Road to Success
Enhancing our MBA programs
page 10
@MAYS

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Information about the majors, degrees and programs offered by Mays Business School is available at mays.tamu.edu.

Update your mailing information at aggienetwork.com.

For our business graduates, we use the information The Association of Former Students provides. To update your mailing information, go to aggienetwork.com, choose the “Login” button found in the top maroon band, and follow the instructions.

ON THE COVER:
View from the boardroom of CITYCENTRE, home of Mays Business School’s Executive and Professional MBA programs.

Connie Weaver photographs taken at Messina Hof Winery and Resort.

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Full-Time MBA Program rises into Top 10 in Bloomberg Businessweek ranking

In the latest ranking of MBA programs by Bloomberg Businessweek, the Full-Time MBA Program at Mays ranked 10th among public programs in the nation and 26th among all schools. This represents an upward move of one place among U.S. public institutions and four places overall.

In the previous ranking, released in 2010, the Texas A&M program was ranked 30th among all business schools and 11th among public programs in the nation.

Bloomberg Businessweek ranked Mays 13th in “Best MBA Job Placement” and 28th in “Top B-Schools with the Highest-Paid MBAs.”

Mary Lea McAnally, associate dean for graduate programs at Mays, says the ranking recognizes the consistency throughout the program’s 12 years. “This is a fitting tribute to our faculty, staff, and students who consistently work so hard,” she says. “Our faculty members provide the underlying rigor our students need to be competitive as business leaders, and our career services group works with students to develop lifelong career management skills. This latest ranking recognizes those core strengths of our program.”

Kelli Kilpatrick, director of the Full-Time MBA Program, says several factors attract students to the program and contribute to their satisfaction: aspects such as a strong alumni network, small class sizes taught by dynamic faculty, and exceptional career opportunities after graduation.

“We have the whole package here, along with the lure of the ‘Aggie experience’ of being based at Texas A&M. It is truly a special program.”

Finally, Bloomberg Businessweek tallies the number of articles published by each school’s faculty in top 20 journals and reviews of their books in three national publications. The total for faculty size is then adjusted, and an intellectual-capital rating is assigned for each school.
The Executive MBA program at Mays is moving up the ranks among the top 10 programs offered by U.S. public universities, according to rankings released by Financial Times. The standing of the Executive MBA Program at Texas A&M improved from 10th to 9th place among U.S. public schools. The program also rose three spots when considered against both private and public U.S. schools, from 27th to 24th, but dropped slightly in the global overall ranking from 54th to 58th. The overall ranking considers the top 100 Executive MBA programs in the world.

Based on years of work experience, the program ranked second among U.S. public institutions and seventh overall. The program consistently averages 15 to 17 years of work experience in its classes. This year’s class average is 18 years — the highest ever.

To determine its rankings, London-based Financial Times surveyed thousands of executive MBA program alumni from more than 100 of the top programs in the world.

Mary Lea McAnally, associate dean for Graduate Programs at Mays, says the success of the program should be credited to its faculty, staff and students. “Our continued success in the rankings reflects the dedication of our faculty and staff in providing a world-class program for our students,” she said. “This dedication leads to the success and satisfaction of our students, as they create value for their organizations and serve as leaders in the community.”

The Mays program continues to improve as it enters its 14th year. Its recent move into a new private facility at CITYCENTRE, a mixed-use urban development in west Houston, will further enhance the program.

McAnally was also positive in her view of how the program’s facility would impact the students’ learning experience. “Our new space in Houston was designed specifically for the executive audience, and we are confident that it will be a significant asset for our students.”
Jillian Netzel appointed to AAF-Initiative Future Board

Jillian Netzel ‘13 was awarded a seat on the 2012–13 American Advertising Federation (AAF)-Initiative Future Board. The Future Board is a creative “think tank” designed to support rising stars in the advertising industry by providing them with hands-on marketing communication experience and exposure to top industry professionals.

This year’s panel will be teamed up with mentors from Initiative, a global creative agency. Throughout the one-year appointment, teams will work together on a client project and will have opportunities to interact with industry executives, shadow employees, and interact with members serving on Future Boards in Europe and Latin America.

Netzel, a senior marketing major and advertising certificate student from Houston, was selected from a pool of applicants across the country.

Exploring dream teams without bosses

Stephen Courtright is helping the terms “self-leadership” and “bossless offices” become household phrases. The Mays assistant professor of management joined a panel on The Huffington Post (HuffPost Live) to discuss whether jobs without the traditional hierarchy can survive.

“As a researcher/teacher/consultant, when someone wants to switch to a bossless office, I tell them, ‘This doesn’t mean that there is no leadership. The leadership is just transferred to the employees,’” Courtright explains on the HuffPost Live episode. He says the role of the leader shifts “from a command and control to more of a provision of resources and support.”

Also on the panel were three employees of Menlo, an Ann Arbor, Mich.-based company where teams of employees make the major management decisions; Matt Shaer, a writer who contributes to New York Magazine; and Nicole Williams, an author and LinkedIn’s career expert.

Courtright’s primary areas of expertise are team and leadership effectiveness. His research has garnered awards from the Academy of Management, Society for Human Resource Management and Network of Leadership Scholars.

He was also quoted in a story in New York Magazine that explores the trend of workplaces where the employees vote on who gets promotions and how much people should be paid.
More clicks on a company’s Facebook page can help generate more income, indicates a research study conducted by four professors, including two from Mays.

The study shows social media activities help strengthen the bond between the customer and the firm, generating 5.6 percent more revenue and about 5 percent more in-person visits than among non-participating customers.

The researchers were Ramkumar Janakiraman and Rishika Rishika, both marketing professors at Mays; Ashish Kumar from Aalto University; and Ram Bezawada from the University at Buffalo, N.Y.

This study has been published in a special issue of the journal *Information Systems Research* titled “Social Media and Business Transformation.”
Companies have long questioned the return on investment of resources needed to operate social media sites. Previously, there was no individual-level data connecting customers’ participation in a firm-hosted social media site and their actual purchase behaviors. This study gives business managers a better understanding of the return on their investment in social media. They also understand the direct correlation between social media participation and the number of items a customer buys. The keys to success include maintaining a user-friendly site, sending regular updates about events, personalizing key messages to customers, and encouraging interaction from them.

"Anyone can open a Facebook page and post, but good firms do something with that interaction — they capitalize on that engagement."
— Ramkumar Janakiraman

Building online communities, personalizing messages and encouraging contributions from online members enhance the customer experience. They also increase the frequency of social media visits and promote sales overall, the research indicated.

This study gives business managers a better understanding of the return on their investment in social media.

“Anyone can open a Facebook page and post, but good firms do something with that interaction — they capitalize on that engagement,” explains Ramkumar Janakiraman. Jason’s Deli, for instance, follows up on customer complaints posted on its social media sites, and large firms boast about the number of fans they have. “We argue social media is good for the business because it helps the customers. They don’t have to go get information, it pops up on their screens. And reviews come in from other fans in the community.”

Customers can be segmented based on purchase history and prior interactions. Market segmentation is essential, since not all customers respond to social media equally.
Researchers help retailers understand shoppers

Not all customers are created equal. It’s common to hear 20 percent of customers provide 80 percent of the profits. So the question arises, how does that 20 percent shop? Online? In-store? By catalog? Nowadays customers may shop using one or all of these channels.

“The prevailing wisdom was that the more channels a customer shops from, the more valuable that customer will be,” says Venkatesh Shankar, Coleman Chair Professor in Marketing and director of research at the Center for Retailing Studies. “For us this was a research issue; rather than just take it at face value, we decided we needed to investigate it.”

Shankar and his colleague — Tarun Kushwaha from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who worked on the research while pursuing a PhD at Mays — used data from 750 retailers during a five-year period to see which customers were the most profitable in 22 different product categories. Researchers looked at which channels had the most profitable customers depending on whether the products were high or low risk, or hedonic or utilitarian.

“Companies evolve through continuous learning.”

— Venkatesh Shankar

“We also thought that multichannel customers would be the most valuable customers for any company, regardless of the product categories they bought from,” says Shankar of their expectations. After analyzing the data, Shankar and his colleague were surprised to find that some non-multichannel customers were actually more valuable depending on the product categories they were buying from. For some product categories, the most valuable customers may shop in-store, and for other categories, they may do most of their shopping online. For example, for high-risk utilitarian products like computers, web-only shoppers were the most valuable segment. For low-risk utilitarian products like office supplies, catalog or store-only shoppers were the most valuable segment. The practical implications these findings have for retailers are significant.

“There are two ways in which companies, especially retailers, can use findings from this research,” says Shankar. “Typically in a multichannel context, firms will have to allocate resources between bricks and mortar, online, and catalog, depending on how many channels they have.”

Instead, retailers can more efficiently allocate those resources to their most profitable channels. The two key ways retailers can use the research are, first, that retailers can improve targeting by focusing on the right customers. And second, retailers can find ways to migrate customers to the more profitable channels.

“Retailers need to understand their cost structures, and these findings help them to understand not only which segments to target, but also how to move some of the segments so they can increase and improve profitability,” says Shankar.

Shankar and his colleague also collected data from a specific retailer to test and support their findings. They collected data from a clothing/accessories retailer for three years, capturing every transaction, including returns.

“We wanted to test, by looking at one single retailer, whether the concept of the multichannel shopper would hold,” says Shankar. “No matter how we sliced and diced it, the answer was very consistent.”

Shankar says the concepts apply in both the business-to-business setting and the business-to-consumer setting, and that it is the nature of the product category that decides what channels are the most profitable for any specific company.

“It has become a strategic necessity for all companies to understand how people are shopping, where they are spending more money, how they are using the channels, and where companies should allocate their resources; companies evolve through continuous learning,” says Shankar.
Despite regulations, financial analysts say private calls with executives are essential

A study of 365 sell-side financial analysts shows that private phone calls with managers remain an essential source of analysts’ earnings forecasts and stock recommendations — even in light of regulations limiting businesses’ selective disclosure of financial information.

