The University of Texas at Dallas recently opened the Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center, a 30,246-square-foot facility in the heart of campus designed to deepen bonds between students and graduates. Alumni, industry partners and friends joined the campus community for a series of events marking the occasion.

“This center, by design, is meant to welcome alumni home and to connect them with our bright, dynamic students — our future alumni,” Dr. Richard C. Benson, UT Dallas president, said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony recognizing the efforts of the many individuals who were instrumental in the development of the alumni center.

Named for Nancy Gundy Davidson BS’80 and Charles “Chuck” Davidson MS’80, in acknowledgement of their $15 million gift that made its construction possible, the center offers the University’s more than 100,000 alumni a place where they can connect with one another and the campus.

Dr. David Daniel, UT System deputy chancellor and former president of the University, also spoke at the ceremony, recalling conversations with the Davidsons in which they first imagined an alumni center for the University and deliberated over the facility’s physical location.

“To me, this is a deeply inspirational building and a place where people come together,” Daniel said. “So much life-changing activity will take place at this facility.”

Through their sustained support, the Davidsons, longtime supporters of the University and the Naveen Jindal School of Management, have made the creation of a number of endowed chairs and scholarships possible, and the Davidson Management Honors Program is named in their honor. Both served as members of the Realize the Vision Campaign Council, and Chuck Davidson is a member of the Development Board. Additionally, the two were recognized as School of Management Distinguished Alumni in 2002 and UT Dallas Distinguished Alumnus in 2008.

“The idea of bringing an alumni center to UT Dallas was something that really resonated with Nancy and me,” Davidson said. “This beautiful building is going to serve our students, our faculty, our staff and our alumni for decades to come.”

As the first campus facility solely designated for special use, the building is designed to accommodate rentals for meetings, conferences, weddings and other events.

“To me, this is a deeply inspirational building and a place where people come together,” Daniel said. “So much life-changing activity will take place at this facility.”

Dr. Kyle Edgington PhD’13, vice president for development and alumni relations. "In addition to making such a facility feasible, the Davidsons’ generosity served as a model and inspiration for others.”

To date, 12 gifts from alumni, industry partners and supporters have resulted in named spaces within the center. Texas Instruments Inspiration Hall, the center’s main thoroughfare connecting interior event spaces with outdoor areas, gardens and surrounding terraces, is a result of a contribution from the longtime corporate partner.

“Texas Instruments has a rich history of engagement with UT Dallas,” said Dr. Peter Balyta MBA’03, president of education technology and vice president of academic engagement and corporate citizenship at Texas Instruments. “More than 900 of our employees are UT Dallas graduates, so it makes sense to ensure our alumni continue connecting with today’s students and our future workforce.”

Alumna Ann Graves BA’83 made a gift through her family foundation to name the Ann and Jack Graves Ballroom on the building’s first level. The 5,785-square-foot ballroom can accommodate 400 to 800 people for banquets, lectures, meetings and other special events.

Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01, Graves’ son and fellow UT Dallas graduate, also made a gift that resulted in the Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01, Graves’ son and fellow UT Dallas graduate, also made a gift that resulted in the Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01, Graves’ son and fellow UT Dallas graduate, also made a gift that resulted in the Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01, Graves’ son and fellow UT Dallas graduate, also made a gift that resulted in the Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01, Graves’ son and fellow UT Dallas graduate, also made a gift that resulted in the Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01, Graves’ son and fellow UT Dallas graduate, also made a gift that resulted in the Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01, Graves’ son and fellow UT Dallas graduate, also made a gift that resulted in

Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center Opens on Campus

Generous gifts from alumni and friends have resulted in the naming of various spaces within the center. Those donors include:

Nancy Gundy Davidson BS’80 and Charles “Chuck” Davidson MS’80
Ann and Jack Graves Charitable Foundation
Texas Instruments
Mike Redeker MBA’97, MA’01
The Inge Foundation
Jane Yates BA’78
Tracey and Steve W. Capie BA’89
Joyce K. Johnson BS’83
Nicole L. Tucker BA’04
Ellaine and Jim Perry MBA’88, MS’88
UT Dallas Athletics Alumni
UT Dallas Student Ambassadors Alumni

Continued
The Yates Family Conference Room was announced at the dinner. Her gift to name The Yates Family Conference Room on the second level was “very, very thoughtful and meaningful for me,” Yates said. “I am very, very thankful for UT Dallas. As such, it is my plan to give back to the University that has given so much to me.”

