

Stuart Long Memorial Journalism Scholarships

Stuart Long Memorial Scholarships of at least \$2,000 per recipient per academic year are awarded annually to aspiring print and broadcast journalists enrolled in Austin-area universities. These scholarships totaled \$6,000 in the 2007-2008 academic year.

Funds for the scholarships were placed in 2004 with the Austin Community Foundation by the SDX Gridiron Association, whose directors serve as the ACF's advisory committee on the selection of scholarship winners.

The ACF distributes information on the application process each year to the journalism, communications or English departments of The University of Texas at Austin, Texas State University, Huston-Tillotson College, St. Edward's University, Concordia University and Southwestern University.

The scholarships honor the memory of Stuart Long, who died in 1977 after a journalism career that began during the early 1930s. Long founded the Long News Service, a state capitol news agency, in the mid-1940s and operated it until the time of his death. He was married to former Austin City Council member Emma Long.

One of the many journalists who worked for and learned from Long was Ben Sargent, who later became a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for the Austin American-Statesman. After Long's death, Sargent wrote in the Texas Observer that Long placed "principles above all else."

"He knew where all the bodies were hidden and how the system worked," Sargent wrote. "His knowledge was encyclopedic. But in a world where fighting for principles is little more than a tired slogan, Long really believed in the possibility of justice. He dedicated his life to its realization."

Long himself said of his work as a journalist, "If nobody is mad at us, we're not doing our job."

Long did make enemies among the powerful, and there were repercussions. One powerful legislator saw to it that when the Capitol received a new elevator shaft, it cut right through Long's newsroom on the building's second floor.

Funds for Stuart Long scholarships were raised from the sale of tickets and program advertisements for Gridiron Shows staged almost every year from 1978 to 2000 by the Austin Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. The shows lampooned political figures of the day and sometimes poked fun at the journalists themselves. Profits from the shows were invested, with scholarships paid from the earnings.

SPJ spun off the scholarship activity to the Gridiron Association in 2002. The association affiliated with ACF to strengthen the scholarship program while retaining the ability for professional journalists to select scholarship recipients.