



## C. Patrick Oles

McCoy Professor of Excellence;  
president and CEO of Barshop & Oles Company

Bringing business leaders into the classroom  
to inspire tomorrow's entrepreneurs

By Rodney Crouther

It would be hard to overstate how much Pat Oles, McCoy Professor of Excellence, has meant to the McCoy College of Business.

Each Tuesday morning of the fall and spring semesters for the past eight years, he has led the entrepreneurial studies class taught by Dr. James Bell at McCoy. The class invites entrepreneurs to share ideas, insights and business lessons with students.

“Our charge to all of our guest speakers is ‘tell your story.’ Try and convey to these young students what is involved in building, growing and developing a business,” says Oles, president and CEO of Barshop & Oles Company. “I have to tell you, Tuesdays are my best days every week.”

The range of speakers is broad, from young innovators still working to launch their ideas, to business titans, like San Antonio Spurs owner Peter Holt and Brian McCoy and Meagan McCoy Jones, of McCoy’s Building Supply.

“We also put a lot of emphasis on bringing back Bobcats, bringing back Texas State grads,” he says. “Of course they have that special relationship to

the students, since they were in those same seats not long ago.”

His own story began in fall 1978. As Oles was preparing to leave Austin for an investment job in New York City, he got an unexpected offer to join the staff of newly elected Texas Gov. William Clements.

He passed up the promising Wall Street opportunity, but Oles says he learned more about business from the governor than he thinks he would have learned in New York.

“In fact, he was a better businessman than he was a politician,” Oles said. “I had the great opportunity to travel the state with him and meet some really great people ... in business and politics, government and academia.”

One of the people he met was Sam Barshop, San Antonio businessman and founder of La Quinta Inns. Barshop encouraged his young friend to try a career in real estate, leading Oles to start his first company.

In 1983, they merged their companies and went on to develop, own and/or manage more than 5 million square feet of shopping centers, industrial and office properties and master planned projects in Texas,

including the highly acclaimed Central Park in Austin and Northwoods in San Antonio.

“He was truly a great man. Very interested in higher education, very generous with his time and his treasure, a great philanthropist,” Oles says of his late friend, partner and mentor.

It was Barshop, along with Dr. James Bell, who created the entrepreneurial studies class 18 years ago at the behest of University President Jerome Supple and former business college dean Dr. Paul Gowens. The first class had only 10 students. Today, it has grown to almost 200 each semester, while entrepreneurial studies has grown from a single class into its own concentration.

Bell points out that while Barshop was an instructor for the first decade, Oles has always been a vital part of the class. As he retired, Barshop personally tapped his partner to take charge.

“He and Sam Barshop were the ‘bookends’ (with Mr. B always speaking first, followed by all the other speakers, and Pat was always last — giving meaning to Barshop & Oles Company,” Bell says.

More than that, Oles is unfailingly generous in his support of McCoy College and the university. He and his wife, Julie, are benefactors of the college, and Oles serves on the McCoy College Development Foundation. He also enjoys participating in events such as the Honors Math Camp and most recently the Matt and Jodi Edgar Texas State Undergraduate Business Plan Competition.

Oles says he’s been privileged to have the support of everyone within McCoy College and throughout Texas State University.

“We’ve had great support from President Trauth and Dean Smart. That means the world to us,” Oles says. “We know they really care about the entrepreneurial studies program, and they’ve given us resources and the support we need for the program to continue to grow.”