



'Iowa Corn Cobs' to the Core: Evonne and Tom Smith

Tom Smith insists that he and his wife, Evonne, are just a couple of "Iowa corn cobs."

Never mind that they were in the vanguard of geotechnology, creating revolutionary software and building a global company that never had to borrow a nickel – or that Tom won the Society of Exploration Geophysicists 2000 Enterprise Award, and Evonne was a finalist for the Ernst & Young Houston/Gulf Coast Area Entrepreneur of the Year award.

The Smiths, Tom (class of 1968 and 1971, geology) and Evonne (class of 1968, textiles and clothing), model Iowa humor and hospitality as they open their hearts and home to fellow Iowa Staters, even hosting regional gatherings for alumni and donors. Loyal friends to the university, they established the Smith Family Foundation Departmental Chair in Geology and provide leadership support for facilities at the Carl F. Vondra Geology Field Station. Recently, they created an endowed fund supporting students in Evonne's home college, Human Sciences.

In recognition of their generosity, Evonne and Tom are Order of the Knoll William M. Beardshear Society members. Together, they were recognized with an Iowa State Distinguished Alumni Award in 2015.

Today, Tom and Evonne live in Austin, Texas, but their Iowa roots – she grew up on a farm in northwest Iowa, he in Okoboji – ground them. Tom says what's most important in life is who you love and not what life gives you. During a lively conversation, Tom gently teased and spoke for Evonne, who sat next to him. She was unable to speak directly due to her Parkinson's Disease.

How did you two meet?

TOM SMITH: Evonne doesn't like this story, do you? (chuckles) But I like to say we met in a bar – the Safari Lounge in downtown Ames. Afterward I thought, I want to see that cute little blonde again. I got her number from a sorority sister of hers and

CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

During the *Forever True, For Iowa State* campaign, visionary giving like the Smiths' is transforming departments and colleges – advancing priority areas, cultivating new strengths and, most important, creating life-changing experiences and opportunities for Iowa State students.



FIELD CAMP OF DREAMS

The Smiths' history of giving to Iowa State began with improvements to the Carl F. Vondra Geology Field Station in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming, where Tom spent a summer as a geology student. For decades the facilities consisted of four buildings recycled from a World War II Japanese-American internment camp, a shower house and outhouses. "We did begin low with our philanthropic support," said Tom. "You can't get lower than replacing the sewer system in the famous Five-holer Outhouse at the geology camp." Through the years, the couple's generosity has resulted in a new main lodge and student living quarters, and a staff position to teach and to oversee the camp. They also created the Smith Family Foundation Departmental Chair in Geology, currently held by Sven Morgan. "These funds have been so generous and helpful to me and the department," said Morgan. "We can do so many more things that elevate us and allow us to compete on the national and international stage."

Evonne Smith Endowed Fund Keeps Department on the Cutting Edge

Established in 2017, the Evonne Smith Endowed Fund for Excellence in Apparel, Merchandising and Design is already sewing up new honors for Iowa State. Three students, Emily Clark, Allison Kirstukas and Lydia Loya, were chosen to present their garment designs and research at the 2017 International Textile and Apparel Association conference this past fall – a notable honor since it's uncommon for undergraduates to have their research accepted for presentation at this premier conference. Kirstukas won first place for the best undergraduate research paper.

"Support from the Evonne Smith Endowed Fund was fundamental in my ability to attend the conference to present my work and represent Iowa State," said Emily Clark (class of 2018, apparel, merchandising and design). "I am so grateful for the Smiths' generosity, as their gift provided me with the most significant professional development experience of my college career."

This year Iowa State students once again stood out in the undergraduate research category. Co-authors Courtney Beringer and Sam VandeLoo took first, and Tara Efobi placed second; the three will once again attend the conference thanks to the Evonne Smith Fund. The fund will also support the fall kickoff of Iowa State's new National Retail Federation student chapter and enable the College of Human Sciences to bring Karen Katz, former CEO of Neiman Marcus, to speak at the event.

"The Evonne Smith Fund will provide opportunities for students to interact with key organizations within our discipline and high-level executives like Karen Katz," said Eulanda Sanders, chair of the department of apparel, events and hospitality management and the Donna R. Danielson Professor in Textiles and Clothing. "Moreover, it's not just unusual for undergraduate students to be able to both conduct research and present at professional conferences – it's a game-changer for the students and the department."

No. 3
in fashion design
among public
schools

(U.S. News & World Report)

No. 2
in fashion
merchandising

(Fashion School Career Advice)

No. 1
in scholarly
contributions to
fashion marketing

(Clothing and Textiles Research Journal)

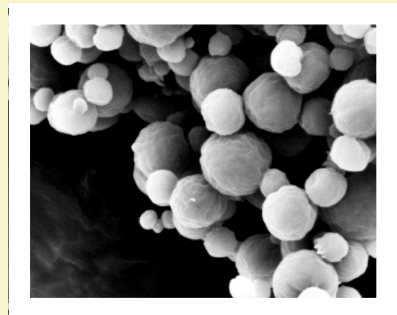


BOREL GIFT SUPPORTS GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Jim (class of 1978, agricultural business) and **Marcia** (class of 1978, family environment) **Borel** recently established the Borel Global Fellows Program at Iowa State. Through their life's work and travel – Jim's career in food and agriculture at DuPont and Marcia's roles as a social worker and volunteer – the Borels have seen firsthand the life-changing impact that access to improved tools, better seeds and education on enhanced agricultural practices has for smallholder farmers and their families. Borel Fellowships will be awarded to students from Africa who are pursuing advanced agricultural degrees and intend to return to Africa, particularly the sub-Saharan region, upon graduation to address food and nutrition insecurity and poverty, and help subsistence farmers improve their productivity and commercial success.

