

AINSWORTH, SPENCER, TURMAN HONORED BY A&M-COMMERCE

Written by Courtesy of TAMU-C
Wednesday, 03 June 2009 13:14



COMMERCE, Texas - They have excelled in their various careers, been successful, and were recently honored as Distinguished Alumni of Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Jim Ainsworth of Commerce, Mary Spencer of Dallas, and Dr.

James Turman of Austin received tributes at a recognition dinner held recently on campus where they won the highest awards given by A&M-Commerce for their career achievements.

Ainsworth graduated from the university with a B.B.A. in 1965 and worked in the financial field as a certified public accountant in this area for over 20 years.

He is a certified public accountant, certified financial planner, and chartered life underwriter. Ainsworth founded Jim Ainsworth, CPA, and co-founded Ainsworth & Lambert, CPA's.

He later formed Ainsworth Money Management, Inc. and became a licensed securities principal. He also co-founded of 1st Global Partners, a full service financial services firm with

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headquarters in Dallas. He authored four books in the financial services field.

In 1997, Ainsworth sold all his business interests and made a journey across Texas by covered wagon and horseback. He wrote about this in a memoir, "Biscuits Across the Brazos."

Two books in his "Follow the Rivers" series, "In the Rivers Flow" and "Rivers Crossing" take place in Northeast Texas.

The third novel, "Rivers Ebb," was a finalist for best mainstream novel of 2008 and the Writers League of Texas Violet Crown Award. It was also selected as a finalist for the best mainstream/literary novel in the Writers Digest international book contest.

On being named a Distinguished Alumnus, Ainsworth said, "I am honored, grateful, and humbled to be named a Distinguished Alumnus of Texas A&M University-Commerce. This university, its people, and the campus have been part of my life since I attended basketball games as a boy."

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"Thousands of students, myself among them, would have missed the opportunity for higher education had it not been for this university. It is a privilege to have one more connection to such a rich heritage," he said.

Spencer, who graduated in 1972, is president and founder of The Spencer Company, one of the largest contract furniture dealerships in the Dallas metropolitan area. This company is the largest contract furniture dealership and the 17th largest women-owned business in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Spencer is an active alumna, having served on the A&M-Commerce Foundation Board for eight years.

In 2003, she played a key role in raising more than \$10,000 for the Sigma Zeta chapter of the Chi Omega chapter to redecorate their sorority house. In 1996, she established the Mary Spencer Chi Omega Scholarship.

"Education is critical to our later successes in life and for that I owe my teachers and mentors during my college years," Spencer said. "They were the ones who refused to accept nothing less than my best. Because of the people who pushed me, I have always lived with the motto of always turning the ordinary into something extraordinary," she said.

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Spencer loves animals and is a former chairman of the board of directors for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Texas.

Her other civic involvement includes being asked by the Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert to serve on the City of Dallas Animal Shelter Commission and helping build the Commerce Humane Society's new facility.

Turman is a native of Fannin County, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees from A&M-Commerce.

He has had various careers, including becoming a junior high school principal in Paris at age 24, later serving as a state representative, and former Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

"The basis of my world of life and work was my education at East Texas State Teachers College and the inspiration given to me by my teachers," Turman said.

He considers East Texas Normal College graduate Sam Rayburn, longest serving Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from Bonham, his mentor.

After narrowly being defeated in the 1962 primary for lieutenant governor, he worked in Washington, D.C. in several positions and was associate commissioner in the U.S. Office of Education in the Johnson administration.

Turman also served in the Nixon and Ford administrations, and later founded and was president of two national education management consulting corporations based in Alexandria, Va.

Returning to Texas, Turman worked for the Texas Department of Health and Human Services.

In 1990, he organized Chaparral Mining Corporation and served as chairman of the board, president, and chief executive officer.

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