More than half of the analysts surveyed by a team of accounting researchers said they make direct contact with executives of companies they cover five or more times per year. The direct contact with management is so important that one analyst said his company hired an FBI profiler to train analysts “to read management teams, to tell when they’re lying, to tell when they were uncomfortable with a question. That’s how serious this whole issue has become.”

“Our intent was to peer inside the ‘black box’ and provide new insights about the pressures and incentives analysts face.”
—Nathan Y. Sharp

The survey also finds that accurate earnings forecasts and profitable stock recommendations have relatively little direct impact on analysts’ compensation. These findings are derived from a study titled Inside the Black Box of Sell Side Financial Analysts, which presents results of a 23-question survey focused on analysts’ incentives, as well as 18 detailed follow-up interviews.

The study offers insights into an area that is understudied by researchers of the financial industry. While hundreds of articles have sought to predict financial analysts’ choices using models and statistics, few have peered into the “black box” of the organizational contexts and personal psychologies that drive analysts’ decision making.

The study’s findings also serve as a potential commentary on the Securities and Exchange Commission’s Regulation Fair Disclosure, launched in 2000 to limit selective disclosure of market-moving information to analysts or other key stakeholders prior to the general public.

But respondents noted that companies’ public conference calls discussing quarterly earnings are often followed by one-on-one conversations between analysts and chief financial officers. According to one analyst: “We’re almost back to where we were pre-Reg FD, but not quite because that backroom chatter is shut down. It’s just now it’s not in the backroom; it’s everywhere.”

More insights from the survey include:

• Approximately 25 percent of analysts feel pressured by supervisors to lower their earnings forecasts, presumably because outperforming forecasts pleases investors.

• Approximately 25 percent of analysts feel pressured by supervisors to raise their recommendations, presumably because it is easier to get their clients to buy rather than to sell the stocks they recommend.

• While only 35 percent of analysts said the profitability of their stock recommendations was a very important determinant of their compensation, 67 percent cited “standing in analyst rankings or broker votes” as central to their compensation.

• Only 50 percent of analysts considered primary research “very useful” in forecasting earnings or recommending stocks.
In business, technical knowledge is critical. But to effectively lead, students need to also be experts in communications, leadership, problem solving and team building. The course work in Mays’ MBA programs provides leadership training by placing students in the role of decision makers during case analyses, team projects and class discussion. By building leadership concepts and experiences into the core courses, the program combines foundational business knowledge with strategies for influencing, motivating, guiding and supporting others in achieving a common purpose.

Janet Marcantonio, a Mays MBA graduate, oversees the signature consulting projects course. In the Full-Time MBA Program, the students complete semester-long capstone projects to address real-world problems for outside organizations. In addition to applying their MBA knowledge and skills, students learn to design a sound project plan and execute it effectively.

“Students consider their strengths, values, skills and developmental goals in defining roles and responsibilities,” says Marcantonio. “This forms the foundation for high-performing teams that create real value for our client companies.”

In the Executive MBA Program, participants identify a significant problem facing their organizations. Over a period of 18 months, they complete an individualized project designed to develop a data-driven solution. “Participants integrate and apply what they learn in the classroom while learning valuable lessons about creating successful change,” says Marcantonio. “Above all, the capstone project is a leadership journey.”

Professional MBA students have the option to complete an individual project for their organizations or a team project for an outside company. “By offering this choice,” says Marcantonio, “we allow students to align their project experience with their developmental needs and goals.”
Mary Lea McAnally, associate dean of graduate programs, says Marcantonio has “revolutionized the class, adding much content and structure.”

“Unlike accounting or finance or other subjects that can be learned in a semester, learning to lead is a lifelong process. Our hope is that we inspire our graduates to continue to develop as leaders.”

—MARY LEA MCANALLY

Her contributions, along with those of John Krajicek [assistant director of business communications studies], are among the most significant things that distinguish our Full-Time MBA Program from our competitors,” she explains.

Krajicek covers many important topics in the communication realm — for example, how to deliver effective PowerPoint presentations. “Contrary to the usual ‘death by PowerPoint’ approach, presentations don’t have to be boring,” he explains. “The key is restraint, avoiding information overload on every slide.”

Students’ writing skills are consistently tested and refined as part of their course work, allowing them to be prepared for the challenge of successfully navigating the modern business environment, which places intensive scrutiny on effective communications.

As Krajicek tells his students, “It really doesn’t matter how much you know if you can’t communicate it effectively. Excellent communication skills won’t guarantee you a successful career, but poor communication skills will undoubtedly hamper your career.”

Mays also has been recognized for its success in training students to be ethical leaders. In 2013, Mays was ranked seventh in the world in Bloomberg Businessweek’s “Top Schools for Ethics” specialty report. The scores came from feedback from the MBA Class of 2012. McAnally says the topic of ethics is woven into the fabric of Mays, particularly in the Full-Time MBA Program. “We don’t offer stand-alone ethics classes; we include frameworks for ethical decision making in each course we teach.”

By providing students the opportunity to develop themselves as leaders, in addition to expand their core knowledge and skills, Mays’ MBA programs are producing leaders who add immediate and significant value to their organizations.

But more importantly, such leaders have long-term impact. McAnally summed it up when she said, “Unlike accounting or finance or other subjects that can be learned in a semester, learning to lead is a lifelong process. Our hope is that we inspire our graduates to continue to develop as leaders. If we produce students who are continually evolving, learning and growing, we will have produced leaders with vision and longevity.”

Full-Time MBA Program

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**NOW:**

2012

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Mays Business School’s new custom educational facility at CITYCENTRE opened its doors in fall 2012. The 24,000-square-foot facility features four executive classrooms, 11 team rooms, expansive dining and common spaces, and a luxuriously appointed boardroom.
The CITYCENTRE development, located off Interstate 10 and Beltway 8 in West Houston, is aptly named because Houston’s westward growth indicates the location will become the center of the city. Developed by Midway and owned by two-time Mays graduate Brad Freels ‘81, CITYCENTRE is designed to be a mini “ecosystem” — boasting everything from shopping and restaurants to living and hotel accommodations.

The Mays facility currently encompasses the second floor of the CITYCENTRE THREE building and was custom-designed by a team of faculty, staff and students to be the ideal environment for executive learning. The new facility has been such a success that Mays has recently leased space on the first floor to house additional offices and team rooms, which will open in late 2014. The CITYCENTRE facility is the home to both the Executive MBA and Professional MBA programs.

Learn more at mays.tamu.edu/citycentre.
Rogelio Oliva

WHAT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN TEACHING MBA STUDENTS?

In my MBA classroom, I am always looking to stretch my students’ skills and abilities. Every day, we, as faculty, have to get them out of their comfort zone and have them do things that they didn’t know they could do. Whether it is learning how to lay off an employee, identify potential market opportunities for new technologies, sort through inordinate amounts of information and decide what is relevant and what is not, make a flawless presentation — day in and day out we push the students to do something new, something that they have not tried, something uncomfortable, scary. But always in an environment where it is safe to fail and possible to infer lessons from the successes and the failures.

The ability to respond effectively outside of their comfort zone, and the ability to acquire new skills to expand that comfort zone, is, in my view, what the corporate world is looking for in an MBA. As I like to say in the classroom, you will probably spend your entire career and never come across a situation similar to any one of the cases that we covered in class. It is not experience that makes you good or desirable in the corporate world. It is the ability to adapt and learn from a new situation that counts.

I believe that MBA faculty have the easy part. Our job is to create the space and the conditions for our students to go out on a limb and discover that it is possible for them to develop new skills, techniques and distinctions for their tool belt.

The people who are involved in the MBA programs at Mays are its greatest assets. Here are a few of their stories.

The distinction between teaching and learning is similar to the adage "you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink." Teaching is showing that something is possible; learning is making it your own.
The Full-Time MBA Program at Mays Business School is a 16-month program targeted at students with two to five years of work experience. The program is held at Mays Business School in College Station.

Clifford Counts, Full-Time MBA student in the Class of 2014, knew that the MBA program he chose had to have a high return on investment. “Return on investment was extremely important to me. Texas A&M University has consistently been ranked at the top of the list on fastest return on investment, with the investment recouped in less than four years. The value that Mays Business School has in the marketplace was critical in my decision.”

The condensed program length was also a significant deciding factor for Counts. “The MBA program is only a year and a half, which limits my time away from the workforce and gives me an opportunity to complete more course work before my summer internship.”

Counts lauds the “intimate learning environment” of the Full-Time MBA Program at Mays and the opportunity to learn from world-class professors. He describes the program as “very fast paced and academically rigorous,” but well worth the effort. “The Full-Time MBA Program at Mays Business School maximizes my return on investment,” he says. “These factors provide a significant advantage in the job market because I reenter the workforce earlier than traditional two-year MBA program students.”

The value that Mays Business School has in the marketplace was critical in my decision.

Full-Time MBA

- **Innovative curriculum:**
  - 16 months

- **Small and selective class size:**
  - 75–80 students/year

- **Highly competitive:**
  - for top students

- **Average work experience:**
  - 4.5 years

- **Highly ranked for job placement:**
  - since 2003
The Professional MBA Program is a two-year program targeted at working professionals with 5 to 10 years of work experience. The program launched in fall 2012 and is held at Mays’ CITYCENTRE facility in Houston.

Growing up in Texas, Melanie Bundoc has always been familiar with Aggies, but it wasn’t until she entered the Professional MBA (PMBA) Program that the true value of the Aggie Network became apparent. “I did not attend Texas A&M as an undergrad, but less than halfway through the semester, different Aggie organizations began to reach out and invite me to functions and networking events.” This unique aspect of the program is further enhanced by her network of classmates. “The relationships that I’ve built with my classmates are by far the largest benefit of the program so far. While I am pursuing my MBA to gain the knowledge, it’s the experience the PMBA gives me that makes it worthwhile.”

