



## Clemson Legacy Connection

PLANNED GIVING NEWSLETTER

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**Barry '85 and Jeanne Reynolds — Planned Giving newsletter donor story, February 21, 2026**

### **Be the Spark that Creates the Light**

Greetings, Fellow Tigers!

February invites us to reflect on love — not just the kind wrapped in roses, gifts and greeting cards, but the enduring kind that shapes lives, builds futures, and quietly changes the world. Love can be spoken in three simple words. It can also be spoken through action — through generosity, faith, and a belief in something greater than ourselves. For Barry '85 and Jeanne Reynolds, love has always been something you *do*. And their story challenges us to remember one spark — one decision to give, to serve, to believe — can create light that shines for generations.

### **She Knew He Was Special from the Start**

In 1989, just days before Hurricane Hugo tore through the South Carolina Lowcountry, Jeanne Davis met a young Clemson graduate named Barry Reynolds in Charleston. They had been on a few dates when the storm struck. Trees crashed onto Jeanne's West Ashley home, leaving it unlivable. In the aftermath, as neighbors sorted through mountainous debris and uncertainty, Barry — then an insurance claims adjuster — quietly offered her a place to stay in his apartment while her home was repaired. She barely knew him — yet she knew enough. "I could tell he was someone I could count on in tough times," Jeanne recalls. It was more than a gesture. It was a glimpse of character. A sign of steady faith. A preview of a life built upon compassion and concern for others rather than convenience. They married in 1993 and moved to Blythewood the following year when Barry was promoted to the home office of the South Carolina Farm Bureau Insurance Company. What followed was an extraordinary career, and a mission — more than 40 years of service grounded in integrity and care for others.



### **A Life Rooted in Service**

Barry joined Farm Bureau just two weeks after graduating from Clemson University in 1985. As he now approaches retirement, his professional journey reflects the same quiet faithfulness Jeanne saw decades ago. Five years ago, Barry and Jeanne made a full-time move to Beaufort — a place already familiar from years of coastal work travel.

Consolidating from two homes to one simplified life since they were both working from home much of the time during the pandemic. This change offered more time for service, community, church, and reflection on how best to use the blessings they had been given. Jeanne, a graduate of the University of Missouri, built a dynamic career in broadcast journalism and internal communications before transitioning to freelance writing and community volunteer work. Education shaped both of their lives — and they believe deeply that it continues to shape the future of our nation.

### **Clemson Is in the Blood**

For Barry, Clemson was never simply a university. It is heritage. An uncle. Two brothers. A sister. Nieces and nephews. Dozens of cousins. “Clemson is generational,” he says. “It gets in your blood.” Living near Columbia — deep in rival territory — Barry became an unofficial Clemson ambassador. He hosted prospective students, walked them through campus, shared stories of Tigerama, life in Johnstone Hall and created lifelong friendships. He would transport students for official campus visits, then take their parents to local favorites like Mac’s Drive In and the Esso Club, letting Clemson speak for itself. By the end of the day, the students were often convinced. The parents usually were, too. Jeanne, a Mizzou Tiger, found it fitting that she would marry another Tiger. “It was just meant to be,” she laughs.

### **The Power of Education to Change a Life**

Education changed their lives. So they decided to change lives through education. When Jeanne’s brother, a fellow Mizzou grad, passed away, she used his life insurance payout to establish a scholarship at Missouri in his memory — a tribute that transforms loss into opportunity. She and Barry are working to endow that fund so it will endure. That same Christmas, Barry and his siblings chose to honor their father — and their still-living mother — with a scholarship at Clemson. “What could be a better gift,” Barry reflects, “than knowing a student is earning an education in your name?” The answer, of course, is that there isn’t one. However, they didn’t stop there. Barry and Jeanne established a new scholarship endowment at Clemson and they plan to include Clemson in their estate plan, ensuring their commitment to students will continue long after they are gone.

