.

Amid this natural renewal, April also brings a more sobering ritual: tax season. It's a time when many reflect on their finances—what's been earned, what's been spent and where they're headed next.

That makes April the perfect time to talk about financial planning—and the perfect time to spotlight one of Clemson University's most dedicated educators in the field: Dr. John Alexander.

More Than a Professor

For over three decades, Dr. Alexander has been a cornerstone of Clemson's finance program. Known for his warm demeanor and genuine interest in student success, he has become a guiding light for thousands of Tigers learning to navigate the world of investments, portfolio management, and corporate finance.

Currently the Breazeale Endowed Professor of Investments, Dr. Alexander is

Clemson's longest-serving finance professor. To most of his students, he's simply "Professor Alexander"—the mentor who cares just as much about their personal growth as their financial acumen.

"Teaching has been a great joy in my life," he says. "One of the most rewarding parts has been seeing former students go on to become leaders in their fields—and sometimes even working alongside them."



That full-circle moment has come true for Dr. Alexander in his other, lesser-known role at Clemson: chief investment officer for the Clemson University Foundation (CUF). Several of his former students, including Matt Brennan and Jon Centurino, now sit alongside him on CUF's Investment Committee.

"Most students don't realize I have two careers," he laughs. "To them, I'm just the guy at the front of the classroom."

A Journey Rooted in Passion

Dr. Alexander's path began in Palm Beach County, Florida. After earning his BBA and MBA at Stetson University, he worked at General Electric while pursuing certification as a Financial Management Professional (FMP). His passion for finance and education led him to earn a Ph.D. at Florida State University—just as Clemson was launching its standalone finance discipline.

"I was looking for a place that felt right," he says. "Clemson wasn't too far from home—but not too close either," he adds with a smile.

The warm welcome he received on his interview helped seal the deal, even though it came just months after the infamous "punt-rooski" football play, when FSU's Deion Sanders dashed Clemson's hopes with a surprise touchdown.

Despite his FSU roots, Clemson saw something special in John. In 1990, he joined the faculty—and he hasn't looked back since.

Building a Legacy—On Campus and Beyond

"I'm the only person who's ever taught portfolio management at Clemson," John says. "That's something I'm incredibly proud of."

He emphasizes trust and integrity in his teaching—foundations he believes are essential in managing others' wealth. "If someone gives you their money, they're trusting you. That trust is everything."

It's a philosophy he's carried into his role as CIO of the Clemson University Foundation. Appointed to the role in the early 2000s after an introduction by John Walker '58, Dr. Alexander helped pioneer strategic investment models that dramatically improved the Foundation's financial performance.

"When I started, we had about \$225 million in the Foundation," he recalls. "Today, we've surpassed \$1 billion. It's been a privilege to help that growth happen, knowing those funds support scholarships and opportunities for generations of Clemson students."

The Foundation's performance has earned national accolades, consistently ranking in the top quartile or decile by independent evaluators like NACUBO and Cambridge Associates.

Giving Back in More Ways Than One



Despite global recognition — including a lifetime achievement award at the Sir Anthony Ritossa Global Family Office Investment Summit and appearances on CNBC Arabia — Dr. Alexander remains grounded in his Clemson roots.

And now, he's planning to leave a legacy that extends beyond the classroom and the

investment committee.

"I always tell my students: be good stewards of what you've been given," he says. "That's what portfolio management really is — stewardship."

Inspired by other Clemson philanthropists such as John Walker, Frank

Bishop, Frank Gentry and Doug Richardson, Dr. Alexander has established a planned gift to create a professorship in his name.

"I believe in walking the talk," he says. "If I'm encouraging others to give, I should be doing the same. My gift is an act of stewardship, a way to live out what I teach."

How Will You Make Your Mark?

Dr. Alexander's journey is a powerful reminder that one person's dedication can ripple across generations. Through teaching, investing and giving, he has helped shape Clemson into a stronger, more financially empowered institution.

So, as the flowers bloom and tax forms get filed, it's worth asking: How will you leave your mark?

A planned gift, like John's, is more than a financial decision — it is a legacy of purpose. It's a way to plant seeds today that will grow and nurture the lives of Clemson students into the future.

You don't have to be a professor or a philanthropist to make a difference. You just have to care — and be willing to act.

When you include Clemson in your estate plans, you are investing in future innovators, leaders and dreamers — students who will carry the Clemson spirit around the globe and make it better for everyone.

Please consider how your legacy can take root and grow where your heart has always been — with Clemson.

To learn more about how you can create a legacy through a planned gift, visit our [website](#) or contact the Office of Trusts, Estates & Gift Planning at giving@clemson.edu. I encourage you to review and download our free [Estate Planning Guide](#) to help you navigate important decisions before meeting with an attorney and financial advisers. Please feel free to contact me directly at jovanna@clemson.edu or 864-656-0663; I always love hearing from you!

Ever Loyal & Forever Grateful ~



JoVanna J. King
Senior Associate Vice President for Development
110 Daniel Drive
Clemson, SC 29631
864.656.0663 telephone
864.940.7983 mobile
jovanna@clemson.edu