



### ***Season's Greetings, Tigers!***

Mother Teresa said, "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." It is a sentiment that has endured the test of time, and it is as true today as it was when Thomas and Anna Clemson founded our great University. With a love for each other and a deep appreciation of higher education, they prepared their estate plan to gift their land and most of their financial assets to establish a "high seminary of learning."

Generations of Tigers have followed in Thomas and Anna's footsteps, giving back to the University they dearly love. Every gift made to Clemson is very important and used to ensure a world-class educational experience. As the semester draws to a close and our newest graduates prepare to walk across the stage and receive their degrees, we witness an amplified testament of Thomas and Anna's vision and the actions of so many others who accepted the challenge to improve and enhance the Clemson Experience for future generations. This is an active demonstration of one generation paving the way for the next with the hope that they will engender more progress to solve the world's greatest challenges.

The late great Charlie Munger, partner of Warren Buffett, passed away a few weeks ago at the age of 99. He once said, "People calculate too much and think too little. Remember that reputation and integrity are your most valuable assets — and can be lost in a heartbeat. You should go to bed smarter than when you woke up." Munger also added, "Learning doesn't stop when you graduate from college. Formal education does. Successful people know that true success requires a 'student for life' mindset."

We look forward to watching our graduates change the world, equipped with the knowledge and skills to be successful and productive citizens. They represent the extraordinary impact we can have on others. Your generosity inspires them to give back to the institution that has given them so much.

It is a feeling that alumni like Lee Ayers and his wife, Janice, know well.

### ***Anything you give back to, you will get more than you give.***

"How can you honor the institution that has supported and educated you for decades?" Since graduating from Clemson, Lee Ayers '82 has pondered this question many times. "Clemson has been an enormous part of my life since I stepped foot on campus." From his first day as a freshman, Lee began developing relationships with fellow students and professors, whom he considers part of his Clemson Family.

“Looking back, I see how those connections positioned me for great opportunities,” Lee shares. “I received a world-class education at Clemson, and upon graduation, I took a job at an electric co-op in Columbia, working for a fellow alum.” This new position thrust Lee instantly into the responsibility of running a complex project. Thanks to his experiences — both in and out of the classroom — while at Clemson, Lee was well-prepared for this role.

While in high school, Lee focused on electrical engineering programs and received numerous offers from other universities. Ultimately, he felt at home on Clemson’s campus and chose electrical engineering as his major. During his time on campus, Lee was involved in numerous organizations, including Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, student government and Tiger Brotherhood. “I had a great student experience,” Lee recounts. “I was involved and served in leadership roles within these organizations, which helped prepare me for the business world.”

Lee met his wife, Janice, when she conducted orientation at Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative in Lexington, South Carolina. They have been married for 34 years. Janice retired in January of 2023, after 44 years of service. Lee has been at Mid-Carolina for 38 years “and counting,” and currently serves as vice president of engineering.

“Lee quickly introduced me to Clemson. He’s had season football tickets since he graduated, and after we started dating, I enjoyed attending the games with him. It did not take long for me to see that Clemson is a huge part of who Lee is, and it didn’t take any time for Clemson to win my heart, too” Janice remarked. She added, “Lee is the definition of ‘A Clemson Gentleman Who Needs No Introduction,’ and wherever we go, he is an excellent ambassador for Clemson”.

Lee was awarded “Volunteer of the Year” in 2021 for his extensive involvement with the Alumni Association, an organization with which he is proudly associated. “I love the inclusivity of Clemson’s Alumni Association,” Lee said. “It’s one of the few associations that does not require graduation as a prerequisite for membership. Simply having enrolled and completed 12 semester hours makes someone eligible to be a member of the Clemson Alumni Association. “That speaks volumes to me,” building a family-oriented, alumni-friend-family type organization that we all know, love and enjoy,” he said.

Lee serves as president of Columbia’s Second Century Society, a Clemson University-based luncheon club that provides a forum for Clemson representatives to share information about the University with alumni and friends in the Midlands area. Active as a volunteer since its inception, Lee has provided leadership and service to the Second Century Society for more than 30 years.

Something Lee says he has realized over the years: “If you spend your time wisely, and on the right things, anything you give, you can get back much more than you gave.”

“Our gift to create the Lee Ayers, ’82, and Janice Ayers Endowment for Excellence will live in perpetuity” and knowing that gives both Janice and Lee “great peace of mind,” Lee said.

Lee and Janice Ayers are outstanding ambassadors for Clemson. They are passionate about making sure Clemson’s future continues to grow and thrive. As we harness our collective passion for academics and athletics, we create a flame that serves as a beacon for all Clemson Tigers who seek excellence in the classroom, on the fields and courts of competition, and in the marketplace.

“Best is the Standard” is in everything we do, as illustrated in our recent NCAA Championship in Men’s Soccer. Congratulations to the players and coaches for an incredible win. You embody our determined spirit and enhance our reputation around the globe.

### ***Happy Holidays!***



As you gather with family and friends this holiday season, please take time to reflect on your many blessings. It’s a season of hope, and we pray hearts can be joined together for peace and safety around the world. Each of us holds the power to make the world a better place. How will you leave your mark? Big or small, how will you choose to invest in the future? Paraphrasing Munger, we should sit down and write our obituary, and then spend the rest of our lives making plans and taking action to live up

to it.

To help you with gift and estate planning options, please visit our [website](#) where you will find useful online resources and information. Required minimum distributions (RMDs) must be made by December 31, and we encourage you to consider an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). There are so many benefits to making a distribution directly from your IRA to Clemson, which can be found [here](#). For information about general estate planning, please download our free [Wills Guide](#), designed to help you navigate your thoughts and plans before visiting your attorney and financial advisors. As always, we are here to help you explore and navigate gifts you can make today and tomorrow. Lastly, we thoroughly enjoy hearing from you! Please call or email us at [giving@clemson.edu](mailto:giving@clemson.edu).

Sending you our very best wishes for the most joyful and happiest of holidays. We hope you will surround yourself with those who make you smile and warm your heart. May your lives be richly blessed with good health and happiness.

C U next year!

GO TIGERS ~ Let’s Beat Kentucky!