

A Heart for DBU

ROLAND AND ANN KELLEY

For those who have the privilege to know Roland and Ann Kelley, they are never just friends; they are family. Married for 59 years, Roland and Ann have combined to pour their lives into whomever God brings into their path, and the number of lives touched remains countless.

Over 65 years ago, Roland Kelley was freshly discharged from the Army Air Corps, making his way back to his hometown of Monroe, Louisiana. While back home, a friend set him up on a blind date with a high school senior named Ann from their church, College Place Baptist. They were married two years later.

The newlyweds soon moved to the Fort Worth area as Roland pursued a graduate degree at Texas Wesleyan University. While at TWU, a faculty member approached Roland about filling an unexpected vacancy in the business department. The offer surprised Roland, who held an undergraduate degree in business. Roland accepted the temporary position, trusting the door God had opened.

After graduation, Roland's skills as a teacher became well-known, and TWU recommended him for a teaching position with the Arlington Independent School District. Roland accepted this call from the District and taught at Arlington High School, then Ferguson Junior High, then was Distributive Education teacher at Sam Houston High School. Then his state supervisor recommended him as Coordinator of a Mid-Management Program at Grayson County College funded by the Kellogg Foundation. He remained there until Tarrant County College opened, and they phoned and asked him to come and serve as department chair for the Mid-Management Program. Throughout his 40-year teaching tenure, Roland never applied for any of these positions: the Lord always brought them to Roland. Roland and Ann learned the lessons of faith and trusting in the Lord to provide in His timing.

As a high school and college educator, Roland constantly found himself surrounded by young people, and in turn, these students became Ann and Roland's adopted children, just as they became everybody's adopted parents and grandparents.

This heart for others carried over not only to the school campuses, but also to their church. Time and again, pastors and ministers knew who to ask to handle special projects or coordinate various ministries. Ann, who was an executive secretary for several corporations, never saw a challenge that couldn't be faced. Both the Kelleys would come through with an infectious joy that involved everyone.

Several years back, a dear church friend introduced the Kelleys to Dallas Baptist University. Rose Williams, a former president of the DBU Women's Auxiliary Board, invited Ann to a WAB event on campus, and Ann joined the WAB. Roland and Ann immediately fell in love with Dallas Baptist University.

Since that time, the Kelley enthusiasm and sense of service has found its place at DBU. Ann continues to invite friend after friend to discover what she found on University Hill. Roland and Ann both look for young people who need the type of Christian higher education that DBU can provide.

"During my 40 years in teaching, I looked at it—since we didn't have children—as a way to invest in the lives of young people," Roland explains. "I just feel like an education is such an important thing to share with young people, and that is what Ann and I have been doing."

Their strong belief in the mission and life of DBU led the Kelleys to give generously to DBU through the years for various events and student scholarships, and the two have even established a lifetime annuity that ensures future support for DBU.

"My thought is that so many young people go off to school and are in such amazement as to what is out there; but when they come to DBU they learn that there is so much more out there for them to do and impact the world," says Ann. "It's just knowing that when young people come out to DBU they aren't going to be just a number, they are going to be the most important student there. Why? Because the faculty, students, and staff—everyone—is focused on Christ."

Because of friends like Ann and Roland Kelley, the word about DBU is spreading throughout Texas and the world, and thanks to their continual financial support, DBU is able to continue its mission to produce servant leaders for generations to come.

However, if you ask the Kelleys, they will tell you that they personally receive just as much, if not more, from their support of DBU.

"It has kept us young," Ann reflects, "because it has made us want to get out there, be involved, and tell students about the school. We're just excited about DBU."

And DBU is just as excited to have friends like the Kelleys.

