

The University of Texas at Brownsville



ENDOWMENT PROFILE

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The Music of Philanthropy

JAMES D. ZELLERBACH AND HIS WIFE, Gloria, relocated to Brownsville, Texas, in 1965 after living many years in Mexico, Gloria's home. Jim, as he was known, and Gloria embraced their new bicultural *frontera* city, and in their unassuming manner they quietly began contributing to the betterment of their adopted community.

"Jim was a rare breed — journalist, photographer, World War II pilot, teacher, businessman, videographer, musician, philosopher, mystic and philanthropist," said Dr. Sue Zanne Urbis, Chair of The University of Texas at Brownsville Music Department. "Most importantly, he was our friend for 25 years."

Brownsville lost Jim Zellerbach at the age of 93 in May 2011. To honor Jim's memory and his unsurpassed support for students, UT Brownsville, the arts, and his friends have established the *James D. Zellerbach Jr. Memorial Endowment for Music*.

"We knew there would be no better way to honor and remember Jim than by helping future students through an endowment," said Richard Urbis, Professor of Fine Arts Piano.

Whether he was purchasing plane tickets that enabled budding musicians to play in Carnegie Hall or helping behind the scenes to make the Master Chorale's trip to Ireland a reality, Jim was a rock-solid supporter of the Music Department and the arts in Brownsville. He donated his time and shared his wealth of knowledge, serving on the advisory committee for the inaugural Signature Series season at The Arts Center.

"My father had a soft spot for people who needed help in any situation," Leslie Zellerbach Castanon said. "He loved music so he followed his heart."

As a child, Jim's parents often took him to operas and concerts where he developed an appreciation for classical and opera music.

That passion never wavered throughout the years but only grew stronger when he felt compelled to offer assistance to students—though he did so without fanfare. His joy came in seeing students develop their talents.

Among the Zellerbachs' many gifts are two endowments, the *James D. and Gloria Zellerbach Music Scholarship for Piano Performance* and the *James D. and Gloria Zellerbach Music Scholarship for Vocal Performance*.

Brownsville Society for the Performing Arts President George Ramirez said he will miss collaborating on projects with Jim.

"Jim was the model of a philanthropist, and a great partner to work with," Ramirez said. "He would see or hear of a need, then take action in an effective and unassuming way. Giving was his business and his hobby. Having Jim's backing on a project gave it credibility."



Gloria and James D. Zellerbach

The Zellerbachs also helped the Department of Music acquire the department's first Steinway concert grand piano that now has a deserving venue in The Arts Center, the campus performance hall that opened in February 2010. The day of the long-awaited facility's groundbreaking was even more exciting with the announcement of the Zellerbachs' gift of the Green Room that bears their name.

It was in the Arts Center that Jim filmed his last performance just two weeks before his death, the university's Bravo Opera Company's "The Gondoliers" by Gilbert and Sullivan, the first full-length operatic production on The Arts Center's stage.

"Jim provided tremendous artistic and financial support to the Bravo Opera Company," Sue Zanne Urbis said. "He was a gifted videographer and attended all of the performances and provided exquisite, high quality videos with his team of videographers."

In fact, two of the Zellerbach named seats at The Arts Center were specifically selected by Jim to be in the last row where he could set up his tripod and equipment.

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

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