AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

FOR

ROBERT TOCKER

Hello ladies and gentlemen, friends and family, students, faculty and administrators, and of course, I want to express a special “Hello” to Dean \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Dempster. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “In art, the hand can never execute anything higher than the heart can imagine.” Here at the University of Texas, and in particular at both the School of Fine Arts and the Graduate School of Information, students and teachers alike experience the nobility of learning, the profound impact realized by stretching the imagination, and the importance of having the ability to have access to the true heart of the matter-information and inspiration used for education, literacy in all of its forms, and a continuing sense of self-awareness that fuels a passion for authentic self-expression. On behalf of my wife, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and all of us at the Tocker Foundation, we want to take a moment to express our gratitude to the Doty Society for recognizing the passion that **we** have in supporting vital programs that in turn support increased awareness and understanding for those who will inherit the future-namely the students and graduates of the University of Texas.

Our family began our foundation fifty years ago with the mission of supporting community based initiatives in small towns and as the years passed and new issues and conditions became apparent, we saw the need to bring education and information to more remote areas by supporting local, rural libraries.

The actor Kirk Douglas once said, “My mother and father were illiterate immigrants from Russia. When I was a child they were constantly amazed that I could go to a building and take a book on any subject. They couldn’t believe this access to knowledge we have in America. They couldn’t believe that it was **free**. Ladies and gentlemen, **everyone** is entitled to have access to knowledge in the form of libraries. Everyone has the right to be literate, and in this day and age, when access to and understanding of information is such a critical element in every day survival, we have to acknowledge the urgency in this society to make sure everyone has the tools and wherewithal to learn and to communicate. Our mission of awarding non-competitive grants to rural libraries is a vital step in insuring that everyone has access to education, no matter how remote their geographic location. As we look out for our neighbors and communities, in turn we strengthen our society and those that will inherit the issues and opportunities being formed today.

(**Name your wife**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I also believe in the wonderful work being done at the School of Fine Arts and the Graduate School of Information. Self-expression enriches the soul and inspires curiosity and that indefinable sense of being alive that comes from within. Friedrich Nietzsche said, “The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude.” We give to the School of Fine Arts to express **OUR** gratitude for the joy of nurturing that self-expression in others.

Knowledge is power and information is being transmitted with astounding speed and even more astonishing volume. The Graduate School of Information is at the nexus of the information revolution that we are experiencing and it is our intention that the graduate students working to resolve tomorrow’s communications issues be prepared. We appreciate the need for participation and innovation, and the Tocker Foundation is there to support the next wave of innovation and distribution of knowledge and the power of connection.

A wise philosopher once said, “The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are humbled that you have acknowledged us with this beautiful award. We are thrilled with the appreciation of our contribution to the University of Texas and **your** generosity and recognition confirms to us that we are indeed very, very blessed.

Thank you!