



Jesse Luxton

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Park twins receive Luxton Scholarship

Texas State Alum Counts His Blessings

Jesse Luxton counts two revelatory moments that have altered the course of his life: the day in 1997 when a dear friend died while jogging, and the one in the mid-1960s when the Distinguished Alumni Award recipient was nearly kicked out of Texas State.

On the latter occasion, a Texas State administrator, Dean of Men Dr. Floyd Martine, decided to give Luxton a second chance, permitting him to stay in school — and, Luxton says seriously, saving his life.

He didn’t waste the opportunity. He went on to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in business administration in 1968, and to serve as president and CEO of a multimillion-dollar, publicly traded company in Mississippi employing more than 600 people.

Today, Luxton — building on the second revelation, when his friend died suddenly — is giving others the same chance he was offered.

Luxton recalls a ticker tape of thoughts that passed through his mind after he learned of his friend’s untimely death, all prompting him to action. “It’s time for you to go home to Texas,” Luxton remembers thinking. “It’s time for you to count your blessings. It’s time for you to start paying back for how lucky and for how fortunate you’ve been.”

Together with his wife, the former Betty Anne Smith of Killeen, a 1965 Texas State graduate, Luxton is doing just that. He serves on the McCoy College of Business Administration’s Advisory Board and its Development Foundation Board in addition to funding scholarships for students from his hometown of Leakey (three currently attend Texas State) and other undergraduates in the McCoy College.

After attending a college event where students met their scholarship donors, Luxton was motivated to become even more involved. He approached Dr. Denise Smart, dean of McCoy College, about his idea to help business students in need of financial assistance. Two Texas State seniors, Edward and Eric Park, were the first McCoy College students to receive a Luxton Scholarship in 2011 to help them continue their studies in management.

Edward Park said he received notice of the award via e-mail. “I was a little wary about it but at the same time a little excited,” he says, explaining he wasn’t at first sure the offer was legitimate. He says the scholarship and others like it are vital to the twin brothers’ continued academic pursuits. “No matter what dollar amount, what range it is, I believe that any amount can help any student toward improving his or her education,” he says.

In addition to the scholarships, the Luxtons have a charitable remainder trust designated to Texas State that will provide a major gift to the university in future years.

The bequest is in keeping with the Luxtons’ other giving, aimed at those in financial need. Moreover, the criteria for the receipt of any Luxton-funded scholarships do not include a requirement that students earn straight As, but rather that they exhibit a combination of service, strong test scores and a willingness to complete what Luxton acknowledges is a deliberately rigorous application process.

The Beta Gamma Sigma Chapter honoree says the role of benefactor — one he wouldn’t have dreamed he’d take on when he was a lackluster student from a disadvantaged background — is about improving not only the minds of the students who receive awards, but improving Texas State and, by extension, America.

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