

The Sutcliffe Spirit of Giving Back

*Curtsey from Gallaudet University



The 20th anniversary of the annual Sutcliffe Business Bowl held at Gallaudet on April 11, 2024 was a family affair for the benefactor behind the event. **Dr. Ronald E. Sutcliffe, '59**, former dean of Gallaudet's School of Management, attended the event with all five of his children – Glen, **Jane, G-'92**; Herb, Bert, and Dale. The matriarch of the family, **Agnes Dunn Sutcliffe, '59**, passed away in 2020 at age 86.

The elder Sutcliffes endowed fund at Gallaudet supports Department of Business activities, including the Business Bowl.

“The Business Bowl is one of many ways they give back,” said Glen. “They have been giving back since they first arrived on campus. They knew that if you are blessed, then you need to share your blessings.”

The Business Bowl is a contest for undergraduate students to showcase their knowledge on a variety of business-related topics such as accounting, business ethics, economics, marketing, statistics, and more. The event is also a chance for students to gain knowledge for pursuing their own business dreams and goals.



Front, left to right: Herb E. Sutcliffe, Dr. Ronald E. Sutcliffe, '59, Dale F. Sutcliffe Back, left to right: Bert E. Sutcliffe, Jane A. Sutcliffe, G-'92; Glen W. Sutcliffe.

Leadership is important to the Sutcliffe family, according to Glen and Jane. In addition to leading Gallaudet's School of Management, Dr. Sutcliffe was the executive director of the National Deaf Business Institute for many years.

"When my dad wrote his Ph.D. dissertation, it was a research project on Deaf leaders," recalled Jane. "He was all about Deaf leaders. He did research about the characteristics that made Deaf leaders successful in the business world, particularly with hearing people."

"Many of my dad's former students are in business now or are leaders in the nonprofit world," said Glen. "The biggest thing mom and dad wanted to impart was to be a leader. To see a need, step up, and lead."

Glen and Jane described their parents as people who were incredibly generous with their money as well as their time.

"They showed us that generosity is not just by donating money, it's donating time, and taking on leadership roles when many people would feel apprehensive to take that on," said Glen. "There

are plenty of minutes in the day. They chose to use many of those minutes to be generous for the Deaf community, especially Gallaudet.”

Jane said that attending Gallaudet forever altered the course of her mother’s life. Agnes did not start school until she was seven years old, and leaving her home in Omaha, Nebraska, to attend Gallaudet was a big deal.

“Being able to be here at Gallaudet just made her whole life,” said Jane. “Her life was because she came here, got a college education, and was in this environment. Her leadership, academic, and athletic opportunities came from Gallaudet. She had such a huge life out of being here at Gallaudet; it made all the difference.”



Agnes served on the faculty of the Department of Physical Education and coached women’s field hockey, swimming, and basketball. Even when she left full-time work to raise her children, Agnes remained actively involved in volunteering at events at Gallaudet, attending sporting events, and being involved with the Gallaudet University Alumni Association (GUAA).

“They attended everything,” said Jane. “If there was a basketball game, they were there. If a Deaf person wrote a book, they bought the book and they were out there promoting it to anybody and everybody.”

Agnes later returned to Gallaudet to teach sign language to new faculty and staff members, and international students. Tutoring students was very special to Agnes, said Jane.

“Growing up in a rural area, not having access to education until she was seven, and then coming to Gallaudet – international students often have similar experiences,” said Jane. “She was a huge pay it forward person.”

The Sutcliffes’ embodiment of leadership and self-determination impacted many generations of faculty, staff, and students at Gallaudet and left an indelible mark on their children as all are currently self-employed.

Sharing in the excitement of the annual Business Bowl is a treat for the Sutcliffe family, and they are grateful to Gallaudet’s Department of Business for their work hosting the event.

“We are always very thankful to the Department of Business for their leadership,” said Glen.

For the 20th anniversary, the Sutcliffe family increased the prize money for the top three winners and gave \$100 gift certificates to everyone who participated.

At this year’s competition, the \$1,000 first place prize went to Trey Johnson, the \$750 second place prize was awarded to Frederick Scott, and the \$500 third place winner was Brian Russell.