UH alumnus William A. Brookshire, Ph.D. (BSChE ’57), co-founder and chairman of the board of S&B Engineers and Constructors, died on April 21, 2017.

Joseph Tedesco, Elizabeth D. Rockwell Dean of the Cullen College of Engineering said, “Dr. Brookshire was a fine gentleman and one of our great philanthropists, always in search of new ways to help students and professors. We will forever feel his generosity and his loss in equal measures.”

Brookshire graduated from the University of Houston in 1957 with a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering. He went on to earn his master’s of science and Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Louisiana State University, but his roots were firmly planted in Houston, where he founded S&B Engineers and Constructors in 1967 with his partner James Slaughter, Sr. At that time, the pair made up the entire roster of a company that would grow to employ 7,500 people around the world.

It seemed the UH Engineering Alumni Association’s Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award, won by Dr. Brookshire in 1989, was tailor made for him. His work to improve the lives of UH engineering students and faculty alike was legend.
Dr. B was an inspiration to so many people around him. He truly believed in hard work, dedication and earning your stripes,? said Russell Dunlavy, chief advancement officer at the Cullen College. ?His gifts have helped hundreds and will one day help thousands of students complete their dream of obtaining an engineering degree. His legacy will continue to live on at the University of Houston and we will remain forever grateful to him.?

That legacy includes a recent donation of $1 million to the Cullen College of Engineering to create the William A. Brookshire Teaching Excellence Award Endowment. The annual distributed income honors faculty members in the Cullen College who demonstrate an unwavering commitment to exemplifying the highest levels of teaching excellence inside the classroom.

Brookshire understood well the significance of classroom mentors. Raised without means, he was the first in his family to earn a high school diploma. College wasn?t encouraged, but he made it happen, mostly at night. ?I had to work a full-time job during the day while attending night classes to finish my bachelor?s degree in chemical engineering at the University of Houston,? Brookshire has said.

It was a hardship he overcame and sought to reward in others. Brookshire founded two scholarships to help ease financial burdens of working students while recognizing their continued dedication to their engineering education. Students who qualify for the William A. Brookshire Scholarship take a full course load (12 hours) and work at least 20 hours a week. Another of his endowments, the William A. Brookshire IMPACT Scholarship is for students who are working, taking a full course load and paying for college on their own with no outside financial support.

In 2016, the lives of 85 UH Engineering undergraduate students changed drastically when they received scholarships donated by Brookshire?s incredible largesse. On Feb. 9, the students had the opportunity to meet and thank the man who helped fund their education and made such a lasting impact in their lives at the annual Brookshire Scholarship Luncheon held at the UH Hilton.

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