



# SMU | LYLE

## SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

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### **HIGH SPEED, HIGH TECH, HIGH IMPACT**

#### **Bobby B. Lyle '67 boosts a future-focused model for the SMU Lyle School of Engineering**

DALLAS (SMU) – Dallas entrepreneur, industry leader and educator Bobby B. Lyle '67 builds on the farsighted generosity that named the Lyle School of Engineering 11 years ago by designating \$10 million to power a new strategic vision for the school. The bold future-focused model will combine innovation, agility and swift responses to shifts in technological capabilities with enduring institutional support.

“Bobby Lyle’s vision, then and now, speaks to the core needs of engineering education to prepare students to solve problems, drive the economy and change lives through problem-driven research and real-world experience,” said SMU President R. Gerald Turner. “Today we celebrate Bobby’s leadership and commitment to the future of the Lyle School and SMU.”

The ability to react quickly to promising new ideas is essential for technological trailblazers. To take advantage of opportunities with transformative potential, Dr. Lyle’s investment will support the school’s Future Fund by establishing endowments for Accelerating Emerging Research and Accelerating High Tech Business Innovations. The fund also will support two additional strategic portfolios: Transforming the Engineering Education Experience and Transformative Technology for Social Good.

In engineering, speed is of the essence when developing groundbreaking advancements, Dr. Lyle said.

“Researching and prototyping new ideas must happen quickly to be competitive, while traditional fundraising takes time,” he said. “This transformational plan allows engineering school researchers to be nimble in the fast-changing tech landscape.”

The Lyle Future Fund will provide seed capital to bridge the gap between a new idea’s conception and its maturation to the point where it can draw external funding. Well-qualified projects will receive significant backing for up to five years – long enough to establish a leadership stake in a promising emerging field. By partnering with thought leaders and industry captains at the vanguard of emerging research, the Lyle School will be able to select strategic investments for the greatest impact based on market needs.

Dr. Lyle hopes others will be inspired to follow his lead and invest in problem-driven research and practical experiences that will prepare students to become innovators, creators, entrepreneurs and leaders.

Since his generous commitment in 2008, Dr. Lyle has remained engaged as a mentor, connector and advocate for the school, designating funds to endow key faculty positions, including the Bobby B. Lyle Endowed Centennial Distinguished Chair in Cyber Security to tackle these complex and growing issues; the Bobby B. Lyle Endowed Centennial Chair in Engineering Entrepreneurship to advance engineering entrepreneurship education; and the Bobby B. Lyle Professor of Engineering Innovation, currently held by Lyle School Dean Marc Christensen, who oversees the school's enterprising culture.

Dr. Lyle also has directed financial support to Lyle School scholarships, the Lyle School Research Impact Fund, SMU Fund for Lyle Engineering, TEDxSMU and the construction of Caruth Hall. Throughout the last 11 years, the Lyle School has followed Dr. Lyle's lead and developed impact- and solution-focused education by establishing the Hunter and Stephanie Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity, the Hart Center for Engineering Leadership, the Caruth Institute for Engineering Education and the Darwin Deason Institute for Cyber Security.

"We are grateful for Bobby Lyle's forward-thinking and generous investment," said SMU Vice President for Development and External Affairs Brad E. Cheves. "His enthusiasm, expertise and vision are invaluable to SMU and the Lyle School of Engineering."

The Future Fund frees creative thinkers to seize opportunities to pioneer developing fields that could address profound global challenges. "Encouraging strategic innovative mindsets equates to continual redefinition of what it is to be an engineer in an ever-changing global society," said SMU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs *ad interim* Peter K. Moore. "Ongoing discovery opportunities translate to generations of impact."

With the new possibilities for targeted investment, SMU will be able to incubate fledgling academic and research initiatives that could produce remarkable results. "Engineering schools exist at the confluence of academia, with its slow methodical advancement over the ages, and high-tech business, with its quick response to market demands," said Marc P. Christensen, Lyle School dean and Bobby B. Lyle Professor of Engineering Innovation. "The Future Fund seeks to do what has never been done before at an academic institution – to endow in perpetuity the possibility for nimble investment in emerging programs and ideas where SMU Lyle could take the lead. The Lyle School will simultaneously have the agility of a startup and the staying power of a century-old institution. We thank Dr. Lyle for this transformational support of the Lyle School strategic plan."

### **About Bobby B. Lyle '67**

Bobby B. Lyle has excelled as an engineer, corporate executive, entrepreneur, civic leader, professor and academic administrator during his distinguished and multifaceted career. He has served as an SMU trustee for over 30 years and is a member of the Lyle School of Engineering Executive Board.

The founder of Lyco Energy Corporation in 1981, Lyle has been a leader in the petroleum and natural gas industry for more than 25 years, exploring throughout the United States. In 2005, he established Lyco Holdings Inc., a private investment firm. During his professional career, Lyle has helped found a number of private companies and joint ventures, and he was instrumental in the development of the Dallas Galleria and the InterFirst Bank-Galleria.

Lyle graduated with a bachelor's degree from Louisiana Tech University, received a graduate degree in Engineering Administration from SMU and earned a doctorate from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He served as a professor and administrator in what is now the Edwin L. Cox School of Business, ultimately serving as dean *ad interim* and as executive dean. He was also the convening co-chair of the Engineering Steering Committee for *The Second Century Campaign*.

His civic activities have included leadership roles with the Boy Scouts of America; Dallas-Fort Worth and national advisory boards of the Salvation Army; Texas Trees Foundation; Communities Foundation of Texas; W. W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation; Southwestern Medical Foundation; St. Philip's School and Community Center; and many others.