

ALBERT AND MARGARET ALKER FOUNDATION



» [ MISSION AND HISTORY ] «





*The greatest achievement of  
the human spirit is to live up  
to one's opportunities and make  
the most of one's resources.*

- V A U V E N A R G U E S





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I learned a lot from my grandfather, Albert B. Alkek. As a small child, he taught me to fish in the swimming pool at the family ranch in Bandera, combining fishing lore with funny stories and tales of the business world. Working for him as a young adult I saw behind the scenes, and learned how he became a successful businessman. It wasn't until after his death that I learned how much impact his philanthropy has made, and continues to make, on the world.

Everyone agreed that "Mr. A," as he was always called, was quite a character. He had a quest for knowledge and success that belied his modest education. His flamboyance in the business world was offset by decades of quiet charitable giving.

A self-made man, he started with a \$250 loan from his dad and left a charitable foundation with initial assets of \$178 million. He was a risk taker – a wildcatter; a stock trader; and an entrepreneur. In his later years, his drive to succeed turned to the philanthropic world. He employed the same energy and focus he used in making money to giving money away. My grandfather made investments in people and institutions he believed would excel over the long haul. He particularly favored research and knowledge, and the majority of his gifts over the years were focused on medicine and education.

He was supported in his endeavors by my grandmother, Margaret McFarland Alkek, a quiet, Southern lady of soft voice and kind heart with deep ties to her family, neighbors and community. She worked side by side with my grandfather for many years to build a successful business. My grandmother is also a strong believer in education. Her love of learning returned her to school in the late forties as a middle-aged parent to complete the college education interrupted by her marriage. She favors organizations that support children, education and the community.

My mother, Margaret Alkek Williams, inherited her parents' interests and passion for philanthropy. As a teenager, my parents' commitments to public service impressed me through deeds instead of words. My mother and my father, Dr. Charles H. Williams, helped people because, to them, it was the natural and obvious thing to do. My wife, Randa Duncan Williams, and I hope to instill similar values in our son, Harrison, so that he will follow in the family's footsteps.

Philanthropy is one of the ties that binds our family together. It keeps our lives in perspective and reminds us that money is only worth what you can do with it. As my grandfather said, "You can't wear but one suit, and you can't eat but three meals a day. What are you going to do with your money except help others?"

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, flowing 'C' followed by 'A Williams' and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

– Charles A. Williams  
*President*

# ALBERT AND MARGARET ALKEK FOUNDATION



*Board of Directors in 2002 (standing l to r): Joe M. Bailey, Ralph D. Feigin, M.D., John Moder, Ph.D., Bobby R. Alford, M.D., Dan B. Jones, M.D., Charles A. Williams, Randa Duncan Williams, Scott B. Seaman (seated l to r) Margaret Alkek and Margaret Alkek Williams (not shown: Daniel C. Arnold)*

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## MISSION AND VISION OF THE FOUNDATION

Albert B. Alkek created a living legacy in the wording of his last will and testament. In it, he laid out a road map that created the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation. Upon his death, in 1995, the Foundation took up the work to which Mr. Alkek and his family had devoted considerable thought, energy and wealth. The Foundation continues to provide support for charitable, religious, scientific (primarily medical), cultural and educational organizations

and programs serving the people of the state of Texas.

The majority of the Foundation's grants reflect Mr. Alkek's preferences for research and education-related projects that will pay lasting dividends in terms of new discoveries and improved quality of life. Additional grants reflect the Alkek family's strong community involvement, both in Houston and throughout the state.





*Albert Alkek with his daughter Margaret, circa 1936.*



*Albert Alkek entered the business world with \$250 borrowed from his father.*



## THE ALKEK FAMILY

The Alkek story is a true American immigrant success story. Jacob and Mary Hyak Alkek, immigrated to Texas from Lebanon. Their son, Albert, was born in Houston, Texas, in 1909. Soon after his birth, the family moved to Victoria, where they were prominent in the ranching and grocery trades.

