

Authentic Journalism Scholarship Established at SWOSU

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford has announced the establishment of The Jack B. Shelton & Walter Crouch Memorial Scholarship for the Pursuit of Authentic Journalism.

The scholarship fund with the SWOSU Foundation will provide financial support to SWOSU junior and senior-level students studying communication arts with a mass communications emphasis.

The Memorial Scholarship Fund has been created and funded by the Shelton family to honor the contributions of these two men to SWOSU and its students and to encourage and support young journalists.

Walter Crouch and Jack Shelton became good friends and colleagues during the time they worked together at Southwestern State College (now SWOSU). Crouch was a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and taught in several Arkansas and Oklahoma public schools before accepting a position at SWSC as registrar and settling his family in Weatherford. His tenure on the campus stretched from 1939 to 1967 during which time he taught and inspired hundreds of students, led efforts in placement and student affairs, and served as an instructor in the business department. He was the director of public relations at the college for 27 years when he retired and remained active as a journalist and civic leader for many years thereafter.

Shelton had been a newspaperman from before his 1951 graduation at the University of Central Arkansas. With a degree in journalism, he began his career at newspapers in Eldorado and Texarkana (AR) and Clinton (OK). Then in 1960, Shelton, his wife and two young daughters moved to the small town of McLean (TX) and he fulfilled a life-long dream...to own and publish his own newspaper. Within three years, the Sheltons were publishing three weekly newspapers in the Texas panhandle.

When Crouch announced his upcoming retirement, SWSC President Al Harris asked Shelton to make the move to Weatherford. Shelton accepted a position of public information director and during the next year, Crouch mentored Shelton for the PR position. Until his retirement in 1981, Shelton oversaw all aspects of the university's external communication and marketing strategy and shaped public perception of "the Hill" for a generation. He was also instrumental in publication of *The Southwestern* student newspaper and of *Echoes From The Hill*, the university's beloved magazine for alumni and friends.

"Here at SWOSU, we are a family, and we are so very honored that the loved ones of a beloved colleague who gave so much to this institution have chosen this special way to honor his memory and that of his mentor," said SWOSU President Dr. Randy L. Beutler.

"The legacies of people like Jack Shelton and Walter Crouch live on in the generosity of private investors like the Shelton Family and in the good work our students are able to pursue, thanks to such philanthropy."

Both Crouch and Shelton are now deceased; Crouch in 1985 and Shelton in 2015. Shelton's widow, Margaret, now resides in Oakland, (MD); daughter, Becky West (SWOSU Class of 1976) and husband Bill have retired at Lake Eufaula (OK); daughter Susan Smith lives in Oakland (MD); and son, Jack "Barney" Shelton (SWOSU Class of 1988) and his wife Wanda reside in Ham Lake (MN).

Crouch's widow, Opal, died in 1988. The couple raised three children: a daughter, Wahnita "Nita" Boozer (SWOSU Class of 1956) lives in Arlington (TX). Their daughter Mary Beth Bell Lantz and son Walter Crouch, Jr. are both now deceased.

Contributions to the fund may be made by visiting www.GivetoSWOSU.com and designating gifts for "Shelton-Crouch Memorial." Contributions may also be made payable to SWOSU Foundation with "Shelton-Crouch Memorial" in the memorandum and mailed to: SWOSU Foundation, Burton House, 100 Campus Drive, Weatherford, OK 73096

The SWOSU Foundation was established in 1977 to promote philanthropy and distribute funds to support the activities and programs of SWOSU. Located on the Weatherford campus in the historic Burton House, the Foundation currently stewards over \$22 million in assets for the benefit of SWOSU. For more information, please call 580-774-3267 or visit www.SWOSUFoundation.com.