As a project manager for a service company in the oil and gas industry, Melanie works across several functional areas. She credits the program with “building on the foundation I have developed by allowing me to learn from various management situations, scenarios and solutions that will provide benefit to my employer and my personal career growth.”

For Melanie, choosing an MBA program was about finding the right fit. “I wanted to attend a highly respected program in a good location, that would allow me to expand my professional network,” she said. “Not only did the PMBA satisfy my initial criteria, but the flexibility to continue working while pursuing my MBA allowed me to apply the experiences and lessons from both work and class in real time.”

The expansion of her perspective is one way Melanie has seen the value of the PMBA. “The program enables its students to look at their company or organization from a grander perspective, looking at other aspects that impact the company strategy rather than getting tunnel vision in our individual disciplines.” The program has also helped her gain perspective on her own future. “I’m able to get a better idea of where I want to take my career and determine the path to get there.”

Professional MBA Program

Launched: August 2012
Enrollment: 36 students
Average work experience: 5.5 years
Organizations represented: 33
As the controller for a manufacturing company, Saa McCarthy is responsible for a wide variety of functions, including inventory management and valuation, working capital management, financial reporting and internal controls. The business skills and knowledge taught in the Executive MBA (EMBA) Program are preparing him to reach the next step in his career goals. “One of my short-term goals is to be a chief financial officer. The communication, leadership and strategic business decision-making skill sets that I am learning in the EMBA Program will be critical in achieving this goal.”

In choosing a program, McCarthy considered several aspects of the program: return on investment (ROI), the years of experience and knowledge of the professors, and convenience. Mays’ Executive MBA Program delivered on all three. “The school was ranked #1 in the nation for ROI, the caliber of professors within the program were exceptional, and the new location at CITYCENTRE was simply perfect!”

McCarthy calls the benefits of the program to himself and his company “immediate” and cites how the program has changed his management style. “The EMBA Program is challenging me to look at leadership differently, especially people management. For example, ‘emotional intelligence’ is a phrase I didn’t know until joining the program. How do you keep your cool under pressure? How do you respond in difficult situations without being perceived as insensitive or angry? This is one of the many benefits I am effectively using in my current role.”

The Executive MBA Program was established in 2000 and is targeted at working professionals with 10 to 17 years’ work experience. After operating for its first 13 years in The Woodlands, the program is now held at the Mays Business School facility at CITYCENTRE in Houston.
Living the Mays mission of creating knowledge and developing ethical leaders for a global society is simple to say but difficult to do.

—Jerry Strawser

Craig C. Brown ’75, Jeffrey A. Miller ’88 and Craig R. McMahen ’89, named Outstanding Alumni of Mays for 2012, are consistent role models for others, says Mays Dean Jerry Strawser.

“Living the Mays mission of creating knowledge and developing ethical leaders for a global society is simple to say but difficult to do,” he said. “Tonight, we are honoring three men who do that every day.”

Texas A&M University President R. Bowen Loftin echoed Strawser’s congratulations, saying the honorees “have impacted their places of employment very deeply.” He said Mays graduates have helped build the brand of Texas A&M. “The graduates of schools like this are prepared to make a difference the first day on the job. They don’t need special favors; they just get to work.”
CRAIG C. BROWN ’75

Brown credits his parents with instilling in him the qualities that have led to his position as president and CEO of Bray International, Inc., a Houston-based global control valve company and actuator manufacturer.

He says his parents and his younger brother taught him to live life to the fullest. His mother passed away when he was 21, and his father lived for 19 years as a dialysis patient — at the time of his death, the longest survivor on a dialysis machine of anyone in the United States.

Brown says he defines success this way: “It’s not what you take with you but what you leave behind that counts.”

He also mentioned the teachers who taught him along the way, saying they all had one common trait: they showed him respect.

Brown says he chose to attend Texas A&M because the spirit and values were similar to what he learned from his family. He received a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and an MBA from Texas A&M. He served in the Corps of Cadets, lettered in track, and served on the Ross Volunteers and the Engineering Student Council. He received a President’s Endowed Scholarship, was a recipient of the College of Engineering Faculty Outstanding Senior Award, and graduated with a 4.0 grade point average.

At the awards banquet, Brown lauded Mays’ recent rise in undergraduate program rankings among both overall and public universities in the 2013 U.S. News & World Report. He noted the 12-place jump among public schools — the largest of any school included in the rankings — as well as the advancement to 24th from 36th overall. “I sense a horse race, and Mays Business School is Secretariat and Sea Biscuit rolled into one.”

He is also chairman of the board of the Craig and Galen Brown Foundation — named for Brown and his father — which was created in 1988 to provide scholarships to deserving students and to support educational and medical organizations. In 1984, Craig was awarded the Outstanding Young Houstonian award by the Houston Junior Chamber of Commerce. In 2006, he was chosen as the Outstanding Alumnus for the College of Engineering at Texas A&M.

Brown says he defines success this way:

“It’s not what you take with you but what you leave behind that counts.”
The dreams of Mays students to work in investment banking have become realities thanks to McMahen, whose firm has hired and trained numerous throughout the years. After identifying the need from his own experience, he helped create the Aggies on Wall Street program — a highly selective program designed for exceptional students to receive a broad overview of the finance world, as well as opportunities to network with former students who are working in the industry and obtain critical knowledge and skills needed to launch a finance career. McMahen has since supported the program in various ways, including underwriting dinners and events.

“It is extremely rewarding to work with these students, seeing the gleam in their eyes and the fire in their bellies,” he says.

McMahen is a managing director in the Investment Banking Department of Keefe, Bruyette and Woods, Inc. (KBW) — a New York Stock Exchange-listed, full-service investment bank that specializes exclusively in the financial services sector.

McMahen specializes in the commercial banking industry, and his current responsibilities involve mergers and acquisitions, capital raising (including initial public offerings), follow-on equity offerings, recapitalizations, and debt for banks in Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. He is also a member of KBW’s Capital Commitment Committee.

McMahen joined KBW in 1989 after receiving a bachelor’s degree in finance from Texas A&M. He has remained active throughout his professional career with Mays and interacts regularly with its students.

He has been on the Advisory Board of the Texas A&M Department of Finance for 10 years and endowed the Craig R. McMahen Fund for Excellence in Teaching and Research.
JEFFREY A. MILLER ’88

Miller has sought roles throughout his business career that allow him to contribute through leadership, insight and analysis. He enjoys building and improving businesses, making important changes to organizations and developing staff. He enjoys working with organizations that want to change the way they do business.

His celebration of his award was amplified when he received a promotion a few hours before the banquet to chief operating officer of Halliburton. He had started that day in his previous role — as the company’s vice president of global business and development. From his base in Dubai, he oversaw strategic account management, sales, marketing, commercialization, global business and technical solutions for Halliburton.

He began his career with Halliburton in 1997 as director of financial reporting and says he and his wife consider the company “extended family.”

Before joining Halliburton, Miller worked for Arthur Andersen LLP for eight years. He received a bachelor’s degree in agriculture and business from McNeese State University and an MBA from Texas A&M University. He is a certified public accountant and a member of the Texas A&M University Look College of Engineering Advisory Board.

He says his wife supported his master’s degree with her job as an assistant to the Student Government president. “Her ‘Aggieology’ is exceptional,” he says. Their son is a freshman in Texas A&M’s Corps of Cadets, which he says shows the ultimate level of commitment: “I am trusting my own child to the place I love.”
The world is waiting for full economic recovery, and the retail sector — the “engine of the American dream” — has a role in that rebuilding. Those were the words spoken and reinforced at the Retailing Summit conference in Dallas.

Culture and branding were common themes at the 2012 Retailing Summit conference hosted by Mays’ Center for Retailing Studies in October 2012.

Roy Spence, author of *It’s Not What You Sell, It’s What You Stand For*, emphasized that to survive, companies must be driven by purpose.
Southwest Airlines puts people first
Southwest Airlines, for instance, is not in the transportation business. Instead, it gives people the freedom to fly. Great companies offer customers more than quality products or services; they commit to improving the lives of their customers, says Ginger Hardage, senior vice president of culture and communication at Southwest, the nation’s largest domestic airline. Its fleet of 700 aircrafts serves 100 million customers annually.

By putting people first and treating customers like family, the low-cost airline has built an edgy brand, elevating it to 10th on Fortune’s “Most Admired Companies” list. Hardage says maverick marketing and promotion played a key role in differentiating Southwest Airlines. In an industry plagued by bankruptcies, baggage fees, bad press and overall passenger frustration, Southwest has remained profitable for 39 consecutive years by valuing people (customers and employees), nurturing its culture and changing ahead of the times to remain relevant for the ever-evolving consumer.

Companies must personalize relationships with customers
GameStop’s Jenn McMillen described the $10 billion retailer’s culture as “irreverent.” Journeys CEO Jim Estepa said the teen footwear chain must always “be cool” and embrace diversity. Toys”R”Us, Inc., vice president of human resources Kelly O’Neill labeled his employees “brand ambassadors.” Together, they demonstrated the many diverse ways companies define, cultivate and communicate brand promise and inspirational customer experiences.

In 2010, McMillen launched GameStop’s PowerUp loyalty program. In 23 months, more than 20 million customers signed up for the rewards program. By capturing and analyzing customer purchase information, GameStop personalizes promotions, engages members through “love it/hate it” game evaluations, excites buyers through game reservations, and better drives new sales, pre-owned sales and trades. A PowerUp member who interacts with GameStop through all four of these customer experience options is worth eight times in annual sales what a non-loyalty member who shops one channel, such as only buying used games, is worth. This successful program makes GameStop very data rich and able to target and reward customers.

