



Dr. Barry B. Thompson and Family Members (L to R) Rob Fimbel (*son-in-law*), Sandra Thompson, (*wife*) Kim Fimbel (*daughter*), Dr. Barry B. Thompson, and Andrew Fimbel (*grandson*).
Photos by Kari Lewis

Thompson Student Center Rededication

February 18, 2010

Excerpts from President F. Dominic Dottavio's speech...

Welcome to a very special occasion in the life of our university. Having the opportunity to rededicate a building, to open newly renovated space, and to honor a living legend of the university is indeed cause for celebration and ceremony.



It is fitting that the Chancellor's Century Council could join us for this event. Although Dr. Barry B. Thompson is a fierce Tarleton supporter because he graduated from here and was our 13th president, he also is a Texas A&M University and East Texas State University graduate (now TAMU-Commerce), was president of West Texas A&M University, and, of course, was the Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System.

This year we asked our students to think about how they can be Texans Today and Legends Tomorrow. We challenged them in a variety of ways to “Become Legendary”.

President F. Dominic Dottavio

Tonight we honor the Tarleton graduate who is possibly the single best example of someone who lived out the challenge to “Become Legendary”.

I know you have all heard many colorful stories about Dr. Thompson.

- as a student being thrown out of bars in Mingus by cedar choppers;
- as the president being thrown off the football field when he protested a call;
- as the chancellor being thrown out of legislators’ offices in Austin;
- and, apparently he has thrown his fair share of people out of his offices as well.



Dr. and Mrs. Thompson
photo by K. Lewis

As colorful as some of those stories might be, there are many more about his passion for higher education, his belief in the power of education to change lives, and his enthusiastic support for education to be given its rightful priority in Austin.

When this building was built in the early 1990s, it was at the edge of the Tarleton campus. There was:

- no Science Building or Dining Hall next door,
- no Recreation and Sports Center up the street,
- no Centennial Residence Hall,
- no Texan Village Apartments,
- and no new nursing building and residence hall under construction a block away.



But after the Thompson Student Center was built, it became the crossroads of our campus. In fact, much like the dining hall next door is the family kitchen, this is now the living room of the campus.

Dr. Barry B. Thompson and Col. Will Tate

Photo by Kari Lewis

It has been used by the campus and community for:

- fund raisers that included picnic basket auctions, festival of trees sales, and rent-a-gents;
- entertainment events like dinner theatres, comedians, Vegas Nights and Tarleton Idol;
- celebrations of distinguished students, alumni, faculty, and staff;
- conferences ranging from hazing to juvenile justice;
- and community events of every type: weddings, court hearings, blood drives, wellness expos, and career fests.



The Purple Poo show spirit for guests and students who gathered to honor Dr. Thompson, a former Purple Poo.

Clearly the original vision for this building to provide a “living room” for our students, the campus and the community has been met. And now with this renovation, a great facility named to honor a great man has become even better.

Dr. Thompson, we are so very pleased that we can rededicate this space in recognition of your remarkable service and accomplishments on behalf of Tarleton students past, present, and future.

And we are certainly proud to count you as one of our truly Legendary Tarleton Texans.



Greeting Mr. Hugh Wolfe, an honored guest.



Ms. Metta Collier, Dr. Stuart Chilton and Dr. Lisette Dottavio



Col. Will Tate and John Pelham

Photos provided by Ms. Kari Lewis

Dr. Barry B. Thompson, Keynote Speaker