

J.E. SIRRINE TEXTILE FOUNDATION GIVES CLEMSON \$5.6 MILLION GIFT FOR TWO ENDOWED CHAIRS IN MATERIALS SCIENCE

The J.E. Sirrine Textile Foundation, giants of the South Carolina textile industry for more than 60 years, stepped forward today and passed its legacy on to Clemson University in the form of a \$5.6 million gift. It is the largest gift the university has ever received from a foundation.

The announcement was made today (Nov. 10) at a luncheon at the Madren Center on campus honoring the foundation and its long, rich history with Clemson.

In accepting the gift, President James Barker said, "This is an historic day in the life of Clemson University, a turning point in the textile industry in South Carolina and a milestone for the economic future of the state in the knowledge-based field of advanced materials. With this gift, the Sirrine Foundation continues to positively impact the educational endeavors of Clemson students and quality of life for South Carolinians."

The money will help fund two endowed chairs in the areas of glass optical fibers and advanced materials fibers, both in the School of Materials Science and Engineering. When matched with resources from the South Carolina Education Lottery and Clemson University, the amount will double in value to \$11.2 million.

J.E. Sirrine Textile Foundation Board President Mark Kent said the gift is in keeping with the vision of engineer J.E. Sirrine when he called upon South Carolina textile companies in 1944 to advocate for future generations.

"Since our inception, the J.E. Sirrine Textile Foundation has viewed education as its primary focus. The belief and wishes of Mr. Sirrine were that education was the key to success, as was investment in research and development. This is what he believed would help South Carolina and create jobs," said Kent.

"Seeds are planted now for multiple generations to come. The growth will impact jobs and economic development in South Carolina. We don't want to grow and develop talent here so that the best and brightest can then leave. We want them to stay in the state and prosper," he said.

While much of the traditional textile industry has gone overseas to cheaper labor markets, Clemson University School of Materials Science and Engineering has expanded to encompass different high-tech niche areas of the market. Expertise now extends to fiber-reinforced composite materials based on metals, ceramics and polymers for high performance and light weight, with uses in automotive, space, athletic equipment and medical prosthetic markets.

In addition, biomedical fibers are being tested for artificial arteries, scaffolds for cell or bone growth and self-healing fabrics that promote skin reconstruction. Non-traditional "textile" fibers, such as inorganic glasses, are also being produced for use in telecommunications or high power fiber laser systems, lasers for automotive welding, defense sensing and warfare applications. Blending the know-how and expertise in these diverse areas will lead to innovative advances.

Materials Science and Engineering School Director Kathleen Richardson said the Sirrine Foundation gift serves as a keystone to an interdisciplinary materials program that will influence needed changes in the industry and shape the school's future.

"We are combining the old with the new in textiles and fibers," she said. "Because of our long history in textiles and with the J.E. Serrine Textile Foundation, we know what it takes to make textiles work, both from the educational side and in research. With this gift for the endowed chairs, we'll be able to extend our capabilities, bringing new, world-class expertise in these areas to Clemson.

"The gift allows us to continue the evolution of our school's academic programs in these cutting-edge areas of science and technology. It is my opinion that no other university has the extensive history and the future potential in the area of fibers. We combine talent in optical materials and textiles in the work in our centers: the Center for Optical Materials Science and Engineering Technology (COMSET) and Clemson Apparel Research. It is an exciting time to be part of materials science at Clemson."

The School of Materials Science and Engineering has 19 faculty members, 105 undergraduates and 68 graduate students. Current research focuses on ceramics, polymers, photonics, medical textiles, biomaterials, fiber science and metallurgy.

Other related information is available on the News Services Web site:

* Clemson University and the J.E. Serrine Textile Foundation -- A Rich History and Partnership

http://clemsonews.clemson.edu/WWW_releases/2005/November/Sirrine_History.html

* Textile Foundation Funds Endowed Chair in Glass Optical Fibers at Clemson

http://clemsonews.clemson.edu/WWW_releases/2005/November/Sirrine_Optical_Fibers.html