Great companies offer customers more than quality products or services; they commit to improving the lives of their customers, says Ginger Hardage, senior vice president of culture and communication at Southwest.
O’Neill bluntly stated, “We must hire nice, fun people because that’s not something you can teach.” Toys”R”Us’ charity work helps attract people who fit the brand. The company is the largest corporate supporter of Autism Speaks and Alex’s Lemonade Stand, which funds children’s cancer research. They help military personnel celebrate life milestones through gifts, toys and even baby shower presents, no matter where they are deployed worldwide.

O’Neill only run one print ad in the last five years. Instead it relies on events, public style influencers, social media and word of mouth for customer acquisition.

Fun is needed in business
Teen shoe retailer Journeys builds customer relationships through numerous “cool” events, including the annual Backyard BBQ Tour concerts. By hosting top bands, extreme sports exhibitions and skateboard competitions, Journeys stays relevant to an ever-finicky young customer through music and unique experiences.

Jim Estepa, CEO, says the Journeys executive team surrounds itself with teenagers and young people to stay current with trends, lifestyles and youth culture. Many of the chain’s 1,200 stores are staffed and managed by associates under 20, which energizes the stores. Journeys celebrates and rewards “attitude” among employees through incentive compensation, recognition programs, manager meetings and amazing vacations for top performers.

At Toys”R”Us, engaged employees value bringing joy to children and families. As the world’s leading toy retailer, Toys”R”Us attracts positive people who play to win but are serious about fun. Kelly O’Neill, vice president of human resources, proposed his department members "are the drivers of the employment brand. Through video, photos, social networks, print and surveys, they communicate that kids are at the heart of the business.”

Changing the way people shop
While GameStop’s market share and roster of 6,000 stores surprised many audience members, most attendees had shopped the members-only e-commerce site, Gilt Groupe. Co-founder Alexandra Wilkis-Wilson recapped the luxury flash sale site’s early days, saying, “We didn’t have a business plan when we launched.” With experience and valuable contacts from her work at Louis Vuitton and Bulgari, Wilkis teamed with other Harvard grads and engineers to put sample sale merchandise in the hands of consumers. This mix of knowledge was vital to the business’s execution and the ultimate success of the start-up.

Gilt Groupe has changed the way people shop. Each day members receive highly customized promotional emails based on past purchases, clickthrough history, gender and zip code. By effectively using data, Gilt personalizes customer interaction with the brand. Gilt also made heavy early investment in its mobile application, which is now faster than the traditional web platform. This further connects Gilt to its affluent, on-trend customer base. In fact, Gilt has...
McIngvale recounted how his team prejudged a customer as either not ready or unable to buy. After feeling ignored, she showed McIngvale, who is ever present in the store, her purse filled with $20,000 in cash. Whether his customers seek the perfect night’s sleep on a $30,000 mattress or want to furnish a living room for less than $1,000 with bargain tent finds, each customer deserves respect.

He shared Gallery Furniture’s commitment to eliminating customer pain points, which he defined as “anything that stands between the customer and your company.”

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He shared Gallery Furniture’s commitment to eliminating customer pain points, which he defined as “anything that stands between the customer and your company.” The top complaints for his store related to poor delivery experiences, long waits and sub-par products. Today, Gallery Furniture applies higher employment screening practices; its drivers wear recognizable company uniforms; and GPS chips monitor trucks, texting customers updates with the exact time their merchandise left the warehouse and when it will arrive at their doorsteps.

Create social value in shopping

The Maritz Institute shared its philosophy on “the social life of brands.” The default system of the human brain is “social.” Human beings are social creatures. While most marketers understand the need to create functional and emotional value, businesses are just learning how important it is to create social value through experiences and interaction.

“When a brand makes you feel special and strives to make your life better, in contrast to simply trying to get more share of wallet, then social value is created,” says Maritz Institute Director Marybeth McEuen. “And social value, at its pinnacle, is created when you join a brand community because you identify with the purpose and ideals of the brand. Great companies like Starbucks and Method understand this type of social value.”

H-E-B is the largest corporate donor to nonprofits in Texas. The 340-store chain focuses on putting people and communities first. Its leadership practices “releantless dissatisfaction,” meaning that if they are not working every day to help customers and improve the shopping experience, then they are not satisfied.

Craig Boyan, H-E-B president and COO, reviewed historical fact that the American consumer today has far less discretionary income and far more debt than past generations. With wallets thinner, H-E-B promises low prices to help customers save and live better. While labor costs often top retailers’ expenses, Boyan urged the audience not to race to the bottom with wages, but instead raise them and hire great people. Finally, H-E-B is a multi-format retailer. Boyan noted that his discount stores, such as Joe V’s and Mi Tienda, and high-income stores, like Central Market and H-E-B Plus, are growing the quickest. This reflects the increasing gap between rich and poor in Texas.

Students entering the industry should:

- Be curious
- Think
- Stay humble
- Stay hungry
- Help those who help you

—ROY SPENCE, GSD&M
The companies recognized as the 2012 Aggie 100 reported a combined revenue of $18.2 billion — the highest in the eight years the program has existed. The celebration in The Zone Club was sponsored by the Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship at Mays.

The top recipient was Navidad Resources, an independent oil and gas company founded in Tyler in 1992. It reported 206.14 percent growth. CEO and President Harold E. McGowen III ’82 said he was honored to be on the list with the other 99 companies. “You are some of the smartest and most capable people in the country,” he said. This year’s group included 40 newcomers, and eight of the recipients have been on the Aggie 100 list at least five times.

The key to the companies’ success is the entrepreneurial spirit, several of the speakers commented.

“You people had the vision — in fact, the courage — to take some chances that most people wouldn’t take,” said Texas A&M President R. Bowen Loftin. “You’re here today because you were persistent and also successful. We applaud you. We think you embody the true spirit of Aggieland.”
The 100 companies reported a combined revenue of $18.2 billion.

Keynote speaker Dan Moran, an Aggie and former Marine whose Houston company funds veterans' start-up companies, summed it up this way: “Aggie entrepreneurs never, ever, ever give up.” He called entrepreneurs “the backbone of the economy... You’re going to get us back on track.”

The inaugural Summit Award, created to recognize the large-corporation Aggie 100 honoree with the highest average revenue, was given to Houston-based Oil States International. CEO Cindy B. Taylor, who received a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Mays, said her company is approaching $4 billion in growth this year. Taylor, one of the 2011 Outstanding Alumni of Mays, is the mother of three Texas A&M students.

About the Aggie 100
The Aggie 100 identifies, recognizes and celebrates the 100 fastest-growing Aggie-owned or Aggie-led businesses in the world. The Aggie 100 not only celebrates their success, it also provides a forum to pass lessons to the next generation of Aggie entrepreneurs.

One of a kind at the college level, the Aggie 100 was created by Mays Business School’s Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship. The center provides encouragement, education, networking and assistance to entrepreneurially minded students, faculty and Texas businesses.

Each year, Aggie 100 honorees are invited to campus for celebrations that include an evening networking reception with fellow honorees and special guests from Texas A&M University, speaking engagements with Texas A&M students, breakfast with the deans of their colleges, and an awards luncheon where the rankings are announced.

To be considered for the Aggie 100 program, companies (corporations, partnerships and sole proprietorships) must have been in business for at least five years and have had verifiable revenues of $250,000 or more during calendar year 2009.

The full list of 2012 recipients is available at aggie100.com/Aggie100Archives/2012/2012List.
Henry Musoma, a lecturer in the Undergraduate Special Programs Office at Mays, almost didn’t attend the Regents’ Scholars spring banquet because it was his son’s second birthday, but he went to support his students.

By the end of the night, the event was imprinted in his memory. He was given the Dr. Robert M. Gates Inspiration Award, nominated by his students, who spoke highly of his support and dedication.

When Musoma’s students heard the presenter use their teacher’s catch phrase, “Your network is your net worth,” they erupted in loud cheers and laughter. Afterward, they crowded around him. “No one could even hear a word after that,” Musoma said.

“I want to open their eyes and increase their awareness of the world around them.”
—Henry Musoma

Another emotional aspect of the program for Musoma was that he was honored in the presence of the keynote speaker, Wynn Rosser — the first person he met at Texas A&M and his undergraduate advisor.

Among his many student-oriented activities since his return to Texas A&M in fall 2012, Musoma has worked with a group of 60 Mays Business School Regents’ Scholars. Regents’ Scholars are required to participate in learning communities, and Musoma led his students in a one-hour class that included discussions, field trips and samples at an international food festival. He also asked them to research a world leader.
“Your network is your net worth.”

—HENRY MUSOMA

“I want to open their eyes and increase their awareness of the world around them,” he says. “I have seen a big change in these students’ confidence since I first met them. I am so proud of them.”

“I have seen a big change in these students’ confidence since I first met them. I am so proud of them.”

Musoma was born and raised in the Southern African nation of Zambia. He completed his high school education in Zambia and Mozambique. In 1996, Musoma relocated to the United States to attend college, receiving both his master’s and undergraduate degrees from Texas A&M with a concentration in international agricultural development.

He is a graduate of the Educational Leadership and Administration Program at Texas Christian University (TCU). He and his wife of 10 years, Tyra, have three children, Kezia, Joshua and Olivia. Prior to attending TCU, he served on the Texas A&M faculty as lecturer and academic advisor in the College of Agriculture. He also held the lecture ship for Texas A&M’s premier multidisciplinary leadership program, the Academy for Future International Leaders.

Musoma has traveled extensively in Southern Africa, where his parents were posted in the diplomatic corps. His travels have taken him to Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana and most recently Tunisia, where he and his wife led eight Aggies on a five-week multidisciplinary study abroad trip sponsored by the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture.

