

13 East Main Street  
Avon Park, FL 33825  
863-453-3133

...inside  
**DONORS**  
AND *Shakers*



**3** The Foundation receives grant that help students who fall outside of typical scholarship requirements.



**4** Duke Energy grant updates equipment and training capabilities for Electrical Lineworker program.



**7** While pursuing acting roles on the New York stage, SFSC alum finds a rewarding teaching career instead.

## Legacy Society Inducts Jarretts

BILL AND LISA JARRETT HAVE SERVED THE SFSC FOUNDATION AND THE COLLEGE IN MANY WAYS OVER THE YEARS.

During the South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation Legacy Showcase and Fundraiser on Saturday, May 1, Bill and Lisa Jarrett were inducted into the 2021 Legacy Society for their service to the Foundation and to the College. Jamie Bateman, SFSC executive director of institutional advancement made the presentation.

“It’s hard to put into words how appreciative we are of Bill and Lisa for all that they have done and continue to do for our College and our community,” Bateman said. “They lead with a servant’s heart and don’t ask for recognition. They also lead by example. It is a great honor to recognize them for all of their support, dedication, and, most importantly, friendship. Because of their dedication and leadership, our Foundation is as successful as it is today.”

This is the third year that this honor has taken place. Joan Hartt was inducted into The Legacy Society in 2020 and Joe Jr. and Gloria Davis were inducted in 2019.

The Jarretts have served the SFSC Foundation and been friends to the College for several years. Bill Jarrett has been a member of the SFSC Foundation Board of Directors since 1991.

“The Jarrett’s record of support to our College and community is remarkable,” said Dr. Norman L. Stephens, SFSC president emeritus, in a video presentation.



Bill Jarrett (left), Lisa Jarrett, and Jamie Bateman, executive director, institutional advancement

“They supported the restoration of the Hotel Jacaranda, they helped our student athletes through the Athletic Booster Club and in improving athletic facilities, they provided housing scholarships for students in need, they sponsored numerous Artist Series programs, and helped with facilities renovations. Of course, the Bill and Lisa Jarrett Endowed Chair in Business provides a deserving member of the faculty with funds to improve their teaching and learning. Several Foundation endowments benefited from the Jarretts’ generosity, including one in my name. The South Florida State College Foundation is one of the most successful in the state or in the nation because of their many influences.”

“Bill and Lisa Jarrett have made a tremendous difference to the profession of dentistry, particularly in our practice,” said Dr. David E. Willey, dentist and owner of Lakeside Dental Arts and a member of the SFSC Foundation board of directors.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Students Are the Future Leaders of Our Community

AT SFSC, FALL IS A TIME TO RECOGNIZE THAT DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE.

I don't know of a better sight than to see so many students walking around our campuses at SFSC. I find myself greeting each one and engaging them in conversation. "Tell me your name!" "What courses are you studying?" "Can I help you in any way?"

The exciting part of being present with our students is knowing that we are talking with the future leaders of our community. The next CEO of a local hospital, maybe a sheriff in training, a judge, a doctor, and if we aim a little higher, we may have the future president of the United States who got their start at SFSC. One can dream, right?

That's what this fall looks like to me, a time to recognize that dreams are coming true. Students are going to school, some for the first time in over a year. Some are the first in their family to attend college, while others are returning to finish a dream they started over a decade ago.

Each student has a story to tell, and when you take the time to get to know those students, you hear their amazing stories and how SFSC is helping them



accomplish their goals and their dreams. I want to invite you to reach out to us and schedule a tour of any SFSC campus so you can see firsthand just

what amazing benefits our local college has for our students. I think you will be amazed and will walk away filled with hope and satisfaction in knowing that this high level of education is being offered right in your backyard.

Did you know that when you support the SFSC Foundation, you are making dreams come true? Will you join us today by becoming a donor? It's easy to do! Donations can be made through gifts of cash, investments, or naming SFSC Foundation in your will or trust.

I look forward to the endless opportunities on how we can partner together in making dreams come true.

Go Panthers!

