



## Don and Willadean Ramsey – Encouraging Students Through an Advised Fund

In the 1960s, while working as an agriculture education teacher at the high school in Jones, Okla., Don Ramsey was constantly faced with the challenge of helping his FFA chapter raise money to fund on-going projects.

After bouncing around a few ideas, Don decided that turning live hogs into a usable product was the answer. He and his students began processing the hogs into a sausage product that they then sold to raise funds. The idea worked. A few years later, the Ramseys took a leap of faith when Don decided to quit teaching and sell sausage full time.

“He walked into the kitchen and said ‘I hope you want to be in the sausage business because I just bought some equipment,’” says Willadean, Don’s wife of 42 years. “I wasn’t worried. He was a good teacher so I knew he could always go back to that if this didn’t work out.”

Today, nearly 40 years later, Blue & Gold Sausage Co. works with 900 groups that sell the company’s products – sausage, bacon and chicken tenders – to raise money for community projects, trips, equipment and other needs. In 2006, the company sold 4.5 million pounds of product, of which half was sausage.

Ones to always give back, the couple made their first gift to the Oklahoma City Community Foundation in 1979. They eventually established an advised fund through which they and their grown sons, Bret and Greg, recommend grants to support agricultural education programs such as the Oklahoma FFA Foundation and the OSU-Agricultural Education Scholarship, both of which were started by the Ramseys.

“Our family’s fund is an ideal situation,” Don says. “There comes a time in someone’s life when helping others becomes more important than helping yourself. When you get to that point, you’ll enjoy it so much.”