The Gates Inspiration Award was established in 2007 to honor Gates’ legacy and tenure at Texas A&M. It is given through the Division of Scholarships and Financial Aid at Texas A&M University. Gates, who served as president of the university from 2002 to 2006, routinely challenged the faculty and staff to provide support for Regents’ Scholars through mentoring and advising.

The Regents’ Scholarship is designed to assist first-generation college students in achieving their educational goals at Texas A&M University. Up to 600 recipients receive $5,000 per year for up to four years, with the ability to add other scholarships. Each recipient must be a first-generation college student — meaning neither parent has earned a bachelor’s degree — with a family’s adjusted gross income of less than $40,000 per year.

The Regents’ Scholars Organization provides an opportunity for the scholars to form a close-knit community at Texas A&M. It hosts monthly meetings and participates in community service projects, fund-raising events and social events.

Regents’ Scholars must attend an orientation, participate in an Academic Success Program as designated by their college, live on campus during their first year, and attend the spring banquet at the conclusion of the first year.

“He helps students discern their career paths, connects them to various resources, and above all he has instilled in students the inspiration to exceed all barriers that weigh us down. Students gain a perspective to their potential thanks to him, and every student who has met him can say the same.”

—STUDENT NOMINATION FOR MUSOMA
The first Coke was a can I brought back from Israel in 1989. I thought the Hebrew writing on it was cool, so I brought it back, put it on my shelf, and the rest just happened. (I still have it, and it’s still full of Coke).

I have over 250 cans and bottles — mostly cans — from all over the world.

Some of the Cokes are ones I’ve brought back from my travels. One of my favorites is a can with a top that resembles the top of a bottle. I brought it back from a trip to Japan in 2001. Two years ago I brought back two interesting cans from Paris. They are tall and slender. One says “Coca-Cola Light plus Vitamins.” The other says “Coca-Cola Light plus Antioxidants.” Healthy Coke — who knew?! 

Most of my Cokes have been given to me from my students — brought back to me from their home country or from their travels. Two of my favorites are bottles — one in gold wrapping and one in silver wrapping, given to me by one of my students whose father worked in Abu Dhabi.

After interning in China in 2008, one of my Chinese students brought me a Coke from the Summer Olympics — it has a large picture of “The Bird Nest” Olympic stadium. Another Chinese student gave me a can that has, toward the top of the can, in large type, “9,888,888 yen.” He explained that it was promoting a contest where the winner could win that amount of money. He said the numbers are significant because 8 in China stands for “good fortune” (i.e., the Beijing Olympics began on 8/8/08 at 8 seconds and 8 minutes past 8 p.m. local time), and 9 is symbolic for “long lasting.” So winning that contest would make the person rich for a long time!

I brought back two interesting cans from Paris. They are tall and slender. One says “Coca-Cola Light plus Vitamins.” The other says “Coca-Cola Light plus Antioxidants.” Healthy Coke — who knew?! 

In the late ’90s a student from Istanbul was in my office, right before his graduation, and he noticed I didn’t have a Coke from Turkey. He said when he got back home, he’d send me one. I gave him a $10 bill, insisted he take it, and told him it would hopefully cover the product cost and shipping.

I forgot about it until about three years later when a student in my office was talking about all the different countries I had a Coke from. He asked me about Turkey, and I remembered the Turkish student I had three years earlier. I replied with a laugh, “Well, I was supposed to have one from Turkey, but the guy kept my money!” No sooner were those words out of my mouth than I had a knock on my office door, and it was that guy. His sister was graduating from Texas A&M the next day, and he had flown in for her graduation. He handed me a small bag that contained three Cokes from Turkey. I’m still shaking my head in disbelief over the timing of that.
Govindarajan, widely known as VG, spoke at Mays as part of the 2012 Dean’s Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series. Dean Jerry Strawser describes the series as a way “to bring speakers here to change the way we think and look at business” — and VG is the world’s trailblazer of disruptive thinking.

Currently the Earl C. Daum 1924 Professor of International Business and the founding director of the Center for Global Leadership at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, VG has come a long way from his humble beginnings in a poor family and small village in India. He is the 2008 Professor-in-Residence and chief innovation consultant for General Electric, and has worked with 25 percent of the Fortune 500 corporations including Boeing, Coca-Cola, Colgate, Deere, FedEx, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, J.P. Morgan Chase, Johnson & Johnson, New York Times, Procter & Gamble, Sony and Wal-Mart as a strategy coach. In addition, the innovation maven has a portfolio of prestigious accolades, including a ranking of #3 on the “Thinkers 50” list of the world’s most influential business thinkers.

VG has published several award-winning books on strategy and innovation, his most recent being the New York Times and Wall Street Journal best-selling book, Reverse Innovation. In his lecture, VG described the avant-garde concept of “reverse innovation” as “innovating in poor countries and selling in rich,” unpacking the idea with several thought-provoking examples.

“More value, lower price” — what sounds like a gimmicky slogan is actually the profound and substantial mantra of Vijay Govindarajan’s revolutionary concept, “reverse innovation.”

“In America, an electrocardiograph [ECG] machine costs about $25,000,” VG says. “How can rural India afford this?” He explained that GE recently set out to create a more efficient, $500 portable ECG machine that costs 5 cents a scan, “conquering rural India.” VG discussed other examples of innovating for the poor, including an Indian hospital that reduced the cost of open-heart surgery from $50,000 to $2,000, etc.
increasing the quality of the procedures by “mass-producing heart surgery” and allowing surgeons to specialize in specific operations. VG also used the example of Thailand’s “Dr. J.” who developed a more durable $30 (versus the U.S. average cost of $20,000) artificial leg made from recycled plastic yogurt containers. “Amputee technicians approached the job with passion, not as work,” VG says.

VG’s examples all point back to his original idea — companies must develop products with “a lot more value, at a lot lower cost.” If companies were to adopt this idea, VG says, they would tap into new, much more populated markets of poor yet fully capable and intelligent people. “Not even Apple can deny the billions of dollars in sales from creating a $10 iPod Nano and selling it to the millions in poorer countries.”

VG took the concept of reverse innovation and applied it to housing. “A house should be a human right,” he says. He developed the idea of a “$300 house” — a house for the poor and homeless that costs $300, including labor and materials, to build. What started as a brief blog post for Harvard Business School — the idea of a $300 house — has expanded into its own website (www.300house.com), attracting followers from around the world. Passionate people have submitted numerous plans for the house concept, and multiple influential leaders and businesses endorse the idea.

According to VG, poor people have the same desires and needs as the rich, “so why can’t they have access to the same things?” The “American dominant logic” in poorer markets is no longer working, Govindarajan says, and reverse innovation is no longer optional for American companies. “It’s no longer ‘What can America create for these countries?’ The new question is, ‘How can India help you?’”
Rafael Alvarez ’90 says he is on a crusade to prove a successful business can also have a social purpose. His efforts were recognized in fall 2012 with the Entrepreneurial Leadership Award, presented by the Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship (CNVE) at Mays.

In his previous career, Alvarez was a corporate strategist. He used those skills 10 years ago to start Genesys Works, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that helps inner-city high school students land internships in the corporate world. Last year, 800 students were served in Houston, the Bay Area, Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

"Being in a nonprofit is not just doing social work; it is also helping the less fortunate by helping them find opportunities in thriving corporations. It is something that can make a lasting impression on a young person, and that will change lives for generations afterward."

Rafael Alvarez ’90

"Being in a nonprofit is not just doing social work, though that is an important aspect of it. It is also helping the less fortunate by helping them find opportunities in thriving corporations," Alvarez explains. "It is something that can make a lasting impression on a young person, and that will change lives for generations afterward."

Genesys Works founder/CEO honored for entrepreneurial leadership

98% of 2011 Genesys Works graduates went to college
Celebrating new ventures
The Entrepreneurial Leadership Award honors a business leader who has been instrumental in the establishment and growth of a successful new venture — either a start-up or an entrepreneurial effort within an existing company. It fulfills the CNVE’s mission of providing education and assistance to entrepreneurs and Texas A&M students and faculty.

While the primary purpose of the award is to honor a successful entrepreneur, the secondary purpose is to give students and faculty an opportunity to interact with and learn from the honoree. In addition to being honored at an awards ceremony, recipients speak to classes and host smaller roundtable discussion sessions while on campus.

Alvarez gave a lecture in the Wehner Building and then spoke at a luncheon in his honor. In the afternoon, he attended a roundtable with several students.

“There is a still long way to go before my vision of Genesys Works comes true, but I take this award as a sign that I am truly on the right path,” Alvarez said before calling his wife Stephanie to the front of the room to join him in raising the glass statue. “She is the unsung hero who stays in the background. This is your award as much as it is mine.”

Works by Genesys Works
Genesys Works enables high school students to work in meaningful internships during their senior year in high school at major corporations.

The innovative model has received wide recognition, from Forbes Magazine naming Alvarez to its inaugural “Impact 30” list of the world’s top social entrepreneurs to President Obama profiling the company as an example of social innovation when he launched the White House Office of Social Innovation. Alvarez has spoken about the Genesys Works model across the United States at universities, including Harvard and Rice, and has been the guest of government and educational leaders in Ireland to discuss solutions to some of the world’s most pressing issues.

The Entrepreneurial Leadership Award was established at Mays in 2000. Past winners include L. Lowry Mays of Clear Channel Communications, Erle Nye of TXU, Pizza Hut co-founder Frank L. Carney, Administaff co-founder Paul J. Sarvadi and Jason’s Deli founder Joe Tortorice.
The right questions can propel a company to success, Clorox leader explains

Starting with the question “Why?” can help individuals and companies sharpen their focus. “What?” and “How?” are next. That is the path Don Knauss takes in leading the Clorox Company, where he has been chairman and CEO since late 2006. He recently encouraged a group of Full-Time MBA Program students at Mays Business School to take a similar approach. “It’s the difference between leading with your head, where you do project leadership and envision the future, and leading with your heart, where you lead people and energize others in the future. It seems to drive better employee engagement.”