Albert Alkek attended Victoria public schools until a study hall prank resulted in his transfer

to the Peacock Military Academy in San Antonio. He then attended St. Mary's University in San Antonio, but withdrew before completion of his degree. He entered the business world with \$250 he borrowed from his father at 6 percent interest. Every penny was repaid. This was the first and last time Mr. Alkek would ever rely on borrowed money.



*Victoria residents in 1934 certainly noticed Albert Alkek, the local agent for Sinclair Refining Company, as he flew about in his custom-designed white and green Stinson monoplane.*

*A newspaper article about the \$8,500 plane described Mr. Alkek as "one of Victoria's most progressive and energetic young businessmen."*



*Mr. Alkek prospered in the 1930s through hard work and hands-on management.*

Like many immigrant families, the Alkeks instilled in their children a solid work ethic and compassionate concern for others. Mr. Alkek did not begin with wealth but acquired it the old fashioned way: through hard work and frugal living.

Not that Mr. Alkek didn't enjoy making money. He loved it! He enjoyed *people* and enjoyed selling to people, and took pride in out-working his competition every day of the week. His first big break came when he

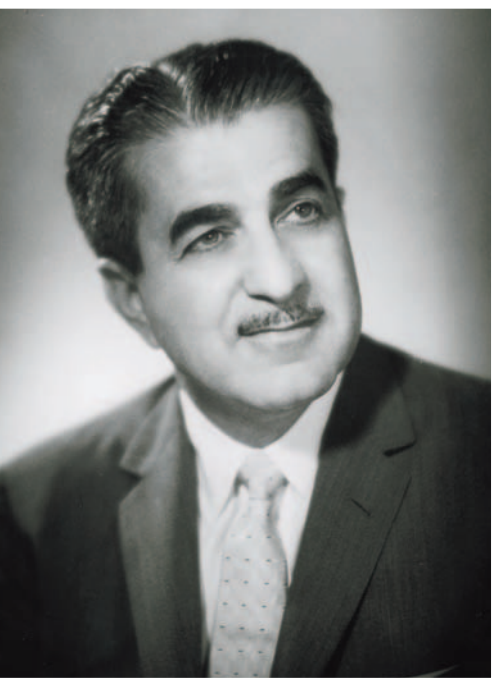
met and forged a bond with Harry F. Sinclair, founder and president of Sinclair Oil Company. In 1948, the two created the Sinclair-Alkek Oil Company, which built and operated the first petroleum pipeline in Texas. When Mr. Sinclair decided to sell his interest in the company in 1952, Mr. Alkek purchased it and continued to operate the venture as Alkek Oil Company.

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*Mr. Alkek ran his Victoria operations from this office just off the Port Lavaca highway for many years.*







*Mr. Alkek's sense of style is on display in this photograph from the early 1930s.*



An excellent salesman, Mr. Alkek was a charming and

frequent entertainer who took great pleasure in socializing with customers, vendors and friends. He was an astute businessman and gifted negotiator who carefully planned and controlled meetings to achieve his own goals. His unpredictability and strong presence often threw others off their game. He didn't

like surprises – unless he created them!

At various points in his career, Mr. Alkek was the largest independent gasoline supplier in the state of Texas and the Southwest, and at one time was one of the most active traders on Wall Street. In 1965, he was trading at an annual volume of \$75 million. He bragged that he made more than \$1 million on some days. He was several times listed in *Forbes* magazine's list of richest people in the United States and, likewise, for several years, on *Texas Monthly's* list of 100 richest Texans.



