

J.T. and Margaret Talkington

Margaret and J.T. Talkington were well-known as the founders and owners of *Margaret's*, a premiere, high fashion store that opened its doors in Lubbock in 1946, and attracted women from near and far for 48 years. Both she and J.T. had a strong work ethic dedicated to customer service and quality. Their customers, known as "*Margaret's* Women," came from Dallas and other major cities to shop with Margaret. Her fashions were from couture centers around the world.

Margaret's was nationally recognized as one of the top specialty stores in the United States. In 1982, Margaret received one of the highest recognitions given by her industry, the Award for Direct Mail Excellence, presented by the Sales Promotion Division of the National Retail Merchants Association and *Direct Marketing Magazine*.

Margaret and J.T. were model entrepreneurs who understood the importance of building not just a business, but the community as well. Texas Tech University was only 23 years old when *Margaret's* opened its doors. Although Margaret, a University of Texas graduate, and J.T., a Texas A&M graduate, did not grow up in West Texas or attend Texas Tech, they were committed to local development, helping Texas Tech provide positive educational experiences for youth and families in their own backyard.

Their endorsement for all manner of civic improvements and initiatives helped to build the economy and quality of life in Lubbock. Margaret and J.T. encouraged leadership experiences for young women. *Margaret's* started a juniors department in 1959 called "Young Ideas" to assist girls transitioning from high school to college. The Talkingtons organized spectacular fashion shows to support worthy causes for many Lubbock non-profit organizations. For 22 years, Margaret organized and produced annual fashion shows for the Texas Tech University Panhellenic Council, and the money raised funded scholarships for outstanding sorority members. The seats at these fashion shows were always filled to capacity and the designs on the runways rivaled any from Paris, Milan or New York!

Margaret was an active Lubbock community leader since she and J.T. moved to Lubbock in 1946. Her community service included serving on the board of directors for the Texas Tech Medical Foundation, the Women's Division of the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, the Covenant Foundation, Lubbock Regional Art Center, the Lubbock National Bank, and the Science Spectrum.

She served as president of the J.T. and Margaret Talkington Charitable Foundation, a foundation that contributes to programs and endeavors aimed at community service and improvement. One of the most significant contributions of the J.T. and Margaret Talkington Charitable Foundation was the founding of the Lubbock Independent School District's Talkington School for Young Women Leaders, which opened in August 2008. The foundation and Margaret have also donated significant resources to the City of Lubbock, YWCA, the Science Spectrum, Early Learning Centers, Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts, the Lubbock Symphony, and Texas Tech University.

J.T. and Margaret were listed as #44 on Lubbock's 100 Most Influential People for its Centennial Celebration. Throughout the years, the Talkingtons have received many awards and honors for their leadership and their outstanding civic and philanthropic contributions. Margaret received the first Distinguished Leadership Award from the Texas Tech College of Human Sciences in 1994, an entrepreneurship award from the Rawls College of Business, the Community Action Award from the Museum of Texas Tech University and the coveted YWCA Women of Excellence Award for Business. In 2009, the Board of Directors of the YWCA of Lubbock dedicated the Great Hall at The Legacy Event Center as Talkington Hall and the accompanying bridal area as Margaret's Bridal Suite. In 2007, the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts recognized Margaret with a gala celebration of her impact on Lubbock and beyond. The recognition included a series of events, display of historic fashions purchased by *Margaret's* customers, and a special magazine, *Margaret's...The Art of Fashion*, published to commemorate this outstanding woman and the lives she has touched.

Additionally, the Talkingtons were recognized by the United Way of Lubbock Alex de Toqueville Award, Prevent Blindness Award, Breedlove Fruit of the Loom Award, and the South Plains Council of the Boy Scouts of America Award. Most recently, in September 2010, Margaret was one of 15 Texans honored by Texas Education Agency as Heroes for Children.

Never seeking fame or affirmation for their charitable contributions, most of the gifts made by the Talkingtons, including those to Texas Tech University, have been anonymous. For this reason, it is impossible to estimate the monetary value of her contributions, but those who know her well realize that the significance of her legacy is enormous. Her gifts will significantly impact our city, children, those without adequate food and housing, those overcoming challenges, university students and those who love the arts. She established the J. T. and Margaret Talkington Scholarship Endowment to assist motivated students with financial needs who graduated from a Lubbock County high school or from South Plains College, and who enroll at Texas Tech University.

In December 2010, Chancellor Hance met with Margaret, and he described our efforts for Tier One, enrollment growth and building projects. He mentioned that he was excited about building an interdenominational chapel on the campus with private funds, and that he was making a major personal commitment to the chapel. She immediately said, "It is needed, and I want to help with that. How much do you need to complete the project?" She thought the architectural drawings were beautiful, and she wanted to be a part of bringing the chapel to reality. When asked what part of the chapel we could name for her and J.T., she said that she would like to have the campanario (pronounced *CAHM puh NAH ree oh*), the bell tower and bell in their names. The campanario, a special wall holding the bell, is a significant and distinctive design, a cherished functional feature that served as a communication tool as well as an item of beauty on many early Spanish missions and churches established in North and South America.

The J.T. and Margaret Talkington bell tower represents the values and ideals that set Margaret and J. T. apart as leaders in the Lubbock community and as entrepreneurs who have made our country great.

Margaret's passion and dedication have always inspired those around her to strive to be better. For her lifetime of civic, business, and philanthropic contributions, the entire Lubbock community is eternally indebted to her.