



NEWS RELEASE

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CAMPAIGN OPENS WITH NAMING, \$10 MILLION GIFT

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The new UTPB performing arts center planned for the Center for Energy and Economic Diversification (CEED) campus midway between Midland and Odessa will, in the future, be recognized as “The Wagner Noël Performing Arts Center” with the announcement of a \$10 million combined gift by Lissa and Cy Wagner of Midland and Ellen Noël of Odessa. The announcement was made by James R. Huffines, chairman of the University of Texas System Board of Regents, at a news conference that also included Texas Speaker of the House Tom Craddick, State Senator Kel Seliger and State Representative Buddy West.

In May, 2006, the Texas Legislature approved \$45 million in tuition revenue bonds for the facility and in July 2006, the UT System Board of Regents approved the expenditure of an additional \$3 million for the project. In February, a 24-member Special Community Advisory Committee appointed by the UT System Board of Regents recommended pursuit of a \$66 million project that would include a 2,000 seat performance hall, a 200 seat multi-use recital hall, and academic space for an expanded UTPB music program.

Friday’s news conference officially began the campaign to secure commitments for the \$18 million needed to fund the enhanced project recommended by the Advisory Committee. With the Wagner Noël gift, \$8 million is the amount still needed. A fundraising deadline of June 30 has been set in order to expedite project planning, design and construction.

“This extraordinary gift demonstrates once again the vision and commitment of these two distinguished families to making the Permian Basin the absolute best it can be. At the same time, their gift brings

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even closer the dream of an enhanced facility to serve this region and the University,” said Chairman Huffines.

In thanking the Wagners and Mrs. Noël, UTPB President David Watts pointed to the project as “an unprecedented opportunity for the region to work together to expand and improve education, arts and the quality of life in the Permian Basin.”

The Wagner and Noël families – related through the marriage of Lissa Noël to Cy Wagner – have a long history of generously supporting UTPB and a multitude of area programs and institutions involved in education, culture, human and social services and economic development.

Lissa Noël Wagner grew up in Odessa and is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. She has been an active leader in many charitable and civic activities including the Board of Trustees of Texas Christian University, the Board of Directors of the Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, Calif., the Georgia O’Keefe Museum in Santa Fe, N.M., and the Museum of the Southwest in Midland where she has served as president.

Cy Wagner is native of Tulsa, Okla., and a graduate of the University of Oklahoma. He and partner Jack E. Brown joined together in 1962 to form the company that is now Wagner & Brown, Ltd., an independent oil and gas exploration and production company based in Midland since its beginning. Mr. Wagner has served on the boards of many civic, charitable and corporate entities including the Texas Medical Center, Chase Bank of Texas, and the All-American Wildcatters Association where he served as President. He was honored as an inductee to the Petroleum Museum Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and he has received the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement.

In 1986, the Wagners created an endowment at UTPB to fund the Ellen and Bill Noël Distinguished Chair for Energy Research. That same year, they also donated \$500,000 toward the construction and development of the CEED building, which is the site of the new performing arts center.

Mrs. Noël is the widow of the late W. D. “Bill” Noël. She grew up in Tulsa, Okla., graduated from

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Duke University and pursued graduate studies at UT Austin. Mr. Noël was a graduate of the UT Austin and he received the University's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1985. Mr. Noël was recognized as a successful and forward-thinking entrepreneur who served as Chairman of the Board of the Rexene Corporation and El Paso Products Company and led efforts to bring the petrochemical complex to Odessa. Mr. Noël gave unselfishly of himself to the University of Texas and to the community and Mrs. Noël continues that tradition today. She has served countless area and state civic and charitable organization and remains involved with UTPB through the Ellen and Bill Noël Scholarship Fund, the UTPB Support for Excellence Fund, and the UTPB Development Board. The City of Odessa honored the Noël family in 1987 with the creation of the downtown Noël Heritage Plaza.

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