*Mr. Alkek liked to sing along with the player piano at the Flying A Ranch. His favorite songs included "The Old Rugged Cross," "She'll be Coming Around the Mountain," "You are my Sunshine" and "Beautiful Blue Eyes."*



*Mr. Alkek was chairman of the Board of Directors of American Bank of Commerce in Victoria for many years.*

Over the years, Mr. Alkek was on the board of directors for many public and private companies and charitable institutions. His directorships not only extended and protected his business and charitable interests, but also expanded his contact with influential people. For example, he was appointed to the

board of First International Bancshares, Inc., in the same year as were future President George H.W. Bush, future Governor William P. Clements, and Joseph C. Walter, President of Houston Oil and Minerals. Governor Clements later appointed Mr. Alkek to the Texas Public Safety Commission, on which he served until his death in 1995.

*Mr. Alkek provided gasoline and petroleum products to stations like this across the southwest.*





*The Flying A Ranch's Buck House was built in 1867 of hand-cut native stone. A Texas Historical Marker recognizes it as the first guest ranch in Bandera County.*



Mr. Alkek was a significant – and equal opportunity – contributor to many charities and politicians. He gave generously to all religious denominations and political parties. In one particular Texas governor's race, he personally made sizeable contributions to both parties' candidates on the same day. Relationships

were important to him and a key factor in his success.

His friendships

covered a broad spectrum and

were not easily sorted into predictable categories or classifications.

Nature, wildlife, and the outdoors were life blood to Albert Alkek. He built a 11,000-acre ranch in Bandera, Texas, the Flying A, that included native species and exotic game. Former President Lyndon B. Johnson was a guest at the Flying A in 1970. In the later years of his life, in gradually declining health, Mr. Alkek used



*The Flying A Ranch still features exotic game animals from around the world.*



*Texas A&M University presented Mr. Alkek with the Twelfth Man award and named him an "Honorary Aggie" in 1990 for his contributions to the Albert B. Alkek Institute of Biosciences and Technology.*



the ranch as his "corporate headquarters" and continued to exert a strong influence over all his business affairs by telephone from Bandera.

An interesting comment on the life of Mr. Alkek, who never graduated from college, is that he was a fervent advocate for, and patron of, education. A number of institutions honored him in his lifetime with a variety of awards and

degrees. He received honorary doctorates from Baylor College of Medicine and St. Mary's University. He received

the Twelfth Man award from Texas A&M University and the President's Excellence Award from Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University–San Marcos).



*Mr. Alkek enjoyed everything about animals and nature, from bass fishing to feeding his Formosan Sika Deer.*



*Dr. Dan B. Jones and Mr. Alkek at the dedication of the Alkek Eye Center in 1989.*



Except for personal airplanes, Mr. Alkek was not known for luxurious living. Over time, one of his most enjoyable and enduring extravagances was philanthropy. In the words of his good friend, Dr. Michael DeBakey: “Albert enjoyed giving back to the country and community that nurtured him. As his wealth increased, he realized he would like to put a great deal of his resources to work while he was still alive to see the results.”

Amazingly, Mr. Alkek didn’t initially encourage recognition for his gifts. For many years, he supported activities around Victoria, near his ranch in Bandera and in Houston,

without much fanfare. As the size of his contributions increased, anonymity became more and more difficult. On October 30, 1988,

the *Magazine of the Houston Post* featured Mr. Alkek on its cover, with an article entitled “Who is Albert B. Alkek and Why Is He Giving Away Millions?” The gift that prompted this article was a \$25 million donation to Baylor College of Medicine. This was, at the time, the largest individual charitable donation ever made to a Texas Medical Center institution. He broke the record again, five years later, with a \$30 million commitment to M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

To this day, the family’s cumulative giving, separate from Foundation grants, ranks the Alkek family as one of Houston’s and Texas’ most generous families.



*Mr. Alkek and Dr. Bobby R. Alford. Mr. Alkek’s vision and hearing problems inspired his gifts for treatment and research for these conditions.*





When it came to giving back to our city and helping others, no one did more to make a difference than Albert Alkek. His selfless efforts, especially in support of our outstanding medical community, will touch countless lives for years to come.

