



The late Louis Rochester, left, his wife Lois (background), the late Governor Preston Smith, center, Bessie Lou and the late Gus Doelling visited on April 15, 2002 at the Leaders of Distinction Reception which honored state legislators and others who helped establish UTPB.

The passing of Odessa icon Louis Rochester on July 21, 2010 (his 92nd birthday) brought to an end the selfless contributions he made to The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (UTPB). With his wife Lois, he was passionate about higher education.

Although Louis was not fortunate enough to finish college, he provided scholarships for a number of students to complete their degrees at four institutions, including UTPB. In an effort to create a ripple effect, he established one of the University's first endowed faculty positions – a professorship – The Mr. and Mrs. Louis Rochester Professor in Music to honor his wife, in 1981. Several years later, he funded The Mr. and Mrs. Louis Rochester Endowed Scholarship in Business at UTPB. Eight business students have received over \$8,092 in scholarships since 2001.

Pam Price, who recently retired from the University, held the fine arts endowed position for more than 10 years. She looked upon Louis Rochester as an advisor and benefactor. "The endowed position benefited me as well as my students, because I was able to pass on things that I became aware of through his generosity."

Although Louis Rochester was born in Alabama, he and his father arrived in Odessa in 1929 and he entered the sixth grade there. Except for a couple of years in Sherman studying at Austin College, he spent the rest of his life making contributions to his adopted hometown.

Rochester made his fortune as a land developer and was a pioneer in the mini-warehouse industry, where he once owned over 200 facilities in 21 states. He also built numerous commercial centers, and where he saw a need for financing, he opened banks. If he needed

supplies, he created convenience stores such as the Colonial Food chain.

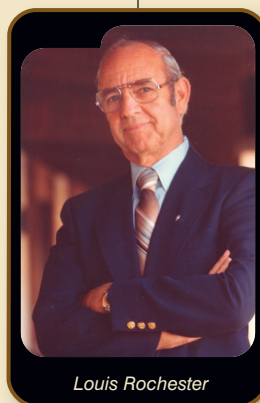
During the late '60s, he was involved with the site selection for UTPB, and in 1987, gave a major gift for the construction of the UTPB Center for Energy and Economic Diversification (CEED) near the Midland/Odessa airport on FM 1788. Acknowledging Rochester's commitment to the education provided at UTPB, board members of Grow Odessa (formerly the Odessa Industrial Development Corporation (OIDC)) presented a check for \$25,000 in April of 2010 to President David Watts to augment funds in the Rochesters' business scholarship.

When asked about why he believed in higher education, Rochester said, "It behooves everyone to learn as much as possible about the subject that interests them, and you do that by going to college."

In addition to supporting UTPB, Louis Rochester was a great benefactor elsewhere. He was a charter member of the OIDC and gave the corporation his option on the first

tract of 400 acres on I-20. He and Lois donated the land for Odessa's Memorial Park, and he was instrumental in getting the Rotary Memorial Walk installed there. As a member of the Odessa Downtown Rotary Club with 64 years of perfect attendance, Rochester served in numerous Rotary offices including Governor of District 5730 and founder of Rotary's RYLA Foundation for Youth. Professionally, he was president of the Odessa Board of Realtors and vice president of District 4 of the Texas Real Estate Board.

Because of his commitment to and investment in UTPB, Louis Rochester improved and enriched the lives of thousands.



Louis Rochester