



Caroline and Nelson Puett

For Caroline and Nelson Puett, supporting The University of Texas System begins with the close bonds of friends and family. Caroline comes from a long line of leaders in Texas education, and Nelson Puett is the great-great-grandson of Thomas Moore Harwood, the longest-serving original member of The UT System Board of Regents. With family literally chiseled in the cornerstone of Old Main, and the football exploits of Nelson's father and grandfather proudly displayed on The University of Texas at Austin campus, Nelson and Caroline are the inheritors of a rich tradition. And now, with a daughter, niece, and two nephews in college, Nelson and Caroline Puett have taken a hand in the promising future of the UT System.

"I think it's important, for parents who have the wherewithal, to support the schools their children go to," Nelson says by way of explaining his support of UT Austin. But with the Puett Foundation's decades-long history of sending high school seniors to college, the Puett family notion of giving back extends beyond a single institution. "My father thought college made for better citizens, better taxpayers — better communities. He was always a big believer in higher education for the improvement of our society."

Such benevolence is a Puett family value. They have created the *Nelson Puett Foundation Chancellor's Excellence Endowment*, and spread the infectious spirit of giving to their own children and friends. In turn, they have seen firsthand the good the UT System can do. When a close friend needed a lung transplant, the Puetts were deeply grateful and

impressed with the advances in transplanting donor organs at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. "It was nothing short of a miracle to see our friend's condition improve so dramatically," Caroline says. And when Caroline's father was treated at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, the Puetts marveled at the compassion shown by the staff and the individualized treatments the doctors implemented.

Proudly displaying the football pocket watch fob given to Nelson by his grandfather — one of twelve bestowed to the UT football team of 1911 — there is no question that the Puett bond to UT is strong and abiding. But while their roots run deep, the Puetts remain exceptionally humble about their contributions to the UT System. "It's a pleasure and honor to support UT, but I just do it with treasure," says Nelson.

Not surprisingly, the Puetts involvement belies the idea that they only contribute monetarily. Indeed, Nelson Puett relates an epiphany from a few years back: life is too short to find excuses not to participate. It's an attitude that applies not only to friendships and family time, but regular participation as a member of the Chancellor's Council Executive Committee. "My favorite saying now is, 'Don't invite me to something thinking I'm going to turn it down.' I'm coming," Nelson says, laughing heartily. Whether it's a special Chancellor's Council forum at UT M. D. Anderson or watching their daughter Callie cheering at a UT football game, the Puetts will be there to lend their support.