Yates said she was pleased to be able to make a gift to the institution “to support the facility.”

“In the months and years ahead, activities at the Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center will engage current students and strengthen ties to the University’s growing alumni base. As envisioned by the Davidsons, this center will be a gateway to the future. It will be the front door for alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends, and it will serve as an epicenter for establishing more permanent ties with one another and the University,” Edgington said. “In essence, it will strengthen the entire Comet community.”

Learn more at davidson-gundy.utdallas.edu.

Leadership Message

I am pleased to introduce the reimagined Momentum. During the Weston the vision campaign years, this publication provided regular progress updates from the Office of Development and Alumni Relations. Today, philanthropic and voluntary giving continue to enhance the Comet community in tremendous ways, and this publication will again highlight stories of generosity and impact made possible by ever-growing support from alumni, friends and industry partners.

In September, I welcomed a crowd gathered for the Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center ribbon-cutting celebration and referenced remarks made in 1964 by then-Texas Gov. John Connally. While speaking at the Founders Building dedication — the very first on UT Dallas’ campus — Connally predicted that in the future “we will honor the day that the seed for this institution was planted by people who recognize the true destiny of Texas.” Indeed, that vision continues to resonate, and it is a privilege to celebrate a new generation of loyal supporters inspired to propel the University into the next half-century.

Continued from cover story
Alumnus Named UT Dallas Development Board Chair

Mike Brodie BS’76 was appointed chair of the UT Dallas Development Board at the annual fall board meeting on Sept. 7. As chair, Brodie will lead a group of business and civic leaders, working to advance the efforts of the University in the community.

“As a graduate and neighbor of UT Dallas, the University has influenced my life for a number of years,” said Brodie, broker/co-owner of Keller Williams Realty and 2017 Distinguished Alumnus. “Now, it is time for me to give back to the University that did so much for me.”

An industry leader for more than 40 years, Brodie and his partners operate the Plano office of Keller Williams Realty. Since inception, he has served as broker/owner, expanding his sales to include operating the the Natural Science and Engineering Research Laboratory (NSERL) at UT Dallas and a $50 million allocation from the Texas Enterprise Fund to support research programs within the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science.

In addition to serving as board chair during the University’s first comprehensive campaign, Brodie was a member of the leadership council for We Balance the Vision: The Campaign for Tier One and Beyond.

Phil Ritter (center right), past Development Board chair, was named to his current role by the Texas Enterprise Fund to support research programs within the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science.

“During my affiliation with UT Dallas, I have witnessed a great evolution across campus,” Ritter said. “With tremendous growth, innovative research and exceptional students, it has been a privilege for me to advocate for this institution.”

Ritter joined the Development Board in 2008. During his tenure as chair, he was instrumental in many University initiatives, notably Project Ernest — one of the most significant economic development projects supported by the state of Texas. The project resulted in the building of the National Science and Engineering Research Laboratory (NSERL) at UT Dallas.

“We stand at the cusp of revolution in the treatment of neurological injury and disease,” Rennaker said. “TPT has the potential to not only recover motor and sensory function, but could be used to treat learning disabilities such as autism and memory loss associated with aging and other cognitive deficits. With the gift from the Caruth Foundation, we can now fully explore the potential of TPT to radically enhance recovery from neurological injuries.”

The system incorporates the Nebraska therapy for brain injuries, neurological disorders

North Texas Giving Day Garners Support for UT Dallas

Dr. Stacey Boland BS’00 and Dr. Justin Boland BS’00 originally met as undergraduates at UT Dallas, first connecting over heated physics discussions. That initial spark eventually turned into love. The couple — now married seventeen-years — share many things, including professional aspirations, a 13-year-old son and an appreciation of their time at the University.

“Our education has served us well, and giving back is how we acknowledge the importance of UT-Dallas in our lives,” Boland said.

Today, both Justin and Stacey work at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California. Justin is an advanced instrument scientist in the Planetary Science and Science Applications Group. He is also working to design a camera for the Mars 2020 rover as part of the NASA instrument suite. Stacey serves as a project systems engineer at JPL. She recently worked with the ISS-RapidFire project.

“We learn to develop and operate a radar attached to the Columbus module of the International Space Station, which provides data on ocean wind speed and direction to various weather forecasting models from 2014 to 2016,” she said. “I’m a member of the steering committee overseeing the National Academies’ next Earth science decadal survey, scheduled for release later this year, which will guide Earth system science and application priorities at NASA, NOAA and USGS for the next 10 years.”