**Jamie Bateman**  
Executive Director,  
Institutional Advancement



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## DONORS

AND *Shakers*

is produced semiannually by the South Florida State College Foundation, Inc., to inspire charitable contributions in support of South Florida State College. The SFSC Foundation raises awareness of the value of an SFSC education and promotes student success through scholarships, facilities development, and program support. By supporting SFSC, the SFSC Foundation endeavors to enhance the ability of residents in our district to obtain a college education.

## Thank You, Annual Sponsors



**Dr. Catherine P. Cornelius**

# SFSC Receives \$60,000 Grant to Benefit Part-Time Students

A \$60,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County has been awarded to the SFSC Foundation to benefit part-time students who are attending SFSC in summer 2021, fall term 2021, and spring term 2022.

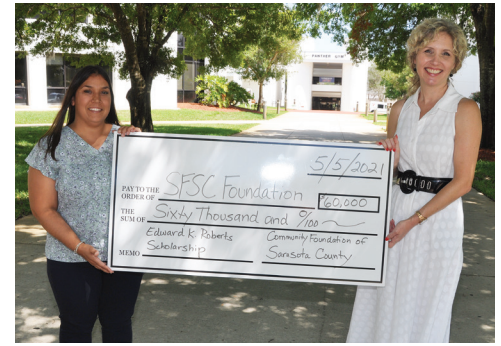
The grant comes from the Edward K. Roberts Community College Fund, which was established by Roberts as a legacy to support Florida's community colleges and other charitable organizations. Managed by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the fund continues Roberts' vision of making higher education a priority, particularly for those motivated to seek a better life for themselves.

SFSC's grant funds will provide assistance to students who are attending college part time and may not qualify for other forms of financial aid. Individual students may receive up to \$1,500 during the grant period of June 2021 to March 2022. The grant

• GIFT FROM EDWARD K. ROBERTS  
• COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUND  
• ASSISTS PART-TIME STUDENTS  
• WITH THEIR EXPENSES.

covers tuition, housing, books, child care, automobile repairs, and needs that would otherwise prevent students from attending college. Recipients are identified by SFSC's Office of Financial Aid.

"Because of grants from organizations such as the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the SFSC Foundation can support the educational goals of SFSC's students," said Jamie Bateman, SFSC executive director of institutional advancement. "The funds from this grant allow our students to concentrate on their studies while they prepare for rewarding careers. This grant also addresses the needs of parents. The Community Foundation of Sarasota County takes a two-generation



Tina Stetson, SFSC's director of financial aid, and Jamie Bateman accept a \$60,000 grant from the Edward K. Roberts Community College Fund through the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

approach to helping families break the cycle of poverty. With this financial support, students can achieve their higher education goals."

For more information, contact Bateman at 863-453-3133. For information about the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, visit [cfsarasota.org](http://cfsarasota.org).

## Grant Helped New Students With Fall Expenses

• INITIATIVE BOOSTED FINANCIAL AID FOR RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ENROLLED IN AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM.

This fall, SFSC partnered with the Florida Department of Education in a new initiative that gave students who graduated from high school in 2020 and 2021 a financial incentive to enroll in associate degree programs in the Florida College System (FCS). "Now. Not Tomorrow" encouraged recent graduates to enroll in college now instead of putting it off.

For that purpose, the SFSC Foundation received a grant of \$6,030 from the Helios Education Foundation. This was matched by funds raised by the Legacy Showcase and Fundraiser in May 2021, bringing the total funding to \$12,060. It was administered by the Florida Student Success Center.

Recipients were awarded between



Tina Stetson, SFSC's director of financial aid, and Jamie Bateman accept a \$12,060 grant from the Helios Foundation.

\$500-\$1,000 to use toward their college expenses. In assessing the potential impact of the scholarship, FCS Chancellor Kathy Hebda said, "This scholarship helps students start right now in AA and AS degree-seeking pathways that are uniquely available in our Florida College System. Florida's 2+2 system of matriculation from a state college to a state university is the envy of the nation. We are excited to partner with Helios Education Foundation to help high school seniors realize that their path to success is close to home."