A New Home for Nano Research

Researchers in the Nanovaccine Institute at Iowa State are developing nanovaccines and nanotherapeutics that promise to revolutionize how diseases are prevented and treated. Led by Balaji Narasimhan, the Vlasta Klima Balloun Faculty Chair, the interdisciplinary team consists of engineers, doctors and chemists from across the university – and the nation – working to develop new nano-scale vaccines and therapeutics. Thanks to generous donors, the Nanovaccine Institute, which previously had efforts spread across campus, will have a centralized home on the fifth floor of the new Advanced Teaching and Research Building. Several alumni made gifts to help complete the state-of-the-art research space that will greatly advance the team's efforts – including a gift of \$2 million from Jim Balloun (class of 1960, engineering), \$1 million from Mike (class of 1959, engineering) and Jean (class of 1960, zoology) Steffenson, and \$300,000 from Robert Lane (class of 1968, engineering).



Researchers in the Nanovaccine Institute are developing nanovaccine platforms to combat a deadly disease: pancreatic cancer. Their approach is to load fragments of proteins associated with pancreatic cancer into nanoparticles to be introduced into the body to help a patient's immune system target and kill cancer cells. The nanoparticles average just 300 billionths of a meter in diameter.

Scanning electron microscope image courtesy of the Nanovaccine Institute.

waited a couple days before calling. I didn't want to seem too eager.

We got to know each other in coffee shops. I was as poor as a church mouse and could only afford two cups of coffee!

After graduation, Evonne got a job designing clothes in Denver. I started a master's at Iowa State. We'd gotten better acquainted after graduation, both in Denver and at Okoboji. In the fall she visited me in Ames during Homecoming, and that Sunday night, I was driving her to the airport. As I reached for the door handle to help her into the terminal, I thought, *I don't want to spend any more time away from this girl.* On the spot, I asked her to marry me. She took her time to reply. Every second was torment, but she finally said yes.

After you married, you developed your business, Seismic Micro-Technology, together, even though Evonne's professional work was in textiles.

Double-underline this: Evonne's farm background provided the philosophy that guided our business. And let me brag about her financial acumen. No way could I ever repay her for the dedication she put into my field.

The safest thing for us would have been for me to stay with Chevron in Houston, where I had been for 10 years. But you have to have faith in the future. I resigned to go out on my own. Personal computers were just coming on the market, so I began using data on PCs to make maps to decide where to drill for oil or gas. Evonne was employee number two of our new company. She handled the books and finance, and I was the

geophysics software developer. We did everything out of cash flow, everything. If we didn't have the cash, we didn't do it. We had no business experience. It was all OTJ – on-the-job – training.

When we sold the business, we had 150 employees worldwide, in the U.K., Singapore, Houston, etcetera. We sold it debt-free.

Many couples would wonder how you could work together all those years!

Evonne and I worked side by side for about 20 years. We always respected each other, like our parents. They were good role models. If you don't have respect for each other, love is going to die.

Why does Iowa State remain important to you?

The question is, what makes ISU so special? We can't define it, but we know it. Life for us began there.

We volunteer to help ISU because it's the right thing to do. Nothing complicated – we give for the same reason. There's no rational explanation. We want to pay forward the advantages we have enjoyed.

What do you hope to achieve through your philanthropy?

We'll never fully achieve our goals. Shame on us if we do. It would mean we've set them too low.

We want to treat everyone with dignity and honor and never drop the ball. We want to help people. Our philosophy focuses on sustaining the mission, vision and joy of ISU. ISU is just that special.



photo: Jim Heemstra

"We should always be aware of opportunities to make things better. All through life, you can make a decision to just stay put, or you can decide to do things differently. Sometimes that decision is best made in front of the bathroom mirror."

TOM SMITH



Trice Blessed

Once the new Iowa State Center extended the campus to the south, the area offered wide open spaces for a new football stadium. By 1972, it had become clear that Clyde Williams Field, located next to State Gym where Eaton and Martin residence halls now stand, could no longer contain the university's growing football crowds.

Completed in 1975, the new stadium was known as Cyclone Stadium until 1997, when it was renamed Jack Trice Stadium to honor the African-American player fatally injured during a game at the University of Minnesota in 1923.

The original stadium was a bermed earthwork bowl with concrete seating and a capacity of 42,500; expansions and improvements – funded in part through donors – have increased the fan capacity and maintained the stadium's tradition of excellence. The recent South End Zone project created permanent

seating in the upper and lower bowls of the south end and added the two-story Sukup End Zone Club and another massive video board. The renovation increased the stadium's capacity to 61,500, making it the third largest in the Big 12.

In spring 2018, a plan was approved to expand the Bergstrom Football Complex, add a student-athlete academic and sports nutrition center, and further improve the north end zone entrance and new team areas for several Olympic sports. Through a partnership announced in August, MidAmerican Energy will support the project, and the playing field will be called the MidAmerican Energy Field at Jack Trice Stadium.

From Jack Trice's early construction to its most recent advancements, donors have helped build a stadium that's given the team a home advantage – and made game-day memories for thousands of Cyclone fans.



Thousands of cyclists took the "Cyclone Loop" through Jack Trice Stadium when RAGBRAI, the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, brought more than 20,000 riders through Ames on July 24, 2018. Most often heard remark as they emerged from the team tunnel: "Wow!"

▶ **Watch this video to learn more about the Jack Trice story:**
<http://bit.ly/JackTrice>

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