



Clemson Legacy Connection

PLANNED GIVING NEWSLETTER

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The Gift That Keeps Giving — A Clemson Holiday Story featuring Dan '72 and Nancy Garrison

“Where’s the Fun in Keeping It for Yourself?”

As the year gently draws to a close and the glow of the season settles in, we hope you will pause for a quiet moment — grab a cup of something warm to drink, take a few minutes to read this holiday message and let it warm your spirit. At Clemson, December is a time of reflection and gratitude, a time when we are reminded that the true magic of this place lives in our traditions and in the generosity of those who believe deeply in our future. This season, I would like to introduce you to two amazing individuals who understand our meaning and purpose so well: **Dan '72 and Nancy Garrison**, a couple whose lives beautifully reflect the joy, purpose and promise of giving.

A Life Built Together

Dan’s Clemson story began more than five decades ago, when he earned his Bachelor of Science in business administration in 1972. That Clemson foundation would guide him through a successful career with Service Corporation International, and the greatest partnership of his life began later — when he met Nancy.

The two met while working at SCI in Houston, Texas, and for more than 43 years, Nancy has been Dan’s constant companion through a life defined by movement, opportunity and shared purpose. Together, they have three children, now delight in three grandchildren, and have learned to embrace each chapter of life as an adventure — one promotion, one new city, one fresh beginning at a time.

Following Opportunity — And Finding Home



Just a year after their marriage in 1982, Dan was promoted to a regional vice president role, and the Garrisons set out on the first of many moves. “This was a big move for me,” Nancy shared, “as I was born and raised in Houston and had never moved away until then.” On to Atlanta. Florida. Back to Atlanta. And eventually, a return to Houston when Dan accepted responsibility for SCI’s international operations. Through it all, Nancy embraced each transition, building friendships and community wherever life led them — while raising their family with grace and optimism. Clemson, though always close to Dan’s heart, waited patiently in the background.

Finding Their Way Back to Clemson

“We didn’t have a lot of opportunities to get back to Clemson when our children were younger,” Dan reflected. “But after my daughter Brooke enrolled at Clemson in the mid-’90s, we began coming back to campus several times a year and reconnecting.” Those visits sparked something meaningful.

“We were busy, as most young families are,” Nancy said. “Getting back to campus for a visit and truly understanding what Clemson was trying to accomplish helped me quickly become *‘All In.’*” The more they experienced the depth of Clemson’s programs, the passion of its faculty, the promise of its students, the more they felt called to be part of its story.

Today, the Clemson story continues into a new generation for the Garrisons. Their granddaughter is now a freshman at Clemson — walking the same paths, dreaming new dreams and experiencing the same sense of belonging that first drew Dan back to campus decades ago. For Dan and Nancy, seeing Clemson through her eyes is both joyful and affirming, a living reminder that the gifts they give today are shaping the experiences of tomorrow.

Inspired by Students. Energized by Purpose.

Since retiring nearly a decade ago, Dan has dedicated his time and leadership to Clemson, serving on the Clemson University Foundation Board, Order of the Oak, IPTAY Board of Directors and, alongside Nancy, the Committee on Philanthropy. For the Garrisons, the most meaningful moments have not been in titles or meetings, but in our students. “When we spend time with students, we see a bright future,” Nancy said. “We have seen amazingly talented students who are already changing the world for the better.” Surrounded by fellow donors who share a commitment to *paying it forward*, the Garrisons found their own joy multiplied through community and shared purpose.

Planting Seeds for a Greater Harvest

During his career, Dan witnessed firsthand the impact of strong university partnerships, particularly SCI’s collaboration with the University of Houston’s sales program. “The partnership helped students be more ‘work ready’ and better prepared for their roles upon graduation,” Dan said. That experience inspired the Garrisons to imagine what might be possible at Clemson.

In 2019, they made a **Cornerstone-level gift** to Clemson’s **Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business**, establishing the **J. Daniel and Nancy Garrison Sales Lab** and supporting the **Sales Innovation Program** — creating hands-on, real-world learning experiences for generations of students. Already Cornerstone donors to athletics and leadership initiatives, this gift made the Garrisons the *first* “One Clemson” Cornerstone Program donors to support both academics and athletics — a testament to their belief in educating the whole student.

“We have been blessed beyond our imagination,” Dan shared, “and we intend to be good stewards of those blessings. We believe Clemson University is a place we can reinvest resources to yield a much bigger harvest than we ever could on our own.” And with their generosity, students now learn, lead, collaborate and innovate in spaces designed to prepare them for successful careers and position them for a life of greater impact.

A Legacy That Grows With Time

The Garrisons’ commitment did not end with today’s students. By including Clemson in their estate plans, Dan and Nancy have quietly ensured that their belief in Clemson — and in young people — will endure far into the future. Their future gift will open doors for students they will never meet, nurturing leadership, integrity, ethics and opportunity for generations to come. In this way, their remarkable legacy becomes immortal — something that will grow and continue to enhance the Clemson Experience for future generations.

“Where Is the Fun in Keeping It All for Yourself?”

Dan and Nancy hope their story inspires others to reflect on what truly matters. “Where is the fun of keeping it all for yourself?” Nancy asked with a smile. “I encourage others to explore what helps you make a meaningful and lasting difference, and in doing so, discover how rewarding paying it forward can be.”

At Clemson, generosity has always been our foundation — from Thomas Green Clemson and Anna Calhoun Clemson’s first gift to the countless donors who continue that tradition today.

As you reflect during this season of light and hope, we invite you to consider Nancy’s encouragement. What are you passionate about? How might you help shape opportunities for current students or those you may never meet, whose lives will be forever changed because you cared enough to provide a similar “Christmas Miracle” for those who are dreaming of a brighter future? When you include Clemson in your estate plans, you help ensure that future innovators, leaders and difference makers will carry the Clemson spirit and light into a world that desperately needs them.

To learn more about creating a lasting legacy through a current or planned gift, please visit our website or contact the Office of Trusts, Estates and Gift Planning at giving@clemson.edu. I also encourage you to download our complimentary **Estate Planning Guide** to support your conversations with family and advisers.

And please feel free to reach out to me directly at jovanna@clemson.edu or 864-656-0663. I thoroughly enjoy hearing from you.

May the joy, peace and true spirit of giving fill your heart and home this Holiday Season.

Ever loyal and grateful,
JoVanna

P.S. As we celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and other traditions that honor light, hope and generosity, may these simple words by Genesse Boudreau Gentry accompany you throughout the holidays:

*In the quiet glow of winter light,
May hearts grow warmer, spirits bright.*

*May kindness travel far and wide,
And love be shared, not kept inside.*

*For gifts that matter most endure—
A hopeful heart, a future sure.*

*And when we give, our light lives on,
In lives we’ll never know, yet dawn.*