

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: SUE & JOHN ALLEN CHALK

When Sue Chalk moved to Fort Worth with her husband John Allen in 1986, one of her first priorities was to get involved with the Cliburn. She had followed Van Cliburn (as a young pianist around his age), as well as the Cliburn Competition, closely—and couldn't believe that she found herself in his, and its, hometown. Her commitment led her to serve on the Board of Directors for 25 years; she recently transitioned to the Van Cliburn Advisory Council. She's volunteered in the office and for six competitions, primarily managing visitors information. And she and her husband are present advocates, participating as donors since 1990 and being full concert and competition subscribers since 1997. Here's a little about why, in their own words:



CLIBURN: What is your connection to classical music?

SUE & JOHN: Sue studied piano for nine years through high school, and also played the flute for many years in the high school orchestra. John Allen began music lessons from 5 years of age that continued into college, playing the trumpet.

CLIBURN: What is it you enjoy most about classical music performances?

SUE & JOHN: Sue says, "It just feeds my soul." We enjoy learning more of the history of composers and compositions as well as the demonstrated skill levels of Cliburn performers.

CLIBURN: Do you have a favorite memory of Van Cliburn?

SUE & JOHN: Sue has many special memories, but one not related to music occurred at a black tie dinner in Fort Worth. We were seated with Van and one of the conversation topics was "good southern cooking." We discovered that Van and Sue loved turnip greens and cornbread! Van was a warm conversationalist, as many experienced through the years. We also enjoyed personal visits in his Fort Worth home and other opportunities to visit personally about various subjects.

CLIBURN: You lived for many years in Abilene. Why did you decide to come to Fort Worth—what makes Fort Worth unique?

SUE & JOHN: Increased professional and other opportunities at a time when both of us could transition from Abilene to Fort Worth without serious complications or hindrances. Fort Worth offered both of us immediate access to participation in and support for the arts. The people, the arts, and the culture in general make Fort Worth unique.

CLIBURN: Why did you decide to contribute to the Cliburn Endowment?

SUE & JOHN: Sue says that as a young pianist near Van's age she followed the news stories regarding his Tchaikovsky Competition victory in 1958. "I read with great interest about the beginning of the Cliburn Competition and then followed news stories when the competition would occur. Never dreaming I would ever live in Fort Worth, I thought it would be fabulous to attend a competition 'sometime.' When we moved to Fort Worth I immediately wanted to get involved with the Cliburn. I became a volunteer for the competition, and John Allen and I enjoyed attending and listening to the competitors." The competition brings very positive world-wide recognition to Fort Worth. To produce this world class event requires lots of financial support and enormous amounts of personal time and effort from the Cliburn staff and volunteers.

CLIBURN: Why do you feel endowments are important?

SUE & JOHN: Endowments encourage and protect legacies that otherwise are subject to neglect and attrition. The Cliburn Endowment helps assure the future of what are now the multiple Cliburn competitions.

CLIBURN: Why do you give your resources and your time to the Cliburn and why should others?

SUE & JOHN: The Cliburn represents the best of classical piano and encourages the continuing development of gifted young performers and future teachers of the genre.

Congratulations go to Marianne Pohle, the Cliburn's director of development, who recently received her professional designations as a Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy® and a Certified Fund Raising Executive®.

For any questions about your giving, such as those regarding non-cash assets or IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions, please contact her at mpohle@cliburn.org or 817.738.6536.