– **George H.W. Bush**, 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States  
*Houston Chronicle*, March 4, 1995, on the occasion of Mr. Alkek's death



Albert Alkek became a warm friend, and I developed a very high esteem for him. I found him to be truly a wonderful gentleman, in the old classic meaning of the term. I found him to be a very compassionate person.

When you try to measure, or describe, the impact the Alkek family has had on the Texas Medical Center, it's practically unimaginable. You and I, literally, would not be sitting here [in Alkek Tower, Methodist Hospital]. That's not just a statement related to place in time. It also means that a lot of the work that we've built on might not have been done here – if this facility hadn't been built and attracted more gifts to expand the programs, and so forth.

People, not just in Houston, but nationally and worldwide, are benefiting from heart pumps, techniques and technologies that were developed here, in facilities provided largely by Albert Alkek and, subsequently, the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation.

One other aspect of all of this is important to appreciate, though somewhat intangible. This family's story is inspirational – they make their friends and colleagues want to be more generous people and more active in their community.

Society depends on the glue that holds it together. Common values are that glue, and one of the most important is "compassionate concern." More than anything, that is what this extraordinary family represents.

– **Dr. Michael E. DeBakey**, Chancellor Emeritus, Baylor College of Medicine





*Margaret Alkek in 1960.*

Albert Alkek's partner in generosity was always his loving wife of sixty-one years, Margaret McFarland Alkek, the daughter of Charles and Letyr Knight McFarland. Throughout their married life, Mrs. Alkek supported her husband's business activities, civic interests, and philanthropic vision and continues to do so today. She was born in Houston, Texas, and graduated from San Jacinto High School in 1933. It was quite a class, including newsman Walter Cronkite,

future Texas first lady Jean Baldwin Daniel, future Houston School Board Chairman Red McCullough, and Carlross Morris, a future head of Stewart Title Company and noted philanthropist.

From the earliest days of their marriage, Mrs. Alkek encouraged her husband and was physically involved in all aspects of his business affairs. Initially, she kept the company's books and inventory. After the couple moved from Victoria to Bandera, she kept an office at the ranch and served as her husband's executive assistant.



*Margaret and Albert Alkek in 1990.*



*Albert and Margaret Alkek prepare to embark on their aerial honeymoon in 1934 to New Orleans, Miami and Cuba.*

*Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Alkek are a familiar sight in the Houston philanthropic community.*



Margaret Alkek brought to her marriage a solid appreciation for family life and public service. She is a member of a number of genealogical lineage societies and keenly appreciates her own family's history and that of her hometown of Houston and her state. Even as a young wife and mother in Victoria, she was active in the League of Women Voters and member of the "Pink Ladies," the Hospital Auxiliary for Victoria's Citizens Memorial Hospital. She began this work with her mother, and continued volunteering later with her daughter, Margaret. Both of "the Margarets" participate in a variety of organizations and

generously lend their names to many others.

Education has been as much a passion for Mrs. Alkek as for her husband. She attended the University of Texas in Austin but interrupted her studies to marry Mr. Alkek in 1934. Mrs. Alkek encouraged her daughter to get a solid, well-rounded education and, in the late 1940s, returned to college herself. In 1951, Margaret McFarland Alkek graduated with honors from Victoria College in Victoria, Texas.



*University of Texas freshman and Bluebonnet Belle, Margaret McFarland was courted by a smitten Albert Alkek, who flew low over the Littlefield Dormitory to the delight of her friends.*



*Mrs. Alkek was honored with the Founder's Award at the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation's 2000 Winter Ball.*

Together, Albert and Margaret Alkek forged an impressive model of community service for friends and acquaintances. Mrs. Alkek and her family continue in this role. Their involvement shows how one man, and then one couple and one family, truly can shape Texas for the better.

