

Sept. 13, 2022

\$1.2 Million Gift to UT Promise Endowment on Behalf of Chattanooga Law Firm

CHATTANOOGA – A member within Summers, Rufolo and Rodgers law firm announced a \$1.2 million gift to UT Promise, an innovative, free tuition program through the University of Tennessee System.

The gift will help graduates from 12 high schools in the Chattanooga area attend an undergraduate campus within the UT System. UT Promise is a last-dollar scholarship program that guarantees free tuition and mandatory fees for qualifying Tennessee undergraduate students with a family income of under \$60,000 after other financial aid is received. The twelve schools include Soddy Daisy High School, Red Bank High School, The Howard School, Tyner Academy, Central High School, Lookout Valley High School, East Ridge High School, Sale Creek High School, Ooltewah High School, Brainerd High School, East Hamilton High School and Hixson High School

“Working families have relied on our firm to protect their interests and their lives since 1969, and we hope that this gift continues that work by creating pathways for students to find their future through UT. This is our way of giving back to the community,” said firm member Jimmy Rodgers, who earned his bachelor’s degree from UT Knoxville in 1991 and his law degree in 1994.

The firm is currently comprised of five attorneys and serves clients in several practice areas such as personal injury, criminal defense, workers’ compensation, labor law and products liability.

In addition to Rodgers, Jerry H. Summers, the firm’s founder, earned his law degree from UT Knoxville in 1966, Jeff Rufolo in 1991 who also earned a bachelor’s degree from UT Chattanooga in 1988 and Marya Schalk in 2005. The fifth attorney, Ben McGowan, is a graduate of Northeastern University School of Law.

During the Sept. 13 UT Promise statewide tour stop at Central High School, Rodgers joined UT System President Randy Boyd to announce the \$1.2 million gift to the endowment. Summers graduated from Central High School in 1959.

“Across the state, UT Promise is making higher education a possibility, and donations like this are laying the foundation to ensure that future generations will have this benefit,” UT Foundation President Kerry Witcher said.

The UT System announced plans for UT Promise in March 2019. Students must qualify for the Hope Scholarship and meet the academic qualifications for the institution to be eligible for UT Promise. To learn more about UT Promise, please visit <https://tennessee.edu/ut-promise/>.

The University of Tennessee Foundation's mission is to raise financial, public and political support for the University of Tennessee. A nonprofit corporation, the Foundation helps meet the needs of the University by augmenting state and institutional funds, and enriching the lives of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends.

For more information about the UT Foundation, visit www.utf.org.

Contact:

Jackie Wise, 865-974-2575, jwise@utf.org, 1525 University Ave, Knoxville, TN 37921