“Use authority, not power. Be approachable, and you’ll learn what’s really going on.”

Knauss has overall responsibility for directing the company’s worldwide business, which produces products ranging from cleansers to cat litter, salad dressings to lip balm. It generated revenues of $5.5 billion in fiscal year 2012. “My guess is if you haven’t used one of his products in your lifetime, you are in sad, sad shape,” Mays Dean Jerry Strawser said when introducing Knauss. “They make just about everything you need in your everyday life.”

In fact, the company’s motto is “We make everyday life better, every day,” and its goal is to gain the strongest percentage of consumer lifetime loyalty, Knauss explains.

The company is celebrating its 100th anniversary, a feat Knauss says only half of 1 percent of companies ever reach. “We are a leader in mid-sized categories and in a sweet spot with the larger categories, but our company is small enough I can get my entire leadership team together within 10 minutes.”

Knauss is a former Marine officer who spent 12 years with the Coca-Cola Company before joining Clorox. He previously held a variety of positions in marketing and sales with the Frito-Lay and Tropicana divisions of PepsiCo, Inc. He began his business career as a brand manager in the paper products division at Procter & Gamble. He sits on the boards of directors for Kellogg Company and URS Corporation.

His long-standing commitment to promoting workplace equality and embracing diversity was rewarded in 2006 when he was given The Jackie Robinson Foundation’s ROBIE Award for industry achievement. It is the foundation’s highest tribute to an individual who has promoted and expanded opportunities for minorities in the corporate world.

A native of Highland, Ind., Knauss holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Indiana University. One of Knauss’ personal passions is promoting education, which includes serving on the Morehouse College board of trustees and the Marine Corps University Foundation board of trustees. In addition, he and his wife, Ellie, launched in 2007, and continue to personally fund, the Knauss Scholars Program which provides 15 children of Clorox employees as much as $10,000 each toward higher education.

Knauss describes real leadership as “taking the people and the assets they are entrusted with and making them more productive and valuable than they were.” He encouraged the MBA students to exude integrity, curiosity, optimism and compassion. He also urged them to be humble and to focus on their employees. “Use authority, not power. Be approachable, and you’ll learn what’s really going on.”
Randy Tomlin ‘81 graduated from Texas A&M University on a Friday and then started his job the next Monday at Southwestern Bell in Houston. In the 31 years since then, the changes in the telecommunications industry have kept his career path fresh. Tomlin thrives on a balanced life that encompasses personal time, work, family and physical fitness. “Sometimes it’s a triangle, sometimes it’s a circle, but all of those elements are always in the mix,” he told a group of undergraduate students at Mays. “I have a PhD in bleacher butt, in coaching, in Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts — anything our kids were involved in.”

“Keep Life in Balance,” Tomlin tells students

Now Tomlin is senior vice president of U-verse field operations at the company that is now AT&T, a position he has held since 2008.

Tomlin touts the company’s Code of Business Conduct as a clear guide for his actions along the way. “It’s as true as the Code of Honor at Texas A&M,” he explains. Like the Aggie honor code, AT&T’s code of conduct recognizes that every choice impacts others. “We develop the people who come into AT&T,” Tomlin says, “not the company. People have kids who get sick and cars that break down, and the decisions you make affect lives of others in the family. You have to remember that.”

Business Honors major Casey Gattshall ‘15 said he found it refreshing to hear that the corporate culture is shifting toward an emphasis on people rather than on numbers/results. “If you take care of the people in your organization and set them up for success, the positive results will follow,” Gattshall summarized.

Mentors are valuable to employees, Tomlin told the students. During his job interview, he told his recruiter, “All I ever wanted was a family, and a job is a way to a family.” Joe Walkoviak, who has been Tomlin’s mentor ever since, drove Tomlin through a nice neighborhood and told him with the position he was considering, he could buy a house in that neighborhood. “Joe made a difference in my life then, and 35 years later, I am still friends with him. We all need someone like that. It helps us keep things in balance.”
McEvoy says he chose to attend Texas A&M 36 years ago because, at 27 years old and newly married, he hoped to parlay his training from his four years in the Navy into a career. “So in spite of being from the East Coast and not knowing what an Aggie was, I came.” He described his workload of 30 to 40 hours a week while working on his MBA as necessary but enlightening. He kept that work ethic throughout his career.

McEvoy obtained bachelor’s degrees in biology and geology from Brown University and upon graduation joined the Navy as a diving and salvage officer, where he gained experience in diving, ship salvage and submarine rescue. After he left the Navy, McEvoy received an MBA from Texas A&M and joined a commercial diving company in the offshore oil industry. He stayed with his company after it was absorbed by Oceaneering, and he worked his way up to the top position.

Willingness to do any job that comes along and to relocate readily can lead to great opportunities, Kevin McEvoy ’79, CEO and president of Oceaneering International, told Full-Time MBA Program and undergraduate students.

“I never had a goal of being CEO. In the last 10 years, I thought each promotion/job could be the last, and I was OK with that.”

–Kevin McEvoy ’79

“I never had a goal of being CEO. In the last 10 years, I thought each promotion/job could be the last, and I was OK with that,” he told the students. “I liked the company, I liked the people, I liked the work, and I was just fine doing it.”

Brad Knotts ’13, a business honors and finance major, says he learned from McEvoy how important it is for a company to set itself apart from others. “Mr. McEvoy spoke in great length of how his company is able to differentiate itself in the market by offering first-class service to go along with its offshore products,” Knotts explains. “Due to the fact that deep-sea trees and associated hardware systems cost hundreds of millions of dollars to complete, having engineers and repair technology readily available to fix any problems is vital.”

Casey Gattshall ’15, a Business Honors sophomore, says her main takeaway from McEvoy is that if you work hard and enjoy what you are doing, success will follow. “Despite the drastic technological and industrial changes that Mr. McEvoy has experienced throughout his time at Oceaneering, he has always allowed his passion and work ethic to fuel him.”
Melendy Lovett ’79, president of education technologies at Texas Instruments (TI), works in what many would refer to as a man’s world. Because TI’s business focuses on technology, many of its employees are engineers, leading to an unbalanced gender distribution among professionals at TI: 75 percent men and only 25 percent women.

“A few years ago, there was never a line at the ladies’ room,” Lovett told Mays undergraduate students when describing her experiences at leadership conferences for TI. “There’s still no line today, but the ladies’ room is busy.”

Lovett says among engineering professionals at TI the number of women drops even further, to around 15 percent. When her daughter reached middle school and started worrying more about boys than math and science, Lovett saw the same thing happen to her daughter as had happened to her 30 years ago.

“She wasn’t sure if being smart was a cool thing or not,” says Lovett. “What I saw was social forces that were dampening girls’ potential as early as middle school.”

Lovett says teachers may not know how to keep girls interested in math and science, and the result is girls headed into high school and then college without a solid background in the subjects. “The world has changed so much for young women, and I was sad to see that the education system hadn’t.”

“The world has changed so much for young women, and I was sad to see that the education system hadn’t.”

—Melendy Lovett ’79

Lovett realized the reasons behind why the numbers of women working as engineers at TI and other companies in the industry were so low, and sought to change it. In 2001, she founded High Tech High Heels, an organization designed to increase the number of girls in advanced science and math classes in high school, and the number of girls headed into a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) major in college.

The organization focuses on counselors, teachers and students. Guidance counselors at the middle and high school levels are prepared to be better equipped to help students understand what a STEM career is and what classes they need to take to prepare for college. A training program for teachers helps them to teach science and math classes in a way that is more inclusive of both genders and more hands on.

“We’ve actually seen from our results that once teachers implement these teaching methods, both boys and girls do better,” says Lovett.

Lovett’s passion for a well-rounded education was a large part of her discussion with current Mays students. A management major in college, she realized once she got into the workforce how important it was to also understand the numbers side of business, so she got her master’s in accounting while working full time.

“We’ve actually seen from our results that once teachers implement these teaching methods, both boys and girls do better.”

“It’s really important for you to be able to handle the analytical side of the job,” Lovett emphasized.
As Stephanie Anderson ’89 and Bob Manz spoke with Business Honors students in a lecture and luncheon, a prevalent thought was evident in the students’ attentive eyes — “They have the coolest job ever.”

Anderson (managing director) and Manz (director) work for AlixPartners, a global consulting firm that specializes in turnaround management. The two work in the forensic accounting sector, and Anderson admits that they often feel “like spies on a mission” with many of their job duties.

Anderson and Manz used a recent case their team handled as an example of what forensic accounting entails, describing the process as the “anatomy of a covert investigation.”

“The beginning of the process is pretty quick,” says Manz. “We get a phone call from the whistleblower, the allegations are presented, and we make immediate decisions on the next course of action.”

Anderson and Manz said after this first spark of a potential case, the team sifts through the allegation details — examining the credibility of the company’s whistleblower and separating allegations that are “just noise” (inappropriate office relationships, bitterness toward management, etc.) from claims that are based on monetary fraud. As soon as Anderson’s team has probable cause of improper use of company resources, an office raid is conducted.

“Bob was the leader of the SWAT team,” Anderson jokes of Manz. Manz explained that in their recent case, he led a team of data collectors, IT specialists and even a locksmith to legally break into the company’s office one weekend and comb through electronic and paper documents. The team worked for more than 48 hours straight, collecting data and meticulously putting the office back to exactly how the employees had left it.

After the office raid is complete, the AlixPartners team members prepare the evidence for review, conduct interviews with the involved parties, and present their findings to the auditors and lawyers.

With more than 20 years of experience in forensic accounting, Anderson says she has seen a common theme in employee fraud — it starts small. “It’s just a little shift in their moral compass. But eventually, their perception of right and wrong swings farther and farther away from our perception of right and wrong.”

