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# Working Hard and Supporting Hard Work

By Isabel Ray



## Scott Emerson

FOUNDER AND CEO OF THE EMERSON GROUP

B.A. 1975, ACCOUNTING AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

2016 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT

Scott Emerson's passion for business — and busyness — started early. "I've always worked," he says. "I'm not money motivated at all, but I'm work motivated." His jobs included shoveling snow when he was young, then working in a restaurant at night and an oil field during the day as he started his college degree. When he got to Texas State, then Southwest Texas State University, he didn't slow down. "I did everything on campus there was to do, except study," Emerson laughs. He was president and treasurer of the TKE fraternity, head cheerleader and a varsity pole vaulter, among other athletic pursuits.

In fact, it was on the fast-pitch softball field that he made an important connection: His math professor was a catcher, and Emerson pitched. As they got to know each other better, the math professor encouraged Emerson to keep working hard at his classes, advice that Emerson took to heart: "I couldn't outsmart anybody, but I could outwork anybody." Personal connections between professors and students, both inside and outside the classroom, are one of the strengths that Emerson remembers from his days at the university. He knows how valuable it is for students to see that their professors care about their success, and he believes that personal attention and mentoring are vital to developing the next generation of business leaders. Emerson himself jumped into business straight after graduating. He worked in sales at Johnson & Johnson, based out of McAllen, Texas, covering the border with Mexico. "My sales territory was 800 miles long and 15 miles wide," he recalls. After Johnson & Johnson, Emerson continued in the consumer packaged goods industry, building a traditional sales force for Unilever. He then moved on to the global pharmaceutical giant Novartis. In 1996, Emerson founded his own company. Now comprising three branches — consulting, logistics and marketing — the Emerson Group is an international organization that positions small and mid-sized businesses, often family-held, alongside their large competitors. Healthcare and beauty products from Emerson's clients can be found in Target, Walmart, Walgreens and Costco locations across the country.

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In 2016, Emerson was recognized by Texas State University as a Distinguished Alumnus (“I don’t think I’m distinguished,” he demurs). When he returned to campus to speak with students during the Distinguished Alumni event and again for Business Leadership Week, Emerson says, “I could see the good that it would do” to reinforce McCoy College’s work. In light of that, Emerson established the Scott Emerson Professorship in Business Administration in support of increased faculty research in the business disciplines. Recipients of the award will receive funding for research and development over the course of a three-year term. This gift of a funded professorship will strengthen faculty research efforts and their effects in classroom learning. Emerson reflects on the value of what Texas State does: “The experience at the university, it’s authentic, and I felt good about contributing to the school.”

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## Chasing Goals

Student-athletes are competitive on the field and in business.

When Scott Emerson spoke to a class of McCoy College students in 2016, he talked about how his experience as a student-athlete informed his career in business. One student in particular took note. “That’s kind of like me,” thought Dila Rosemond. Rosemond is a business management major and Bobcat football player who graduated in December 2017. In the class where Emerson spoke, Rosemond asked him to explain more about how collegiate sports can lead to corporate success. After what felt like “a one-on-one conversation” about teamwork, problem-solving and natural competitiveness, Emerson approached Rosemond outside the class to exchange contact information.

Rosemond followed up and earned a summer internship at the Emerson Group, where he collected data on market trends, worked on promotional strategy and did “lots and lots of networking.” “It opened up so many doors and opportunities for me,” he says. Rosemond is already paying it forward. He and a teammate led a workshop for fellow student-athletes on skills such as résumé writing, networking and building a professional presence online. His dream is to open a school of the arts somewhere in the South to help others meet their creative potential. As for that in-class question that led to the internship, Rosemond is modest, saying, “When business speakers come to class, I like to pick their brains. Who better to ask?”

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