

Latest Hart Gift Advances Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at SMU
Couple now among SMU's most generous donors

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DALLAS (SMU) – SMU's ability to cultivate and launch entrepreneurs for North Texas and beyond received a major boost with a significant new gift from prominent Dallas business leaders and major SMU supporters Linda Wertheimer Hart '65 and Milledge (Mitch) A. Hart, III. The Harts now are among SMU's most generous donors.

The Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at SMU will combine the innovative forces of SMU's Cox School of Business and Lyle School of Engineering. The two schools will integrate their expertise, resources and guidance to develop technology prototypes and create viable business plans.

"SMU will play a major role in the formation of new enterprises and cross-disciplinary ventures thanks to the Harts' generosity and vision," said SMU President R. Gerald Turner. "The Hart Institute will stand as a pioneering and lasting example to future SMU donors, reinforcing our role as an engine of regional economic development and job creation."

Linda Hart said SMU's focus on creating new knowledge inspired the gift.

"I was inspired to support this institute because I have seen first-hand how technology and innovation have been crucial to my own business endeavors, and they are critical elements needed in solving the world's challenges," she said.

With a new institute dedicated to guiding and promoting entrepreneurial work, the University will continue its march forward as an innovation leader, Mitch Hart said.

“Providing exposure to forward-thinking mindsets and feeding the enterprising spirit in an academic setting means there is no limit to what can be done,” he said. “I look forward to the exciting work that will be produced here.”

The Hart Institute will advance SMU’s vision to promote technology and entrepreneurship through five key components:

- **Business Plan Competition Award**

Building on the successful SMU Business Plan Competition, the Hart Institute will fund an annual Linda and Mitch Hart Innovation and Entrepreneurship Award to recognize the best student-created business plans as identified through an annual competition. The Hart Award’s financial proceeds to the winning teams will be used by recipients to invest in new business start-up needs such as equipment, supplies, personnel, market research and software. The significance of the endowed award also will elevate the competition and reinforce its vibrancy.

- **Entrepreneur-in-Residence**

The Hart Institute will establish a Linda and Mitch Hart Entrepreneur-in-Residence initiative that will expose business and engineering students and faculty to seasoned entrepreneurs and to world-class thinking on technology entrepreneurship. The Entrepreneur-in-Residence initiative will provide both inspiration and mentoring to young entrepreneurs.

- **Graduate Fellowships**

Providing Linda and Mitch Hart Graduate Fellowships will enable the Cox and Lyle joint entrepreneurship degree programs, such as the Master of Science in Engineering Entrepreneurship, to recruit budding entrepreneurs by offering full-tuition scholarships as well as funding for the development of commercial prototypes based on

technological discoveries. Support for prototype development could, for instance, take the form of funds for advanced prototyping equipment, supplies and/or staff oversight.

- **Faculty Fellows**

The Hart Institute will establish the Linda and Mitch Hart Faculty Fellows fund to support faculty leaders in advancing the mission of joint business and engineering programs in technology entrepreneurship. Recipients will be selected from among members of the Cox and Lyle faculties.

- **Technology Transfer Fund**

Resources provided by the Linda and Mitch Hart Technology Transfer Fund will help establish the Lyle School as a prime contributor to the region's economy by supporting a concept-to-prototype pipeline for students and faculty, bridging the gap from theory and research to commercial development.

SMU Provost Steven C. Currall said the Harts' generosity will pay dividends for SMU students and faculty for years to come.

"The Harts are difference makers," Currall said. "They have repeatedly taken opportunities to support SMU and followed through with gifts that make us a stronger university. Their latest gift goes to the heart of our aspirations to raise our academic quality and standing through actions that encourage visionary thinking and cross-campus collaboration."

Brad E. Cheves, SMU Vice President for Development and External Affairs, applauded the Harts' longstanding visionary support of SMU.

"This latest gift by Linda and Mitch reaffirms their dedication to the University as it seeks to be a leader in interdisciplinary research and education," Cheves said. "We are

incredibly grateful for their support of excellence, technology development and innovation among our faculty and students, and for the opportunity to share these entrepreneurial capabilities with our North Texas and global communities.”

Marc Christensen, Dean of the Lyle School, said cross-disciplinary partnerships amplify promising work.

“This gift celebrates the powerful pairing of a highly ranked business school and an innovative engineering school guiding the best and brightest to achieving their dreams while bringing new technology to the marketplace,” he said.

Matthew Myers, Dean of the Cox School, said the new Hart Institute will benefit SMU graduates and businesses looking for well-trained employees.

“Technology innovation drives all parts of business from talent recruitment and company culture to market and customer base. Businesses are hiring and partnering with those who have multidisciplinary backgrounds and a startup spirit,” he said.

Active in professional and civic endeavors, Linda and Mitch Hart have founded, supported and enhanced many educational ventures at SMU.

In March 2018 they committed a significant gift to the future Gerald J. Ford Research and Innovation Building at SMU that will house the University’s Linda and Mitch Hart eCenter, which includes SMU Guildhall, the world’s top-ranked graduate game design program. The couple also has made gifts to support the Hart Global Leaders Forum and the Hart Center for Engineering Leadership. Both serve on the board of directors for the University’s Tate Distinguished Lecture Series and both have led the board as chair. They received SMU’s Mustang Award in 2003 in recognition of their exceptional philanthropic support of the University.

Linda Hart, a graduate of the SMU School of Law, is Vice Chairman, President and CEO of Hart Group, Inc. and former Chairman of Imation Corp. Ms. Hart is a Trustee of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C., is Past Chairman of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra Association and also has been an active leader in the Dallas Citizens Council, Dallas Opera, International Women's Forum – Dallas, the Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce, the Texas National Research Laboratory Commission, the International Women's Forum Leadership Foundation and the Dallas Women's Foundation. Ms. Hart is former Chairman and current *ex officio* member of the Legal Advisory Committee to the New York Stock Exchange and serves on a variety of corporate and civic boards, including Executive Boards of SMU's Dedman School of Law and Cox School of Business.

Mitch Hart, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, served as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps and is SMU Trustee *emeritus*. He serves on SMU's Lyle School Executive Board and on the DEA Standing Committee for the SMU Board of Trustees. In 2017, Mr. Hart received the USNA's Distinguished Graduate Award, the highest honor given by the Naval Academy to its graduates. He is Chairman of Hart Group, Inc., founding Director and former Chairman of Episcopal School of Dallas, and a former Trustee and Trustee *emeritus* of Duke University. In 1985, he endowed the Hart Leadership Program at Duke University's Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, and he and Ms. Hart served on the Institute's Board. A member of World Presidents' Organization, Chief Executives Organization and the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America, he has served on numerous business and civic boards. He also served on SMU's Second Century Campaign's Leadership Council and the Lyle School of Engineering's Campaign Steering Committee. He was Co-chair of the SMU Dedman College Capital Campaign Committee during SMU's Time to Lead Campaign from 1997-2002.

About SMU

SMU is the nationally ranked global research university in the dynamic city of Dallas. SMU's alumni, faculty and nearly 12,000 students in seven degree-granting schools demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they lead change in their professions, communities and the world.