

Chicago GSB Magazine

The Family Ethos: Suzanne Deal Booth

By Libby Morse (Photo by Matthew Gilson)

"It's been brewing for a while," says Suzanne Deal Booth of her and her husband's decision to make a precedent-setting gift to the business school. But she also sees it as a natural progression of their shared personal interests, as well as their professional and philanthropic commitments.

Booth has made her career in the field of artistic and historic preservation; she met David Booth shortly after moving to Los Angeles to work at the Getty Conservation Institute. She describes her husband as someone who "loves history" and is an avid reader of nonfiction. Even family vacations have been built around exploring cultural legacies. "We don't go to the beach," she adds with a laugh. "We go look at what past civilizations have left behind."

In 1998, the couple created the Friends of Heritage Preservation, www.fohpinfo.org, which acts as kind of rapid response team for initiatives encompassing everything from entire sites to single works of art. In 2001, the family moved to Rome for a year to immerse themselves in similar projects there. "We arrived on September 5, 2001, so we were there less than a week when the world changed," she says. The experience was so illuminating that the family is now talking about continuing their in-depth exploration of cultures with a similar sojourn to Asia (their son, a fifth grader, is studying the Chinese language).

It's this same strong sense of history and legacy that prompted the Chicago gift. "David and I have both been thinking about our lives lately, and we believe what goes around comes around," she says. Giving to educational institutions, she adds, is a way of both conserving the past and building upon it. "Every generation is different," she says. "What David is doing at Chicago, and what I'm currently doing at Rice University (her alma mater), is to honor the experiences we had, but also provide the flexibility for new ideas and experiences to thrive."



Family Highlights

Suzanne Deal Booth

Education: BA in Art History, Rice University Conservation Diploma, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU MA in Art History, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU

Suzanne's postgraduate studies in art conservation took her to Paris where she restored important 20th century paintings in the permanent collection at the Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou. She also has worked at the J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles and at the Menil Collection in Houston.

Suzanne currently serves on many boards, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Geffen Playhouse at UCLA, and the American Academy in Rome. She launched the Rice University Humanities Advisory Board.

She is director of the Friends of Heritage Preservation, which has accomplished 29 preservation and conservation projects spanning four continents.

David and Suzanne were married in Los Angeles on August 8, 1988, and celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary last August with a family trip to see the total eclipse in Mongolia and to visit the Beijing Olympics.

Erin Deal Booth

Erin, 18, is an art history major at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

D. Chandler Booth

Chandler, 11, is a fifth grader with interests in judo, Chinese, and basketball.