Celebrate the  
Holidays  
with the  
SFSC FOUNDATION



Jacaranda Jubilee  
Monday, Nov. 29 | 6:30 p.m.  
Join us for a festive evening viewing the Avon Park Christmas Parade from the veranda of the Hotel Jacaranda.

Christmas Luncheon  
Thursday, Dec. 9 | 11:30 a.m.  
Dine at the grand ol' Hotel Jacaranda and enjoy the holiday.

# Lineworker Program Powered by Duke Energy Grant

THE \$30,000 GRANT WILL FUND ENHANCED AND UPDATED EQUIPMENT AND INCREASE TRAINING CAPABILITIES.

South Florida State College (SFSC) received a \$30,000 grant from Duke Energy Foundation to create powerful communities in the College's district of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties through its initiative, Increasing Training Opportunities for Electrical Lineworker Students by Expanding Training Capacity and Improving Safety.

This grant will infuse SFSC's Electrical Lineworker Program with enhanced and updated equipment, increased training capabilities, enhanced readiness for job opportunities, and preparation for natural disasters.

SFSC's Electrical Lineworker Program prepares students to work as electric line technicians in the construction, maintenance, and repair of electric utility systems. Through 1,500 contact hours of training at the SFSC Hardee Campus, students gain an understanding of electrical systems, operations, and safety while mastering competencies in electrical distribution, basic electrical theory, and underground electrical construction operations. They learn how to maintain electric power systems and use electrical distribution equipment. The program provides practice in climbing, framing, building single and three-phase overhead lines, pole top and bucket rescue techniques, operating bucket trucks, and



SFSC's Electrical Line Worker Program prepares students to build, maintain, and repair overhead and underground electrical systems.

maintaining and repairing underground systems. Students who successfully complete the program earn a Career Certificate.

"Duke Energy is a valuable partner to SFSC," said Jamie Bateman, executive director for institutional advancement at SFSC. "Its determination to see our students succeed in the Electrical Lineworker Program is evident from the continued support of the Duke Energy Foundation Grant. We are grateful to Duke Energy and look forward to continue working with them as we move the bar of excellence higher in the Electrical Lineworker Program."

The Duke Energy Foundation annually funds more than \$30 million to communities throughout Duke

Energy's seven-state service area. SFSC is one of 24 organizations in Florida to collectively receive \$734,000 in grants from the Duke Energy Foundation.

"Supporting educational and workforce development initiatives like this one at SFSC is an integral mission of the Duke Energy Foundation," said Melissa Seixas, Duke Energy Florida state president. "Our Foundation's workforce grants support vital programs and help develop a diverse workforce pipeline needed to strengthen our communities today and in the future."

For information about SFSC's Electrical Lineworker Program, call Christopher Yeomans, electrical distribution professor, at 863-784-7045 or email [yeomansc@southflorida.edu](mailto:yeomansc@southflorida.edu).

## 5 Ways You Can Support the Work of the SFSC Foundation

1. Make the SFSC Foundation your favorite charitable organization at Amazon Smile, and go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) when making future purchases. Learn more at [amzn.to/2g9Ku0P](https://amzn.to/2g9Ku0P).

2. Become a Friend of

SFSC by setting up an online recurring donation of \$25 or more per month using the QR code.



3. Sponsor a fundraising event, such as the Legacy Showcase, the Jacaranda Jubilee, the Christmas

luncheon, or the the Million Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout.

4. Give stock or securities. For information, call 863-453-3133 or email [foundation@southflorida.edu](mailto:foundation@southflorida.edu).

5. Join the SFSC Heritage Society by including



the SFSC Foundation in your will or trust, or name us as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

## Bar Association Foundation Raises Funds for Scholarship Honoring Jani Branham

WITH SUPPORT FROM MEMBERS OF THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION, THE CAMPAIGN WAS ABLE TO MEET ITS FUNDING DEADLINE TWO YEARS EARLY.

More students in Highlands County have an opportunity to attend South Florida State College (SFSC) without financial concerns because of the Highlands County Bar Association Foundation (HCBAF).

The HCBAF has raised over \$100,000 toward the corpus of The Janette “Jani” Seamans Branham Memorial Scholarship.