Anderson received her undergraduate in accounting from Texas State University before earning her MBA from Texas A&M in 1989. Prior to joining AlixPartners, Anderson held positions at Arthur Andersen and PricewaterhouseCoopers, working in countries such as Kuwait, Mexico and Russia.

Despite their accounting backgrounds, Anderson and Manz echoed many Mays business professors when they told the Business Honors students that they’ve got to learn sales, regardless of their major. “I never wanted to go into sales,” Anderson says, “but the further and further you climb up the ladder in a company, the more you have to learn how to sell your products or services in order to drive revenue.” …Even in a forensic accounting firm.
Enron Corp. in several capacities, including vice president in international finance, chief accounting officer for a publicly held subsidiary and vice president in accounting. Prior to that, he spent eight years at Deloitte & Touche LLP, working in the energy, wholesale trade and construction sectors.

The annual M.B. Zale Visionary Merchant Lecture Series hosted by the Center for Retailing Studies highlights the role of innovative merchandising in the success of retail businesses. M.B. Zale was a legendary retailer, visionary merchant and esteemed philanthropist. Past recipients of the Zale award represented companies ranging from Wal-Mart to Crate and Barrel to Build-A-Bear Workshop.

The Center for Retailing Studies at Mays has helped prepare thousands of Aggies for careers in retailing. As she introduced Faldyn, she added, “You all are going to have your interest piqued in retailing. If so, come see us at the center on the second floor.”

Mays Dean Jerry Strawser said Faldyn differed from many speakers in that he is involved in an area of retail that directly impacts the students’ lives.

“Our culture is very similar to the culture at Texas A&M: friendly, energetic, the highest integrity, respectful and based on family values,” Faldyn says. “We strive to bring active families what they need to stay active.”

Faldyn described during his lecture at Mays how his years at Texas A&M University, where he received an accounting degree, prepared him for his career in more ways than one. He juggled a rigorous academic schedule with a job as an assistant manager at a retail store. “I don’t think I could do my role as a manager now if I had not put in that time.”

He says he also learned from the failure of the company he worked for back then — Furrow Building Materials. “So many companies lose touch with the changing consumer landscape, and they don’t make adjustments they need to, so they get left behind,” he says, naming other businesses such as Linens ’n Things and Circuit City.

Before his promotion to CEO of Academy, Faldyn was president and CFO of the company. Prior to Academy, he worked at N.F. Smith & Associates, a privately held international electronics distributor. He spent eight years at Enron Corp. in several capacities, including vice president in international finance, chief accounting officer for a publicly held subsidiary and vice president in accounting. Prior to that, he spent eight years at Deloitte & Touche LLP, working in the energy, wholesale trade and construction sectors.

Faldyn’s lecture concluded the Center for Retailing Studies’ annual Retail Sponsor Forum. Speakers for the one-day event included Mays faculty members and industry experts who addressed topics such as showrooming, supply chain security, shelf-space allocation and motivation of employees for top performance.

Center Director Cheryl Holland Bridges said the Center for Retailing Studies at Mays has helped prepare thousands of Aggies for careers in retailing. As she introduced Faldyn, she added, “You all are going to have your interest piqued in retailing. If so, come see us at the center on the second floor.”

Mays Dean Jerry Strawser said Faldyn differed from many speakers in that he is involved in an area of retail that directly impacts the students’ lives. The company that started as an Army surplus store now has 159 stores in 13 states, and is still expanding.

“Our culture is very similar to the culture at Texas A&M: friendly, energetic, the highest integrity, respectful and based on family values,” Faldyn says. “We strive to bring active families what they need to stay active.”

Faldyn and his wife live in Houston with four 16-year-olds — two sets of twins they each brought to their marriage.
“I would just caution you to focus on what’s actually going to help you along. Don’t do things at the expense of your goals.”
–Mike Yantis ’02, Yantis Company

“A brand is a promise, and the King Ranch brand is a very valuable asset that has evolved over 160 years.”
–Bill Gardiner ’76, King Ranch

“Think about where you want to go. It’s easy to get hung up on money, but get hung up on your future.”
–Jay Graham ’92, Wildhorse Resources

Heard @Mays:
Students learn from top executives
That is what entrepreneurship is all about. You sink or swim, make lemonade or quit. Entrepreneurship is not for everybody...because it’s really hard.

–Andres Ruzo ’83, LinkAmerica

“It doesn’t matter how analytical or book savvy you are. If you can’t explain it in spoken or written fashion, you won’t get your point across.”

–Arnold Torres ’85, Daystar Television Network

“I want you to be successful, and I want you to help others after you’ve been successful.”

–Monty Davis ’77, Core Laboratories

“That should be your first job, to begin looking for an internship in August or September of the school year.”

–Anthony DeLuca ’84, SCF Partners
“40 Under 40”: Advertising Age honors Mays former student

Brandon Coleman ’05, a marketing graduate from Mays and currently CMO of Snapfinger, is among the 40 up-and-coming executives profiled in Advertising Age’s “40 Under 40” list.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact Coleman is the youngest (30 years old) among those profiled.

The annual list is the magazine’s method of honoring the innovative, young marketing leaders who have made their marks in the client, agency and media realms — all before their 40th birthdays.

Coleman joined Snapfinger — a national restaurant search and remote ordering site for take-out, delivery and catering — in early 2013. He was CMO at Macaroni Grill when he received the recognition.

Recalling his undergraduate experience at Mays, Coleman says, “Texas A&M has shown me the importance and the relevance of tradition. It should be honored and respected, but it should never impede progress. I’m very fortunate to have been taught both sides of this maxim during my tenure at Texas A&M.”

He lauds the opportunities the undergraduates have to “rub elbows with the MBAs and the people who lead some of the most successful companies out there.” He said that gives the Mays graduates a competitive edge. “We learned the hows and why’s in small groups, and then also learned the applications of the academics to the workplace.”

Project Mays surprised Bryan teachers and students at Milam Elementary School with new technology for their classrooms: student response systems, or hand-held, wireless clickers. It was part of an annual endeavor by the Business Student Council.

This year, the students raised $35,000 for the project.
Audrey Henderson ’13 was the first Texas A&M student named one of “50 Most Promising Minority Students” by the American Advertising Federation (AAF) for 2013. The program is the premier avenue for the advertising industry to recognize and recruit outstanding minority college graduates in advertising, marketing, media and communications. The program honors the students and enhances their knowledge and understanding of the advertising industry by offering networking, interviewing and industry immersion opportunities with industry professionals.

Henderson is a senior business honors and marketing major, creative studies minor and advertising certificate student from Lake Jackson, Texas.

Recipients were chosen after a nationwide search for the top 50 advertising, communications or marketing college seniors based on their demonstrated interest in the advertising industry, leadership potential and community service. Henderson will be attending the Building Bridges for Our Future Awards Luncheon in New York City as part of a three-day, expense-paid trip provided by AAF.

Henderson has had multiple leadership positions within the Aggie Advertising Club and Texas A&M’s National Student Advertising Conference team. She was selected as a member of Mays Business Fellows Group XXXI and is a member of Alpha Mu Alpha, the national marketing honorary society. Henderson also has served for three and a half years as a mentor to elementary students through Help One Student to Succeed (HOSTS) at Navarro Elementary School. Her work experience includes a marketing internship in the Windows Phone 7 department of Microsoft and an advertising account coordinator internship with The Atkins Group in San Antonio. She works as the communications coordinator for the Business Honors Program.

The Most Promising Minority Students Program and its finalists will be featured in Advertising Age, USA TODAY and the Most Promising Minority Students Program book. Additionally, each finalist’s résumé will be included in the 2013 Most Promising résumé database, which will be available to human resources and media professionals across the nation.

Startup Aggieland in Texas A&M Research Park offers free assistance to any student who is operating a business, has a strong business idea, or is curious about entrepreneurship and innovation. Resources include work space, mentoring and networking with innovators and collaborators.
James P. Kelly, a Full-Time MBA Program student at Mays, was one of 19 students awarded a $10,000 scholarship by the Texas Business Hall of Fame Foundation.

Kelly, who is from Houston, is president of the MBA Association at Mays. He enlisted in the Army in 2001 and deployed to Iraq in 2003 as a sniper with the 4th Infantry Division. He has a bachelor’s degree in finance from Sam Houston State University. He has been married for 10 years and has three children.

The foundation annually awards one scholarship at each of the program’s 19 participating Texas universities. The undergraduate and graduate students selected are all focusing on entrepreneurial studies at Texas universities.

The awards were presented at a luncheon in the recipients’ honor at the Hilton Americas Hotel in Houston.

That evening, the scholars were presented at a gala for 900 attendees, who also witnessed the induction of five Texas Legends into the Texas Business Hall of Fame — including Donald Adam ‘57 of Bryan. The Bryan native, a longtime businessman, was a 2012 Distinguished Alumnus of Texas A&M and a 1993 Distinguished Alumnus of Mays.
Donor spotlight

Businessman paves way for new entrepreneurs

Taseer Badar ’95 honored his mother and his university when he created an endowment — the Kausar Badar Family Business Honors Scholarship. Distributions from the $100,000 endowment, funded through the Texas A&M Foundation, will be used to provide scholarships to full-time students enrolled in the Business Honors Program pursuing an undergraduate degree from Mays Business School.

“I feel as though our Business Honors graduates can compete with the likes of those coming from Harvard and Yale,” he said. “I want to do all I can to help our students and faculty feel equipped for any comparisons nationally.”

Badar says he and his wife, Zohra, were eager to honor his mother in this way. “All my family members have science backgrounds — doctors of nuclear medicine and engineering — so when I chose a different path, they were concerned that I was going to go hungry. But my mother believed in me, and I am tied to the health field from a different perspective.”

