



*College President Kerry Prather and his spouse, Cindy, lead guests in a toast "to Franklin College and to all who love her!"*

**What happens when like-minded people unite to make dreams come true for others? Opportunities multiply. Skills grow. Lives change. In other words, philanthropy comes full circle.**

**Franklin College has an annual tradition of honoring its most generous donors at the President's Circle Celebration. Members of the President's Circle change the lives of students by taking a leadership role in their future through unparalleled generosity. A cumulative gift to the college of at least \$1,000 during a fiscal year qualifies donors for membership. In appreciation of their support, the college invites members to enjoy special events throughout the year, highlighted by the President's Circle Celebration each February.**

**President's Circle members helped make the 2018-19 fiscal year the most successful in recent college fundraising history, with gifts totaling \$4.9 million. Highlights of the recent celebration included inspiring remarks by Board of Trustees Chair Jim Due '82 and College President Kerry Prather. Additionally, the FC Singers gave moving performances to begin and end the night.**

**Excerpts from Prather's speech follow:**

**"Since my appointment, I have spoken to students, faculty, staff and alumni about the responsibility I feel, having inherited and been entrusted with the legacy of Franklin College.**

**"While we update our programs to stay relevant, and we refine our message to grab the attention of Gen Z, there remains in this place a soul that is the source of both its character and strength. My message to you tonight is that the soul of Franklin College burns bright. It is alive and well in every corner of our campus.**

**"Franklin College needs and is worthy of your continued support. You are making a difference in a place whose business is making a difference.**

**"This college values and teaches the roles of honor and integrity in one's personal and professional life. No isolated instance of human frailty—not even a high profile one—and no momentary bad publicity can undo what generations of worthy character have built.**

**"I was here in the spring of 1985 when a large portion of the campus burned to the ground in two fires a month apart. That was a critical moment in the life of Franklin College.**

**"The subsequent renaissance of the campus was a natural reflection of a resilient student body, a committed faculty, an ambitious administration, an unwavering board of trustees and an army of loyal and generous alumni and friends whose faithful support of the college spoke volumes about their aspirations for its future.**

**“As surely as I will never forget watching Old Main burn to the ground, I will also never forget watching just a few years later as a giant crane hoisted the new bell tower atop Old Main, restoring both the iconic tower and our faith in the future of Franklin College.**

**“Today’s challenges dim by comparison, but we meet them with the same determination ... Franklin College has always persevered in the face of challenge and emerged even stronger. Together, we will continue that legacy. Thank you.”**

**Republished from the *Franklin College Magazine*, Spring 2020**