“This was a seven-year campaign that began in 2016 for which we aggressively set a target of completion for 2022,” said attorney Andres N. Oliveros, chair of the HCBAF, and of the Law Office of Andres N. Oliveros, P.A., in Sebring. “We finished two years early during one of the hardest years for many of us. This means that we will be fulfilling the dream of the scholarship’s namesake, former Highlands County Bar Association (HCBA) president, Jani Seamans Branham.”

Through the endowment, one graduating high school senior from Highlands County will be able to attend SFSC on a full tuition, two-year scholarship. The scholarship will be awarded annually in perpetuity.

According to Oliveros, Branham was an attorney in private practice at the time of her 2005 death from domestic violence. HCBA members decided to honor her memory by making her dream of a college scholarship a reality. In accordance with her wishes, they established a scholarship that would help a deserving student who had not received a Bright Futures Scholarship but would commit to staying in Highlands County and attending SFSC.

In 2007, a fund was established



The 2019 recipients of the Janette “Jani” Seamans Branham Memorial Scholarship with Jamie Bateman

toward an endowed scholarship. Attorney Mark A. Sessums of the Sessums Law Group, P.A., in Sebring began a challenge grant in which he donated \$2,500 a year if the other members of the HCBA matched the donation. In 2016, the board of the HCBA formally instituted the seven-year campaign. To date, 14 students have been awarded a Janette Seamans Branham Memorial Scholarship.

“SFSC is blessed because of the Highlands County Bar Association’s support for our students,” said Jamie Bateman, executive director of institutional advancement at SFSC. “This adventure began with a dream of creating an endowment to assist students in their higher educational goals. It was successful because of the board members, the Bar Association members, and everyone who got behind Jani Branham’s vision. We celebrate the success of the Highlands County Bar Association in making and achieving its goal long before its deadline. Thank you for your support of SFSC and our students. And thank you for being an example of leadership in our community.”

**BILL AND LISA JARRETT ARE INDUCTED INTO LEGACY SOCIETY**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

During the clinic’s Day of Giving, Bill paid for the lab bills and other expenses for many patients. “Bill and Lisa don’t ask for recognition, but they always help us to improve the lives of many other individuals in the community,” Willey said.

“When I think about Bill and Lisa Jarrett, I think about four words: humble, compassionate, kind, and friend,” said Senator Denise Grimsley, vice president of administration, AdventHealth Wauchula. “They are friends to me, our College, to our Foundation, to our community. I met Bill and Lisa about 25 years ago through an SFSC Foundation meeting when I became a board member. I’ve watched them invest in our youth in Hardee, DeSoto, and Highlands counties. I’ve watched many young people grow up under their influence. I believe that we will continue to see the impact of their investment 20, 30, 40, and even 50 years out at South Florida State College.”

Randy Surber, CEO of AdventHealth Heartland recounted the Jarretts’ contributions to the hospital and the community. “Bill’s been a member of our hospital board for over 22 years. He was recognized throughout AdventHealth last year as the Trustee of the Year for our entire AdventHealth System. And Lisa’s been a part of the Hospital Foundation Board for nearly 21 years. What a difference they’ve made.”

All-You-Can-Eat  
**LUNCH BUFFET**  
Returns on Oct. 23  
Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

19 E. Main St., Avon Park

# Derrick Roper's Love of Performance Leads to Teaching

WHILE PURSUING A CAREER ON THE STAGE, SFSC ALUMNUS TAKES A DETOUR INTO A CHARTER SCHOOL CLASSROOM.

When Derrick Roper earned his Associate in Arts degree from South Florida State College in 2006, he dreamed of a life on the stage. Instead, his journey to a meaningful career took him in an unexpected but equally fulfilling direction.

Roper's love of performing took root while he was an Avon Park High School cheerleader taking dance classes to hone his skills. He discovered that he had a talent for dance and an ability to relate to children. Once he graduated from high school, he began teaching hip-hop to 25 first-graders at the same local dance studio where he had been studying.

