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NORMAN — University of Oklahoma President David L. Boren today announced a leadership gift to the university from the Tom and Judy Love Foundation in support of the Michael F. Price College of Business.

In appreciation of this gift, Boren has recommended to the OU Board of Regents that the donor be recognized by naming the Division of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, the Innovation Hub, the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneurs-in-Residence Program to honor the visionary leadership of Tom Love.

“We are grateful to the Love family for continuing to promote opportunities for our students so that they can build a better future for our state,” said Boren.

Tom Love, who attended OU in the 1960s, is founder and executive chairman of Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores, which he and his wife Judy started in 1964 with one small location in western Oklahoma. Today, Love’s has more than 450 locations in 41 states and employs more than 20,000 people. Love’s is recognized each year by Forbes as one of America’s largest privately-owned companies. Love, along with three of his four children, leads the day-to-day business of Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores and the Love’s Family of Companies.

“Tom Love and the Love family are synonymous with Oklahoma innovation and entrepreneurship,” offered Daniel Pullin, OU vice president and dean of the Michael F. Price College of Business. “Their inspirational success story motivates current and future entrepreneurs across OU to catalyze the future for our state and nation. The Love family’s investment accelerates this progress in and out of the classroom and builds on OU’s national leadership in cross-disciplinary entrepreneurship education.”

The Tom Love Division of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, one of six academic divisions within Price College, launched as the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies in 2002 and was approved as an academic major within the college in 2003. Through a hands-on innovation curriculum and supporting programs, students learn what it takes to start a venture with the guidance of practicing entrepreneurs and leading entrepreneurship scholars. Entrepreneurship and Economic Development students consistently place high in regional and national competitions, such as the Rice Business Plan Competition, the California Dreamin’
Competition and the Love’s Entrepreneur’s Cup, Oklahoma’s preeminent business plan competition.

The Tom Love Center for Entrepreneurship, one of several programs within the Division of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, was named by both *The Princeton Review* and *Entrepreneur Magazine* as a top 15 program on their respective annual lists of top 25 graduate and undergraduate entrepreneurship programs for 2018.

The leadership gift also establishes the fund to support the Tom Love Innovation Hub and projects such as construction of a business accelerator, tools for rapid product prototyping using 3-D printing technology, other interactive learning and business-building capabilities, and salaries for support staff.

The Tom Love Entrepreneurs-in-Residence program will pair student teams at the Tom Love Innovation Hub with industry experts who have extensive entrepreneurial expertise and experience in such fields as health care, energy, technology and manufacturing.

Additionally, the gift establishes the Tom Love Endowed Scholarship in Entrepreneurship to fund at least 20 student scholarships or “proof-of-concept” grants. These grants would provide critical resources to entrepreneurial-minded students at OU by giving them access to non-equity capital sources.

Tom and Judy Love, the Tom and Judy Love Foundation and Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores are longstanding supporters of a variety of programs and activities at OU, including Price College, the Sam Noble Museum, President’s Associates and the Heart Rhythm Institute among others.

“We are fortunate to have had a successful company with sustained growth over the past 54 years with much more in store,” said Tom Love. “I know I couldn’t have done it without the visionary people we’ve hired who have that entrepreneurial spirit and passion for making a difference. I hope this investment from my family helps to further inspire the bold innovators Oklahoma and OU are known for.”

The Michael F. Price College of Business, originally established in 1928, ensures the enduring global competitiveness of Oklahoma and the nation. As OU’s second-largest college, the Price College of Business educates more than 4,000 students through undergraduate, master’s, executive and doctoral programs across six academic divisions in Accounting, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, Finance, Management and International Business, Management Information Systems and Marketing and Supply Chain Management.

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