Over the years, Mrs. Alkek has continued to be involved in her community. Her friends speak of a gracious enthusiasm for helping others and for an energetic support of their fundraising efforts as well as her own. She has received many honors, including a 1996

Honorary Doctor of Philosophy Degree from St. Mary's University. In 1999, Northwood University presented her its "Distinguished Women's Award." In 2000, she received the "Maurice Hirsch Award for Philanthropy" from the National Society of Fund Raising Executives. She received the first "Women of Achievement" award at the 2000 National Convention of Delta Delta Delta in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Alkek also has served on numerous charitable boards including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Houston Grand Opera.



*Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Alkek were honorees at the 1999 Houston Ballet Ball "Scheherazade."*



*Daughter and mother in 1936.*



The couple's daughter, Margaret Alkek Williams, inherited her parents' tradition of generosity. Though she wasn't aware of "philanthropy" as a distinct concept, Mrs. Williams grew up believing that privilege came with responsibility. She watched her parents' strong involvement in their community as a child, has practiced it in her own life, and modeled it for her son.

Mrs. Williams developed a deep love of music, particularly vocal performance, at the tender age of five. She performed in theatre productions throughout her early childhood and college years and had principal roles in several musicals and operettas. She performed

in Philadelphia with the Gilbert & Sullivan Society, and sang with the Houston Grand Opera Chorus. She particularly enjoys live performances, having a keen appreciation of the talent and hard work required. She maintains connections to both the Houston Ballet and Houston Grand Opera because of her strong love for the performing arts.

*Mrs. Williams as Pandora in her 3rd grade play.*





*Mrs. Williams was honored as a "Woman of Distinction" at the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation's 2000 Winter Ball.*

*David Gockley, general manager of Houston Grand Opera, congratulates Mrs. Williams upon her receipt of the Masterson Award in 2000.*



Mrs. Williams demonstrates her commitment to philanthropy on a number of levels. She is on the board of trustees for

Houston Grand Opera Association, Houston Ballet, Texas Heart Institute, The University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center, and the University Cancer Foundation Board of Visitors for The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. While she enjoys the festive nature of the fundraising galas, with the opportunity to meet new and interesting people, she also relishes the opportunity to work in

smaller groups where her input is on a more personal level.

Although she has received considerable recognition for her philanthropic work over the years, she is most touched by the Masterson Award which she received from Houston Grand Opera in 2000. This award honors individuals who, over an extended period of time, have made significant contributions to further the goals of the Houston Grand Opera Association.



*Mrs. Williams received the Bishop Claude M. Dubuis Award from David Doherty at St. Joseph Hospital Foundation's 38th Annual Gala in November 2004. Mrs. Williams had previously co-chaired St. Joseph's 4th Gala in 1970.*



*Charles Williams and  
Randa Duncan Williams*

Charles Williams and his wife, Randa Duncan Williams, have interests which have taken the Foundation into new areas of philanthropy. As partners in philanthropy, they primarily support education through schools and scholarships as well as through educational organizations such as museums and the zoo. The Williamses are key supporters of the Houston Zoo, the Houston Museum of Natural Science, The Brookwood Community, and various school-related charities.

Mr. Williams' earliest recollection of philanthropy was watching his parents participate in various public service organizations. Their willingness to contribute time and money made a subtle but lasting impact on him. Randa Duncan Williams was similarly shaped by her own parents' community involvements.



*The Alkek family celebrates the dedication of the Margaret M. and Albert B. Alkek Building, home of Baylor College of Medicine's Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in 1999.*