While attending SFSC, Roper was cast in a leading role in "Yuletide Treasure" at Restoration Center in Sebring and fell in love with musical theater. In 2009, he earned a degree in theater performance from Florida A&M University (FAMU), where he appeared in numerous university productions, including August Wilson's play, "Jitney," and a children's production of "The Emperor's New Clothes." During his undergraduate days, he taught hip-hop dance at the Boys and Girls Club in Tallahassee, was part of a dance ensemble in Tallahassee Little Theater's production of "Chicago," and played Papa Ge in Lynn Ahrens' one-act musical, "Once on This Island." He also performed in the FAMU Connection show, which promoted the university at high schools and college fairs.

During his last semester at FAMU, Roper was picked for a leading role in Disney's "High School Musical II, the Live Show." From January through September, he performed six outdoor shows a day. This experience became the subject of his thesis and earned him an Equity card from the Actors' Equity



SFSC alumnus Derrick Roper finds his calling in teaching theater performance to students at the Achievement First charter school in New York.

Association.

"It sounds grueling, but it truly was a learning experience," Roper said. "It was so much fun."

Roper then began pursuing a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), garnering lead roles in college productions of "Zombie Prom" and "Hair." By the time he earned his degree in 2012, he was ready to follow his dream to Broadway.

The move to New York City proved to be a difficult transition. He went to lots of auditions and received some call backs but couldn't get his big break. The rejection made him question his talent, and he still had to work. Eventually, Roper took a job teaching hip-hop at the Harlem Children's Zone to support himself while he continued to pursue acting. There, he unintentionally found a new calling. In time, he was promoted from dance instructor to middle school program coordinator to assistant director for middle and high school.

"I had staff working under me. I was in leadership. I had been teaching kids

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

for so long and liked teaching kids that it became second nature."

Just before the pandemic hit, Roper became the full-time theater teacher at Achievement First, a charter school in New York. He spent his first year leading remote classes.

"I love teaching theater," Roper said. "The school is predominately African American, so I'm teaching little boys who look like me. When I was in school, I didn't have a *me* as a teacher. And I didn't have anyone to expose me to theater at a young age. Although I loved to perform, I didn't know what it was."

"There's no better thing for me than to be on the stage," he said. "But to teach it to little ones, I'm certain that I'm giving them knowledge and confidence they'll use for the rest of their lives. Just to know that they have to deal with the injustice in the world with being a little black or brown kid — to make sure that they have support, that they have someone to go to, that Mr. Roper



Roper (right) played Wendal in Cheryl L. West's play, "Before It Hits Home" — his graduate thesis performance.

is always there. I love watching the kids blossom and helping them rise to their full potential."

Now, Roper has a message for young people: "Find your passion and make sure that it's something that you love to do. No matter the obstacle, go after that passion and live life to the fullest with no regrets. No matter where you're from, no matter how small the town is, you can dream big and see what you need to do to follow your dream."

# Take Stock in Children Introduces New Staff

Take Stock in Children welcomes three new staff members.

The new student services coordinator is **Dr. Benjamin Carter**. Dr. Carter began his career at South Florida State College (SFSC) in 1996 as the Job Training Partnership Act specialist. In 2007, he began working for the College's Tutoring and Learning Center, where he helped set up the writing, math, and open labs and provided tutoring assistance to students. He was the College's director of outreach and academic support when he retired in 2018.

Dr. Carter is also an Army veteran and the bishop of Bethel Pentecostal Holiness Church in Avon Park. He frequently delivers prayers at SFSC's annual Veterans Day and Commencement ceremonies.

"As I venture into this next chapter of life, I am grateful for the expanded



Jamie Bateman (left) and Anastasia Saunders (right) introduce new Take Stock in Children Staff: Latasia Polk, Dr. Benjamin Carter, and Dolores Breedlove.

opportunity to serve students within our community towards a successful career pathway," Dr. Carter said.

The new college success coach is **Dolores Breedlove**, who holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM) and an Associate in Science from SFSC.

Breedlove joined SFSC in 2018 as a part-time staff assistant with the Emergency Management Technician

(EMT) and Fire Science programs. Most recently, she was a case data specialist with the College's Farmworker Career Development Program.

