

The University of Texas System Administration



ENDOWMENT PROFILE

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Teaching Leadership

AS PROFESSORS in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin, Jim Yates and Alba Ortiz have impacted the lives of generations of students. Dr. Yates holds the *John L. and Elizabeth G. Hill Centennial Professorship* and has spent his career working to ensure students from culturally diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have the educational services they need to advance and succeed. Dr. Ortiz is a nationally recognized scholar whose work focuses on the education of bilingual students with special needs. She holds the Presidents' Chair for Education Academic Excellence, an honor bestowed by UT Austin in recognition of her contributions to the education of English language learners and special education programs.

But as is the case with all outstanding educators, their leadership doesn't end in the classroom. The couple has established several endowments at UT Austin in support of programs that are close to their hearts, such as bilingual and special education.

"People like us aren't typically philanthropists," says Alba. "When you think about philanthropy, you think about Bill Gates or someone on that level. I think there would be a lot more support if the general public understood that a modest gift can make a big difference."

With the appointment of Chancellor Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D., in 2009, Alba and Jim were inspired to make a big difference at The University of Texas System level by creating the *James R. Yates and Alba A. Ortiz Chancellor's Excellence Endowment*.

A native of San Antonio, Alba was familiar with Chancellor Cigarroa's success as president of The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. "We knew this was an individual who had potential to make a statement," she says. "We also recognized that you can't do that unless you have some flexibility in terms of resources."

Like many of their peers in the Chancellor's Council, Alba and Jim created a Chancellor's Excellence Endowment in support of the chancellor's efforts to launch and sustain critical initiatives that add value to the work of all 15 UT institutions and



Jim Yates and Alba Ortiz

ensure that Texas is at the forefront of education, research and healthcare. Each of the endowments reinforces the vital nature of leadership, just as each of the philanthropists who generously donated the gifts understands that with visionary leadership in place, The University of Texas System will advance to even greater levels of excellence.

"We believe it's important that key leadership roles reflect the change of the demography of this state and wanted to show our support for the chancellor," says Jim. "A gift to the System in support of leadership can impact the future in ways you can't imagine."

If you'd like more information about how to start an endowment, please contact:

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