

SWOSU Receives Largest-Ever Gift from Dobsons

01.30.2008

Everett (center) and Jeanetta Dobson of Oklahoma City have donated \$1 million to fund four endowed chairs for the Southwestern Oklahoma State University School of Business in Weatherford. Accepting for SWOSU are (left) President John Hays and (right) SWOSU Vice President for Institutional Advancement Jim Waites. Pictured in the background is Everett's grandfather, Doc Dobson, who was founder of Dobson Telephone Company.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford has received its largest-ever monetary gift.

Everett and Jeanetta Dobson of Oklahoma City have donated \$1 million to fund four endowed chairs for the SWOSU School of Business. The funds will be used to recruit professors for the School of Business as SWOSU strives for accreditation in the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

The Dobsons challenged SWOSU Foundation trustees to match the donation. The original \$1 million donation plus the additional matching funds total \$2.1 million, and with the Oklahoma State Regents Endowed Chair program matching the funds, the total value is \$4.2 million. The endowed chair program in Oklahoma was established to enhance the quality of higher education by providing state funds as a match for private donations for endowed chairs, distinguished professorships, visiting professorships, artists-in-residence, and lectureships.

"This exceptional gift—along with the matching funds it has and will generate—is truly appreciated," SWOSU President John Hays said. "It is the students who are the ultimate beneficiaries of this most generous gift."

"It is my honor to give back to the college that gave me so much," Dobson said. "We want to make SWOSU's Business College a leading choice for students to earn a business degree for years to come."

In 2000, Dobson became the youngest benefactor among Oklahoma's endowed chair programs at universities when he established SWOSU's first endowed chair (\$250,000) with the SWOSU Foundation to benefit the SWOSU School of Business, now known as the Everett Dobson School of Business & Technology.

Dobson, a graduate of Cheyenne High School, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from SWOSU. He has been very involved in the support of his alma mater serving on the SWOSU Foundation Board of Directors since 1991. He currently is the second vice chair of the Foundation's Board of Directors and chairs the Foundation's Investment Committee.

Dobson was a four-year golf letterman at SWOSU and was a three-time all-conference selection. He was inducted into SWOSU's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1996 and the SWOSU Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame in 2000.

Dobson is the founder and former chairman of Dobson Communications Corporation, which was recently acquired by AT & T. During his tenure at Dobson Communications, Dobson established the PRIDE Scholarship Fund (Promoting Individual Development and Education), providing scholarships to graduating high school seniors living in the Dobson Communications' service areas.

Dobson has also served on the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum Board of Directors since 2000.

The Dobsons have three daughters—Amy, Dana and Haley.

Jim Waites, vice president for institutional advancement at SWOSU, said the Dobson gift has brought excitement to the SWOSU Foundation.

“Everett’s gift is a tremendous boost to our Foundation,” Waites said. “We can’t thank Everett enough for this most generous gift.”

The SWOSU Foundation, combined with the SWOSU College of Pharmacy Foundation, now has assets of over \$20 million.

“Private support of colleges and universities has become even more critical in Oklahoma as the state’s support has not been able to keep pace with the rising costs of a quality educational experience,” Hays said. “We thank Everett for his continuous leadership for SWOSU.”