**Latasia Polk** is the new part-time college success coach in DeSoto County. A 2016 University of Florida graduate, she earned her Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a concentration in Africa and pre-medicine.

Polk is the former nutrition coordinator for Senior Friendship Centers in Arcadia, where she taught specialized health and wellness classes, managed the daily operation of a dining site for the elderly, supervised volunteers, and planned special events. She now works as a substitute teacher for the DeSoto County School Board. Previously, she served as a research assistant with the University of Florida College of Medicine's Department of Epidemiology.

## Friends of the Foundation Make an Impact on Students

Through financial support from the SFSC Foundation, SFSC students get the education and experiences that help them become future leaders. We appreciate all of the Friends of the Foundation who support our students and their future. We know the impact that each of you make, and we enjoy sharing stories about the impact you are making. Recently, one of our scholarship recipients sent us a card with this testimony:

"I thank you for the scholarship awarded to me in the amount of \$500. As you are aware in your line of work, this scholarship will benefit more than just one person, it will benefit my entire family! The same



way that a house becomes a home for a family and a building becomes a place for opportunity within our community. Thank you again for investing in my family and me as well as into our community here in Highlands County. I look forward to giving back and serving our community as an RN.

Please remain safe,  
Anthony, SFSC Student."



Making a Difference =  
**\$10**



Educational Book =  
**\$80**



New Lab Technology or Equipment =  
**\$300**



Tomorrow's Leader Tuition =  
**\$2,593**

The Future of the Panther Community = **Priceless**

Support the work of the SFSC Foundation as we help students receive a college education and become the leaders of tomorrow.

**GIVING TUESDAY**  
**NOV. 30, 2021**

**sfsc foundation**  
SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE



South Florida State College  
600 West College Drive  
Avon Park, FL 33825

## On the Calendar

### Foundation Events

#### The Jacaranda Jubilee

MONDAY, NOV. 29, 2021 | 6:30 P.M.  
The Hotel Jacaranda Veranda  
RSVP required

#### #GivingTuesday

TUESDAY, NOV. 30, 2021  
[southflorida.edu/support-sfsc/givingtuesday](https://southflorida.edu/support-sfsc/givingtuesday)

#### Dine Before the Show: Gatlin Brothers, A Country Christmas

THURSDAY, DEC. 2, 2021 | 5:30 P.M.  
Board Room on the Highlands Campus  
Tickets required: [sfscarts.org](https://sfscarts.org)

#### Christmas Luncheon

THURSDAY, DEC. 9, 2021 | 11:30 A.M.  
The Hotel Jacaranda  
RSVP required

#### Dine Before the Show: Michael W. Smith

MONDAY, Dec. 13, 2021 | 5:30 P.M.  
Board Room on the Highlands Campus  
Tickets required: [sfscarts.org](https://sfscarts.org)

#### 5th Annual Million Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout

Thursday-Sunday, Jan. 13-16, 2022  
Sun 'N Lake Golf Club, Sebring  
Reservations and tee times are not required.

#### Dine Before the Show: The Simon & Garfunkel Story

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 9, 2022 | 5:30 P.M.  
Board Room on the Highlands Campus  
Tickets required: [sfscarts.org](https://sfscarts.org)

#### Legacy Showcase and Fundraiser Featuring Dueling Pianos

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022  
5:30 P.M. SOCIAL | 7 P.M. PERFORMANCE  
Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts  
Tickets will be available in April at [sfscarts.org/show/pianos](https://sfscarts.org/show/pianos).  
Limited space available.

### Board Meetings

#### Board Meeting

TUESDAY, NOV. 9, 2021 | 6 P.M.  
The Hotel Jacaranda

#### Board Meeting

TUESDAY, JAN. 11, 2022 | NOON  
SFSC Board Room

#### Executive Committee Meeting

TUESDAY, FEB. 8, 2022 | NOON  
The Hotel Jacaranda

### SFSC Events

#### 2021 Fall Commencement

THURSDAY, DEC. 16, 2021  
Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts  
Highlands Campus

Annual and event sponsorships are available. Please contact the Foundation for more information.