

STERLING STEWARDS

The Texas A&M Foundation honors three couples with the 2019 Sterling C. Evans Medal award.



By Chrystal Houston.

The Texas A&M Foundation Board of Trustees has recognized three Houston couples as the 2019 recipients of its highest honor, the prestigious Sterling C. Evans Medal. Selected annually, Evans Medal recipients have a long history of supporting Texas A&M University through philanthropy, service and leadership. Honorees have supported scholarships, student development, faculty, athletic programs and academic innovation. They have also served on committees and boards that are instrumental in maintaining Texas A&M's place among the world's top public higher education institutions.



HONOREE:

Craig Brown '75
*Founder, Chairman and CEO of
Bray International Inc.*



HONOREE:

Sue Harris Smith
Community Volunteer and Leader

“WITH ITS CULTURE OF FRIENDLINESS AND SELFLESS SERVICE, ALONG WITH THE CORE VALUES AND EXCELLENT ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES, TEXAS A&M TRULY GIVES STUDENTS THE BEST WELL-ROUNDED COLLEGE EDUCATION ANY YOUNG PERSON COULD EXPERIENCE.”

—Craig Brown '75

Campus Benefactors:

Craig and Sue have been generous patrons of numerous Texas A&M campus building projects, such as the Memorial Student Center (MSC), Zachry Engineering Education Complex and the John D. White '70–Robert L. Walker '58 Music Activities Center. They have also supported all STEM colleges, especially engineering and business, but perhaps their greatest impact on Texas A&M has been through student scholarships.

The couple's flagship program is the Craig and Galen Brown Foundation, which awards competitive scholarships to well-rounded, high-achieving students—primarily STEM and business majors—recognized as National Merit Finalists. During the past 28 years, the couple has personally recruited and provided scholarships to more than 400 Aggies through the Brown Scholarship Program, attracting the nation's top talent to Texas A&M. Brown Scholars include more than 40 doctors and veterinarians, 300 engineers (including more than 40 chosen as Outstanding Senior Engineers), Corps Commander and Corps Staff Officers, Student Government and MSC Presidents, Rhodes and Goldwater Scholars, and University Scholars. Brown Scholarships supplement any other academic awards students receive to provide fully-funded college scholarships. This fall, more than 140 Brown Scholars will enroll at Texas A&M.

Gifts of Time and Talents:

Craig and Sue are highly involved in recruiting Brown Scholars to Texas A&M and sharing why Aggieland is such a special place. “There are a lot of great universities in the United States, but Texas A&M's ability to combine stellar academics with a focus on developing students' people skills is unique from other institutions,” said Craig, who holds both a bachelor's degree in engineering and an MBA in accounting from

Texas A&M. In large part due to the Brown Scholarships, Texas A&M ranks No. 1 in Texas for National Merit Scholar enrollment, No. 3 among public U.S. universities and No. 7 nationally. Additionally, the Craig and Galen Brown Engineering Honors Program at Texas A&M has ranked first nationally in the number of National Merit Scholars enrolled in its freshman class the last three years and now has more than 1,800 engineering honors students enrolled. In addition to the Brown Scholar Program, Craig has given his time serving with the Engineering Advisory Council, the Engineering Honors Executive Committee and the Corps of Cadets Board of Visitors.

Heart for Healing:

Sue is involved in recruiting and interviewing Brown Scholar applicants in STEM fields, especially for Texas A&M's new EnMed program, due to her interest in medicine. She is a founding member of the Translational Research Initiative at the Houston Methodist Research Institute as well as a member of the President's Leadership Council of Houston Methodist and the Houston Methodist Capital Campaign Steering Committee. A graduate of The University of Texas at Austin and the University of Houston Law School, Sue is past president and a member of the Board of Directors of Bo's Place, a nonprofit that helps families dealing with grief. She also serves on the Board of Trustees of KIPP and holds an executive office on the Board of Directors of Brighter Bites, a nonprofit that delivers fresh food and nutrition education in school settings to disadvantaged families.

A Strong Foundation:

Craig credits much of his success to his parents, Galen and Virginia. “They were inspirational and great role models for me,” he said. He took the work ethic and life lessons learned from his parents, paired them with his education—Craig was chosen as Outstand-

ing Senior Engineer at Texas A&M—and turned them into a successful entrepreneurial career. After working a few years as a financial analyst at Exxon and U.S. president of Keystone International, Craig co-founded Bray International, a rotary valve and actuator manufacturer. Thirty-three years later, under his leadership, Bray has grown to be the largest global manufacturer of these products. It is a conglomerate of 80 companies and 3,000 employees located in more than 50 countries worldwide.

Howdy and Selfless Service:

Craig believes that traditions like “Howdy” make Texas A&M special. “It's a simple tradition, but first impressions are important,” he said, noting that the Aggie tradition of a friendly greeting and smile is invaluable in both the business world and everyday life. Membership in the Corps of Cadets was similarly formative. “The Corps emphasized that you're only as good as the weakest link on your team, and everyone must strive to be the best team member for the team's success,” he said. The important life and leadership insights acquired at Texas A&M led him to great success in life. “Most importantly, through Texas A&M, my family and my wife, Sue, I have learned that the greatest gift one can give themselves is to give to others through selfless service. Life is not what you take with you; it's what you leave behind that counts.”

At the 25th anniversary of the Brown Foundation, Craig's impact was best summed up by Andy Sanchez '13, a former Brown Scholar and Rhodes Scholar finalist. “I believe the most appropriate expression is ‘life-giving,’” he said. “It was amazing to see so many people express how thankful they were for their time at Texas A&M and for Craig's generosity in enabling their journeys.”



Former Brown Scholar Clare Elizondo '18 created the Brown Mentorship Program to pair incoming freshmen with a sophomore or junior mentor to build a sense of community among Brown Scholars. "I think our community develops us into who we become," she said. "Texas A&M shaped Mr. Brown into the successful businessman and exceptional person he is today, and he uses those qualities to positively impact the next generation of Aggies in immeasurable ways."