



**MAYS BUSINESS SCHOOL**  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## *Mays Business School receives lead gifts in Department of Accounting naming*

*Mays Business School, September 7th, 2017*

By Texas A&M Foundation

The Texas A&M Foundation has received two lead gifts totaling \$4 million in a \$10 million fundraising campaign to name the Department of Accounting in honor of James J. Benjamin in Mays Business School at Texas A&M University. David Baggett, a 1981 graduate of the university with a degree in accounting, and his wife Denise have committed \$2 million to the campaign. Ernst & Young has also committed a gift of the same amount. Both gifts will be endowed to support the needs of the department and to ensure its future growth.

The idea to name the Department of Accounting resulted after discussions between Mays Business School, David Baggett and Ernst & Young partner, T. Randall "Randy" Cain, a 1982 graduate from the accounting program and a Texas A&M Foundation trustee. James Benjamin was presented as a worthwhile namesake for the department because of his decades-long commitment to students. The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents recently approved the naming of the James J. Benjamin Department of Accounting.



"The Department of Accounting at Texas A&M is one of the leading accounting programs in the United States, largely due to Dr. Jim Benjamin's leadership over 35 years as department head," said Eli Jones, dean of Mays Business School. "In recognition of his extraordinary leadership and selfless service, former students David Baggett '81 and Randy Cain '82 have co-led the fundraising effort to name the department in honor of Dr. Benjamin. This funding will help sustain efforts in the department to maintain its national prominence in accounting research and teaching."

The campaign to name the Department of Accounting is intended to enhance the visibility of the department and provide young people in the field additional opportunities to explore the accounting

profession. In addition, the endowment will allow the department to recruit outstanding faculty, develop international opportunities for students to learn global accounting practices, and support high-impact educational programs, such as the Professional Program and the Energy Accounting Program.

Benjamin is the Deloitte Foundation Leadership Professor and head of the accounting department. He joined the faculty at Texas A&M in 1974 and has served as department head since 1982. After attaining his undergraduate degree and CPA license, he received his M.B.A. and DBA degrees from Indiana University. He previously served as the Ph.D. coordinator for Mays Business School and director of the school's honors program.

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"Over the past almost four decades, Jim Benjamin has been a driving force in the transformation of our business school," said David Baggett. "When I came to Texas A&M in 1979, we were known largely as an engineering and agricultural school." Today, some 38 years later, the Mays Business School undergraduate accounting program is consistently recognized in the top 10 among public universities, while the bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. programs made Public Accounting Report's top 10 list for 2017.

"With Jim's personality, business savvy and leadership skills, he would have been very successful in the corporate world," added Baggett. "Fortunately for me and thousands of other accounting and business graduates, Jim dedicated himself to our success."

"We are excited to be part of this effort to name the accounting department after Dr. Jim Benjamin and know the resulting endowment will serve future students for decades to come," said Denise Baggett.

Half of the Baggetts' contribution to the accounting program campaign will create a matching gift fund to encourage other donors to contribute to the cause.

"At Ernst & Young we are a purpose-driven organization focused on building a better working world," said Cain. "When I think of Texas A&M, I can't think of a better place to invest when we're trying to live our purpose. Students come out with a set of instilled values, and this marries up with the EY purpose. You have to give credit to Jim Benjamin, who has been an extraordinary visionary in the world of accounting education."

In addition to the two lead gifts to the campaign, Mays Business School has also received commitments from KPMG LLP, Deloitte, Karen Pape '80, Karen and Rodney Faldyn '88, Becky '76 and Monty Davis '77, Lina and Kenny Lawson, Marian '82 and Willie Langston '81, Wanda and Lou Paletta

'78, and Kay '02 and Jerry Cox '72. Combined, these pledges, along with other commitments, total nearly \$7.5 million.

"I was humbled and honored when I learned of the initiative to name the Department of Accounting," said Benjamin. "While I have been gratified to be a part of the growth and success of the accounting program, I have always recognized that our growing reputation was a product of exceptional students and talented and dedicated faculty. I have been truly blessed to be surrounded by such great students, faculty and former students throughout my career."

All gifts toward the James J. Benjamin Department of Accounting naming also count toward the Texas A&M "Lead by Example" campaign, which aims to raise \$4 billion by the year 2020. If you wish to make an endowed gift of \$25,000 or more to support the naming initiative, contact Brian Bishop at (979) 862-3615 or [bbishop@txamfoundation.com](mailto:bbishop@txamfoundation.com). You can also contribute non-endowed gifts online at [give.am/JamesBenjamin](http://give.am/JamesBenjamin).

### Mays Business School

Mays Business School's vision is to advance the world's prosperity. Their mission is to provide a vibrant learning organization that creates impactful knowledge and develops transformational leaders. Mays Business School educates more than 6,200 undergraduate, master's and doctoral students in accounting, finance, management, management information systems, marketing and supply chain management. Mays consistently ranks among the top public business schools in the country for its programs and faculty research.

### Texas A&M Foundation

The Texas A&M Foundation is a nonprofit organization that unites generosity and vision to raise and manage major endowed gifts that support the future of Texas A&M University. For additional information and for photographs, please contact Dunae Crenwelge at [dcrenwelge@txamfoundation.com](mailto:dcrenwelge@txamfoundation.com) or (979) 845-7461.

### "Lead by Example" Campaign

Launched in 2015, Texas A&M University's third comprehensive fundraising campaign, "Lead by Example," is a joint effort between Texas A&M and its affiliate organizations: the Texas A&M Foundation, The Association of Former Students, the 12th Man Foundation and the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation. With a goal of reaching \$4 billion by 2020, it is the largest higher education campaign in Texas history and the third largest conducted nationally by a public university. The campaign will generate gifts in three major areas: Transformational Education; Discovery and Innovation; and Impact on the State, Nation and World.

For more information about the campaign, visit [leadbyexample.tamu.edu](http://leadbyexample.tamu.edu).