Yet no matter how far the Boland family roams, they remain connected to UT Dallas, keeping in touch with their “adopted physics family” — the University\’s educational and application priorities at NASA, NOAA and USGS for the next 10 years. Our nervous systems control everything we think, do, feel and remember. But a single interruption to our annual gifts to UT Dallas, it reminds us of our time there, which always brings our annual gifts to UT Dallas, it reminds us of our time there, which always brings our annual gifts to UT Dallas, it reminds us of our time there, which always brings our annual gifts to UT Dallas, it reminds us of our time there, which always brings our annual gifts to UT Dallas, it reminds us of our time there, which always brings our annual gifts to UT Dallas, it reminds us of our time there, which always brings
Brain Performance Institute – First of Its Kind Opened in October

Since 2013, the Brain Performance Institute has given tens of thousands of people of all ages the opportunity to take charge of their brains. A part of the UT Dallas Center for BrainHealth, the institute celebrated the public opening of its new, state-of-the-art building on Oct. 12. Designed to represent the human frontal lobe, the 62,000-square-foot facility is directly adjacent to the Center for BrainHealth’s campus, funded by private philanthropy, it is the first institute of its kind serving as a destination for individuals seeking to improve their brain health and enhance their brain performance.

“What sets us apart from all other brain institutions is the approach we are taking,” explained Dr. Leanne Young, Brain Performance Institute executive director. “We are focused on how to make your brain stronger whenever you use it. Every day, we are opening eyes about what the brain can really do and empowering people to get the most out of their brains.”

Guests took part in a “vernissaged ribbon-cutting” — a simulated, lighted brain synapse — signaling the official opening of the Brain Performance Institute from left, Dr. Ian Robertson, co-director of the Global Brain Health Institute and T. Boone Pickens Distinquished Scientist at Center for BrainHealth; Debbie Francis, Center for BrainHealth advisory board chair; former first lady Laura Bush; veteran and former Dallas Cowboys player Chad Heritage; UT Dallas President Richard C. Benson; UT Dallas President Richard C. Benson; Geoffrey Martin, aide of UT System Chancellor William H. McRaven; Dr. Sandra Bond Chapman, Center for BrainHealth founder and chief director; Dr. Leanne Young PhD’16, executive director of the Brain Performance Institute; and former Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert.

The 62,000-square-foot building and program center, located at Mockingbird Lane and Harry Hines Boulevard in Dallas, will offer scientifically based programs to increase brain performance and health.

The annual Blondes vs. Brunettes event in Dallas raised more than $3.4 million for research in North Texas.

The Center for BrainHealth launched a capital campaign to raise the funds for the building through private philanthropy.

For more information, visit BrainPerformanceInstitute.com.

In August, 152 women met on the field for the 10th annual Blondes vs. Brunettes Dallas event. The flag football game that raises money for Alzheimer’s disease research and awareness. Each participant raised a minimum of $1,250 to earn a spot on the gridiron, and the event raised more than $3.4 million for research in North Texas.

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Inaugural Giving Day Raises Nearly $200,000

On April 4, UT Dallas alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends contributed $199,143 to students and initiatives across campus during the University’s inaugural Comets Giving Day, an 18-hour online fundraising drive.

“Beyond the opportunity to raise funds for the University, this initiative connected the entire UT Dallas community through a common goal of supporting schools, centers, scholarships, athletics and other programs,” said Dr. Kyle Edgington PhD’13, vice president for development and alumni relations at UT Dallas.

Dollars raised were tracked, leaderboard-style, on the University’s giving day website, and the campaign included matching opportunities along with school and staff contests to increase the impact of contributions. Donors were also able to unlock bonus funds by meeting challenges sponsored by various supporters, and some gifts even qualified for additional matching funds.

Carter Pate MS’03, retired chief executive officer of MV Transportation in Dallas, and his wife, Angela, committed to a challenge gift that is helping to establish the first accounting scholarship in the Naveen Jindal School of Management.

“Alumni giving is important to the rankings — even if it’s $20 a month or whatever you can afford,” said Pate, a 2015 Distinguished Alumnus.

Comets Giving Day will occur annually on the first Tuesday in April, with the 2018 event planned for April 3. There are several ways to be part of the day in person, as well as online. Giving stations throughout campus will provide opportunities to make gifts, thank donors and spread the word on social media.

Interested participants can also contribute to the campaign beyond donations by signing up to serve as an ambassador to spread the word and encourage giving.

Learn more at utdallas.edu/cometsgive.