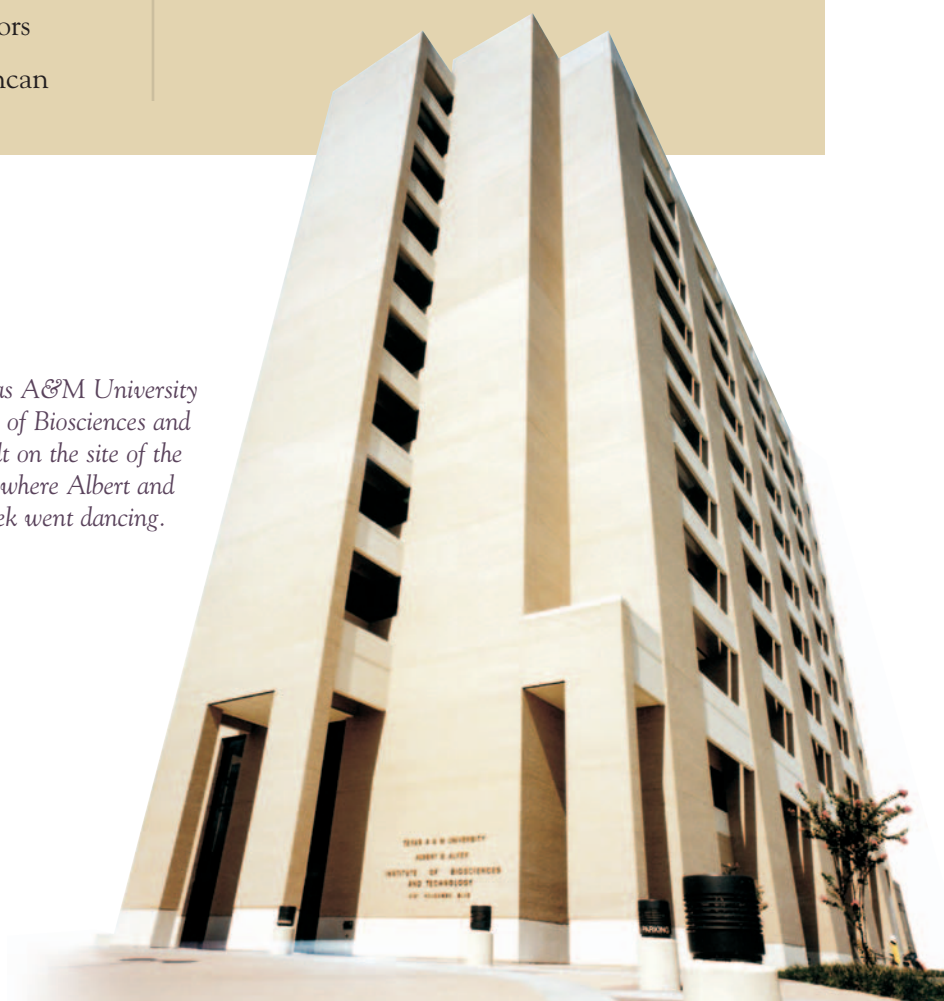
*Children enjoy exhibits sponsored by the Foundation at the Houston Zoo.*

As a teenager, Mr. Williams worked summers at the YMCA, where he witnessed the difference volunteers can make in the life of a child. In college, he belonged to a group that regularly visited a local nursing home. There he saw how meaningful simple human interactions can be to people in need.

Mr. Williams is a trustee of Baylor College of Medicine, and a member of the Board of Visitors at Texas A&M Institute of Biosciences and Technology, and the Board of Visitors of Southwestern University. Randa Duncan

Williams has served as president for Zoo Friends of Houston, Inc., and sits on boards for the Houston Museum of Natural Science, Houston Zoo, Inc. and the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She was named vice chairman of the Houston Museum of Natural Science in 2005. They bring a youthful perspective to all the Alkek Foundation's ventures and both are active participants on the Board of Directors.

*Dedicated in 1992, the Texas A&M University Albert B. Alkek Institute of Biosciences and Technology was built on the site of the Shamrock Hotel where Albert and Margaret Alkek went dancing.*







ALBERT AND MARGARET ALKEK FOUNDATION

1100 LOUISIANA, SUITE 5250

HOUSTON, TX 77002

PHONE 713.652.6601

INFO@ALKEK.ORG