Badar moved to the United States from Lahore, Pakistan, at 11 months old, and says he has been “living the American dream” since. He got his first work experience mowing lawns in his hometown of Humble, Texas, and received a bachelor’s degree in management and finance from Texas A&M. He now has 800 employees as president and CEO of ZT Wealth, which provides equity offerings in the health care, global commercial and residential real estate markets. He is also co-founder of Altus Healthcare Management Services and has developed several medical centers.

As leader of numerous companies, Badar has received 18 Aggie 100 awards, which are given to the fastest-growing Aggie-owned companies.

“To establish an endowed scholarship at such a young age speaks highly of Taseer’s success and his generosity,” said Mays Dean Jerry Strawser. “Not only will our students benefit from his financial gift, but also from the opportunity to meet and know a great entrepreneur.”

Badar says he plans to continue advancing. “I really want to compete with the Ernst & Youngs, the top national firms. I want to produce high returns. I want us to be #1, and I want to bring a lot of good people with me.”
Bolners back Business Honors Program

The Mary Pat and Michael J. Bolner ‘73 Business Honors Scholarship, created by a $100,000 donation to Mays Business School, will be used to fund scholarships for students enrolled in the Business Honors program. Bolner runs the sales and marketing arm of the San Antonio–based family business, Fiesta Spices, which distributes cooking spices in 40 states.

“I have found if you help students when they need help, they will help someone else later on. It starts a nice chain of events.”

— Michael Bolner

Bolner says he and his wife enjoy meeting the scholarship recipients and their families. He says he chose to support the Business Honors Program because he wanted to help Mays retain its high standing. “I think Mays Business School graduates can stand up against any other in the country, and I wanted to help the best of the best.”

“We are so very appreciative of the Bolners for their generosity and support of our students,” said Mays Dean Jerry Strawser. “Because of their support, our school will be in position to attract the very best students to study at Mays, and our students will receive critical financial support for their education.”

San Antonio couple backs Mays Accounting Program

T. Randall “Randy” Cain ‘82, a partner at Ernst & Young, considers the pipeline of outstanding students from Mays Business School so valuable that he and his wife have committed $100,000 to Texas A&M’s Accounting Program.

Cain, vice chair and southwest regional managing partner of the firm where he has worked for 30 years, says he and his wife wanted to create the Randy ‘82 and Jyl Cain Accounting Education Excellence Fund to help ensure continued excellence in accounting education at Mays.

Matching funds from the Ernst & Young Foundation will be used to complete the gift, which is being funded through the Texas A&M Foundation. “Without the quality students Texas A&M provides and the top-notch graduates from Mays, we would have a hard time meeting our professional goals,” he explains.

Proceeds from the fund will be used to support strategic initiatives of the accounting department. “Hopefully, it will allow more flexibility to the professors so they can focus on doing what they do best, which is to attract the top students and provide them with the knowledge they need to succeed,” Cain explains.

He praised the accomplishments of Mays Dean Jerry Strawser and Accounting Department Head James Benjamin, and added, “We are trying to give them the tools — the arrows in their quiver.”

“It is difficult to envision how anybody could participate more in the life of our school,” said Strawser. “Whether hiring our students, speaking to our classes, serving on advisory boards or providing financial support, Randy has literally impacted thousands of Mays graduates. We are truly blessed to have him as an advocate for our students and programs.”

The Cains’ affinity for Texas A&M has trickled down to the next generation: daughter Courtney and son-in-law and Tim Kuhn ’06 were part of the Professional Program at Mays, each earning a bachelor’s in accounting and a master’s in management information systems. Daughter Meredith Cain ‘13 is also at Texas A&M, studying recreation, park and tourism sciences.
Frank Raymond has been a fan of Texas A&M University — and Mays Business School in particular — since Craig Brown ’75, his co-founder of Bray International, invited him several years ago to attend scholarship events Brown hosts. Brown has long been a supporter of Texas A&M and Mays, where he graduated and was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2012.

Soon Raymond began exploring ways to connect with Mays on his own, funding scholarships and serving as a judge for the Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship’s (CNVE’s) Ideas Challenge, in which students from across campus vie to pitch their proposals for products or services to a panel of judges. Raymond’s son, who shares his excitement about innovative ideas, typically joins him.

Now, Raymond and his wife, Jean, have created the Frank J. and Jean Raymond Foundation Ideas Challenge Fund, committing to contributions of $50,000 per year for the next 20 years. These funds will support the Raymond Ideas Challenge and allow the CNVE to increase its impact on the entrepreneurial mindset of Texas A&M University students.

In addition to this gift, the Raymonds also provide scholarships for Mays students with an interest in entrepreneurship.

“Frank and Jean are true champions of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial thinking at Mays,” said Mays Dean Jerry Strawser. “Their generous support of our students and encouragement to have our students develop great ideas will have an impact on their lives for many years to come.”

Raymond said he hopes his gifts will have another benefit to Mays: “I’m hoping to attract others to building on what I’ve done.”

An Aggie turned Houston businessman wanted to help students pursue their own entrepreneurial endeavors, so he and his wife created the Jennifer and Brian Lamb ‘91 Entrepreneurship Excellence Fund.

Distributions from the $100,000 endowment will be used to support the activities of the Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship (CNVE) at Mays Business School. The center’s vision is to produce and encourage entrepreneurs. Its activities are supported by corporate and individual partners.

Brian Lamb received his bachelor’s degree in management from Mays and has served on the CNVE’s advisory council since 2010. Both Brian and Jennifer have supported the CNVE financially since 2008.

Brian serves as president and Jennifer as vice president of administration at AXYS Industrial Solutions, Inc., a Houston-based company that repurposes secondary products from industry and helps companies find new revenue streams while reducing disposal costs. Brian Lamb says the entrepreneurial approach aligns with the company’s philosophy and business ethic.

“It’s just the way we do business and the way we think,” he says.

The Lambs say they wanted to honor Texas A&M while encouraging young people to pursue their dreams. “I tell young people to focus on the things they are good at and find solutions to problems in areas they can do something about. Find your passion, and your niche will show itself,” Brian Lamb explains.

“The Lambs are helping us work to create the next generation of entrepreneurs,” said Mays Dean Jerry Strawser. “Through their time and financial investment, they are providing us with the resources to help young people achieve their dreams and pursue their passions.”

The Lambs’ company was recognized as an honoree in the CNVE’s Aggie 100 program that recognizes the fastest-growing Aggie-owned companies in 2009, 2010 and 2012.

“‘I tell young people to focus on the things they are good at and find solutions to problems in areas they can do something about. Find your passion, and your niche will show itself.’

—Brian Lamb

“‘You always hope what you’re doing will help these outstanding young people to be better students and that it will ease their burdens a little bit.’

—Frank Raymond

“‘You always hope what you’re doing will help these outstanding young people to be better students and that it will ease their burdens a little bit,’” Raymond said.
If I were not a professor, I would be... a winemaker.

Connie Weaver is a KPMG Professor in accounting and a Mays Fellow. She is also a recipient of the 2010 David and Denise Baggett Teaching Award and the 2006 American Taxation Association/Deloitte Teaching Innovations Award.
I AM READING...The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012. Congress passed new legislation that affects both individuals and businesses. The act is 154 pages long, and I’m gaining a better understanding of how these changes in the tax law will affect investment and business decisions. On a more personal level, I am reading A Memory of Light, the 14th and final book in a series written by Robert Jordan and Brandon Sanderson. My son got me started on the series years ago when the first book was released (2002), and after all this time I am committed to finishing it.

I RECOMMEND...expanding one’s horizon. In being a tax accounting professor, I spend so much time thinking about the tax law and numbers that I often remind myself that there is much more to learn than this narrow perspective allows. So, I try to read in broader areas. For example, I listened to one of “The Great Courses” on philosophy and found it to be very valuable in framing the way I teach and research.

TO KEEP UP WITH BUSINESS TRENDS...I do a lot of reading, primarily the Wall Street Journal and The Economist. In terms of my specific discipline, I also teach tax professionals at some of the national accounting firms. My interactions with these professionals help me stay current with the transactions and events that the professionals are tackling.

I THINK RESEARCH AND TEACHING ARE...synergistic. I often bring in research studies to my classroom to help students see where we are in our understanding of a particular topic. Similarly, my research benefits from the insights students provide in class discussion on current tax topics.

MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY IS...centered on helping students develop skills that will enable them to understand the material taught in class and to extend that understanding to problems they face later in their careers, even if they have never seen that particular issue before. With that in mind, I focus on the process necessary to understand the tax law and to find solutions to complex tax and accounting issues.

MY CURRENT RESEARCH IS...focused on how firms’ business models influence their reporting choices for both financial and tax purposes. Policymakers are concerned about earnings management and aggressive tax strategies, and have ascribed this behavior to poor accounting quality and the downward trend in firms’ effective tax rates. This research, coauthored with a doctoral student and a colleague, shows that these concerns may be misplaced, that these trends are associated with the business model a firm uses to operate.

DURING MY TIME OFF...you will find me running the streets of College Station and Austin. I am an avid runner and have completed three marathons so far. I also enjoy spending time with my family and friends and searching for the perfect new puppy.

I’M INTERESTED IN...experiencing different cultures. I love to travel, and at the top of my list would be a trip to Macchu Picchu or New Zealand.

IF I WERE NOT A PROFESSOR, I WOULD BE...a winemaker. I’d enjoy being outdoors among the grapes and trying to understand how different grapes produce different wine types.

MY ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR MY STUDENTS WHEN THEY GRADUATE FROM TEXAS A&M IS...to try new things and enjoy the journey as well as the destination. Those paths we think of as diversions may just be the paths to happiness.
Supporting **Entrepreneurs**, Developing **Leaders**

The Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship at Mays Business School supports and develops entrepreneurs through research, teaching and community engagement. The center’s innovative programs and services pave the way for the next generation of business leaders to take their ideas from conceptualization to reality. Learn more about how to get involved at [cnve.tamu.edu](http://cnve.tamu.edu).