### **Give with Warm Hands — and Cold Hands**

When asked why they give, their answer is immediate: “We want to be the spark that creates light.” They fund scholarships now — with what Jeanne calls “warm hands” — and they have made plans to give through their estate — with what she gently refers to as “cold hands.” Both matter. Both reflect intention. Both say: *We believe in what Clemson does for students.* Barry often quotes Matthew 5:15: “*No one should put their light under a basket.*” For them, generosity is not about recognition. It is about illumination. “A small spark creates light,” Barry says. “And giving to Clemson in any amount — large or small — creates that spark. People can do more than they think if they truly examine what they actually need.”

### **College Shapes More Than a Career**

Barry’s Clemson experience was transformational. He volunteered at Tigerama, worked at the student radio station, served as a resident advisor in Johnstone Hall and built friendships that have lasted four decades. “I met people from all backgrounds,” he says. “That’s what prepares you for life.”

Jeanne remembers arriving in Missouri from suburban New York state and feeling culture shock — then discovering Southern hospitality and never wanting to leave. Both emphasize that college is not just about grades. It is about growth. “Life is not all about your GPA,” Barry says. “A large part of college is learning to interact with people who think differently from you.” Those soft skills — empathy, listening, leadership — are the true dividends of higher education. And scholarships make those transformative experiences possible for students who might otherwise never step onto campus.

### **Light That Outlives Us**

As Barry and Jeanne look toward retirement and the next chapter of life in Beaufort, their mission is unchanged: serve others, invest in students, and let their light shine. They may never meet every scholarship recipient. They may never know the doctor, teacher, engineer, or entrepreneur whose life was set on a new course because tuition or financial assistance became available for them to fulfill their dreams. We all know:

Light multiplies.

A scholarship becomes a degree.

A degree becomes a career.

A career becomes stability for a family.

Stability becomes generosity.

And the spark continues.

### **A Call to Fellow Tigers**

Every Tiger has a personal story. We have all been shaped, in some way, by Clemson and the generosity of others. The question is not whether Clemson made an impact on us.

It is: *What impact will we make because of it?*

Perhaps a current gift to pay it forward.

A planned or future gift to impact others.

A scholarship in memory or honor of someone you love or admire.

An act of service in your own community.

Each is a spark.

Generosity is never about wealth — it is about a willingness to act so that your philanthropic ideas and plans are put into motion. It takes a single spark to create light.

And that light, once ignited, can shine for generations.

### **Tigers, the future is waiting on us to become a spark.**

To learn more about how you can create your own lasting impact at Clemson, please visit our [website](#) and download our complimentary Estate Planning Guide, or reach out to us personally at [jovanna@clemson.edu](mailto:jovanna@clemson.edu) or **864.656.0663**. We would be honored to have a conversation with you about your goals, your passions, and the legacy you wish to create. An enduring Legacy is never built in a single moment — it is shaped by intentional choices made over time. Barry and Jeanne remind us that generosity is also not reserved for a certain stage of life or a certain level of wealth. It begins with gratitude. It grows through purpose. And it endures through planning because:

Long after the cheers fade in Memorial Stadium.  
Long after a diploma is framed and hung.  
Long after we ourselves have stepped into eternity.  
The light remains.  
Scholarship recipients walk across the stage.  
A first-generation student becomes the first in their family to earn a degree.  
A young mind discovers confidence, calling and courage.  
And somewhere in that journey is a spark — perhaps one you ignited. This is the beauty of a planned gift.

It is love extended forward.  
It is faith placed in the future.  
It is belief — in students you may never meet — who will carry the Clemson spirit into a world that desperately needs bright, capable leaders.  
You do not have to change the whole world.  
But you can change a world.

And when you do, that light will shine far beyond what you can see or imagine.

Tigers, thank you for loving Clemson so well.  
To those of you who have already become a spark, I encourage you to add more illumination to your endowment balances. And for those who are considering this wonderful opportunity, I urge you to provide illumination for a student's pathway so they can feel the warmth of your "Paw" during their Clemson Experience and perhaps you will ignite a thought in them to "pay in forward" when they move into this global marketplace in search of meaning and success, which will certainly benefit us all.