

# Donor Profile: Paul L. Foster

VISIT



Visionary, determined, and philanthropic – three words that can be used to describe El Paso businessman Paul L. Foster.

Raised in Lovington, New Mexico, it was his original desire to follow a premed track that led him to Baylor University. And while an M.D. was ultimately not in his future, Mr. Foster went on to receive his bachelor's degree in accounting from Baylor University and became a CPA. It was that career track that enabled him to begin his successful journey in the oil and gas industry.

He founded Western Refining in 1997, and the company bought its first refinery in El Paso in 2000. Since then, Mr. Foster has built one of the most respected oil refining and marketing operations in the nation. Today he serves as Executive Chairman of Western Refining, and is Chairman of Western Refining Logistics, LP and Northern Tier Energy, LP.

Throughout the process of building his company, Mr. Foster wanted to give back to the community in a meaningful way. "I became convinced that building this medical school was the most impactful thing we could do for this region – long term," said Mr. Foster. "Not only in terms of health care, but in terms of economic development and all the other development that would follow."

In 2007, Mr. Foster donated \$50 million to help create the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso. His gift has also funded the tuition of 75 medical students, known as the Foster Scholars. In September 2015, those 75 scholarship recipients were given the unique opportunity to meet the man who helped change their lives.

"My vision is to create access to the best education in the world for as many people as we can and to improve this region," he told them.

Mr. Foster also emphasized the importance of helping others, which would ultimately benefit the community. "I would hope you give back to the extent that you have the opportunity to do so. Give back with your time, with your effort, with your intelligence, or with your arts. Whatever it is, give back, because it's very important."

After spending more than an hour with Mr. Foster, the students presented him with a handcrafted wooden box that contained handwritten thank you letters from each of them. The students then presented a video to Mr. Foster that explained how he has helped them pursue their dreams.

"Through your generosity, I will be able to work in the El Paso community as a primary care provider and continue to care for the people I adore," said Saul Ivan Ramirez, a fourth year medical student. "I hope to one day give as much as you have given to the people of El Paso."

"Every time one of the students helps a patient, it is in large part due to you," said Michael Mullarkey, a first year medical student.

"I am eternally grateful to be a student at this school and have this scholarship to support me," said Taylor Bramblett, a second year medical student. "I don't think I can ever thank you for having such a significant impact on my life."

Before leaving, Mr. Foster said his hope is that his passion would impact these 75 students, as well as future students, so that one day, El Paso will become a hub for medical education and care for the region.

"I think we have a unique opportunity to address border-related health issues and Hispanic health issues. I think this will make an overall difference in the long term well-being of the region. In addition to providing job opportunities and education opportunities for hundreds and ultimately thousands of people, I think it's going to continue to grow and be successful in many ways."



Mr. Foster serves on numerous civic and charitable boards. He also serves as Chairman of the University of Texas System Board of Regents, and is on the Board of the El Paso Branch of the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank and the Board of WestStar Bank.

He and his wife, Alejandra de la Vega Foster, are major supporters of the bi-national region of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and El Paso, Texas contributing to many Borderplex initiatives. They are co-owners of MountainStar Sports Group, the ownership group of El Paso's Triple-A Baseball team, the El Paso Chihuahuas, and Ciudad Juarez' Ascenso MX soccer club, Los Bravos.

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COVID-19: What You Should Know



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