Renovated Atrium of Business Building Dedicated in Recognition of Sam Walton's Legacy

$1 million gift updates display at Sam M. Walton College of Business

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. – Officials from the University of Arkansas and the Sam M. Walton College of Business were joined by representatives of Walmart and the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation, students and faculty on Friday to dedicate a three-level display honoring Walmart founder Sam Walton.

The Sam Walton Legacy Display spans the three floors of the central stairway atrium of the Business Building on the University of Arkansas campus. The display and atrium renovations were funded by a combined $1 million gift from Walmart and the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation, with each organization donating $500,000. The Walmart Visitor Center contributed artifacts and design assistance.

“I am extremely grateful to both Walmart and the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation for their assistance in making possible this impressive new display,” said University of Arkansas Chancellor G. David Gearhart. “Once again, they have demonstrated their interest in, and commitment to, the U of A and to the people of our great state. We appreciate all that Walmart and the Walton Family Foundation do to support the academics, accessibility and the aesthetics that distinguish the University of Arkansas.”

In 1998, the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees voted to rename the business college in honor of Sam M. Walton and the financial, civic and public leadership he had shown throughout his life.
Ann Bordelon, chief financial officer of Sam’s Club, said the new display is a tribute to Sam Walton and is educational for Walton College students. “I think this display is so important,” she said. “It brings to light what can and also what can’t be taught in a classroom: Just how Sam was able to accomplish so much during his life and beyond. It’s a wonderful way to understand his contribution to the business world on a much deeper level.”

Others attending the celebration included Jim and Lynne Walton, representing the Walton family; Alan Dranow, representing the Walmart Visitor Center; and university officials, including Sharon Gaber, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs; Brad Choate, vice chancellor for university advancement; Don Pederson, vice chancellor for finance and administration; Mike Johnson, associate vice chancellor for facilities management; Richard Hudson, vice chancellor for government and community relations; Jeff Long, director and vice chancellor for athletics; Bruce Pontious, associate vice chancellor for development; and Mark Power, assistant vice chancellor for development.

The renovated tribute to the life and business principles of Sam Walton features a bronze bust of him just inside the second-floor entrance and interactive displays on several levels. Previously, memorabilia had been housed in a single display case in a secluded, low-traffic area of the building.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation, Walmart, and the Walmart Visitor Center for their generosity and support of this project,” Walton College Dean Eli Jones said. “We believe this tribute is most fitting, as Mr. Sam and his lessons have been central to business education at the University of Arkansas.”

Walton’s “Rules for Building a Business” are graphically displayed on the walls of the third floor of the atrium. The dedication ceremony featured 10 Walton College students, each reading one of the rules. Meredith Armstrong, a senior marketing major, said the display is a daily reminder of what a Walton College education means for students. “The Walton name equals success,” Armstrong said. “Because of that, the Walton name inspires me and other students to strive for our own business success.”

In 1998, the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation gave $50 million to the then-named College of Business Administration. In 2002, the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation gave $300 million to the university — the largest gift on record to an American public higher education institution — during the billion-dollar Campaign for the Twenty-First Century.
Walmart also has made a significant impact on students and programs at the university through gifts to areas such as scholarship programs, endowed faculty positions, the Supply Chain Management Research Center, the Walton College Business Leadership Academy, diversity initiatives, the Sustainability Consortium and the China EMBA Program.

The Walton College is ranked in the top 50 among public and private undergraduate business schools in the nation and in the top 30 among public business colleges, according to the U.S. News and World Report 2013 “America’s Best Colleges.”

-30-

CONTACTS:
David Speer, director of communications
Sam M. Walton College of Business
479-575-2539, dlspeer@uark.edu

*Members of the media can subscribe to the Arkansas Newswire weekday email by sending a note to Charlie Alison at calison@uark.edu.*