

The University of Texas at San Antonio



ENDOWMENT PROFILE

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Jack and Laura Richmond Celebrate Jack London with Gift



Laura and Jack Richmond

THE INTERSECTION OF businessman Jack Richmond's life with that of Jack London, one of the most popular 20th century American authors, began early and has lasted for decades.

Smitten by London's sparse, vivid and naturalistic prose, Richmond has been an admirer of Jack London's work for most of his life. A visit to Richmond's corporate office on San Antonio's North Side reveals the extent of his appreciation for the iconic writer. Wall-length, nearly floor-to-ceiling bookcases contain dozens of aging, but beautiful, leather-bound copies of London's books. Maps of South Pacific islands and the frigid far Pacific Northwest regions of Canada and Alaska, where many of his nature stories are set, adorn the walls.

Richmond's admiration of London's writing is also deeply personal. Like London, Richmond grew up in a single-parent home: his father abandoned the struggling family when Richmond was four-years old. Growing up in the Texas Panhandle during the Great Depression, Richmond could also relate to the "abysmal poverty" London grew up in.

Richmond, who operates 32 Pizza Hut restaurants, will now honor London in a way that also stands to benefit UTSA English professor Jeanne Reesman and her students. Richmond

considers Reesman the preeminent London scholar in the United States. So he and his wife, Laura, have donated \$100,000 for an endowment. The gift, says Richmond, will allow Reesman to continue her "outstanding success in bringing Jack London's literary and personal story to greater prominence." The gift is invested with The University of Texas Investment Management Company in the UT System Long Term Fund.

Specifically, the endowment to the UTSA College of Liberal and Fine Arts will support Reesman's research on the author of *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang* and *The Sea-Wolf*. These are stories of nature versus man and man versus man, set in the large and oftentimes unforgiving world—from the Canadian Klondike gold rush to the South Pacific at the turn of the 20th century. In addition to research, Reesman also plans to use the donation to help underwrite a film festival and dramatic readings of London's work, as well as support graduate students.

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The endowment will allow English professor Jeanne Reesman to continue her "outstanding success in bringing Jack London's literary and personal story to greater prominence," says Richmond.

"It has been a sheer pleasure to have read and enjoyed his work all these years," Richmond said. "And now I have the opportunity to help the College of Liberal and Fine Arts promote their meaningful endeavors," ensuring that Jack London's works continue to be admired and celebrated for generations to come.

If you'd like more information about how to start an endowment, please contact:

Office of Development

210-458-5162

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