

MORE FROM HOMEPAGE

Dallas doesn't inspect road maintenance work, lacks rules to ensure proper monitoring, audit says

Flu season in Dallas County turned out to be mild, despite recent omicron surge

UT Southwestern completes \$1 billion campaign for brain research

SPORTS

Super Bowl charity donor's repaid a good deed many times over

Follow This Story

Get Personalized News Updates



By SportsDay Staff

11:30 PM on Jan 28, 2011



Listen to this article now

Powered by Trinity Audio

00:00

1.0x

04:03

When Pat Riley made the decision to help a struggling second-year law student, he had no idea that the return for his kindness would be millions of dollars in contributions for education and arts initiatives — and the seed money for the Super Bowl SLANT 45 effort.

About 15 years ago, Shannon Boy was studying at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock law school. With final exams two weeks away, her landlord informed her that he was selling the condominium she had been renting near campus.

“It was impossible for me to actually consider buying the place,” she said. “And two weeks before finals is clearly not a good time to be going out trying to find another place to live.”

In stepped Riley, whom she had gotten to know by playing tennis at his Little Rock Athletic Club. Riley operated by a principle of giving he learned from a friend, Arkansas Tennis Hall of Fame inductee Jay Freeman.

Shannon Sharpe reacts to Kyler Murray's response on the Cardinals' report saying he is "immature" | UNDISPUTED



Freeman and Riley made a habit of finding young people with potential — Shannon had been Miss Arkansas in 1992 and was a hardworking student — and helping with their financial needs in return for their continuing the cycle of giving someday.

“He said, ‘I see potential in you,’” she said. “The only thing that I ever ask of you is that one day, when you can afford to do something for someone else, then you do that in return.”



SPONSORED CONTENT

BY IDIBS

Riley purchased the condominium and allowed her to continue living in it at a reduced rate until she graduated from law school in 1997.

Now, Shannon Boy Skokos lives in Dallas and contributes millions of dollars at a time to arts and education initiatives in the community, as well as smaller amounts to individual students through the Ted and Shannon Skokos Foundation, founded in 2008.

“My husband and I have always referred to it as “The Riley Rule,”” Skokos said. “Whenever we’re out and doing things, we’re always looking like he did for young people with potential.”

Over the years, the Skokoses have put many students through college with their own money, in addition to their contributions through the foundation.

“The only thing we ever ask of those young people is the same thing: ‘One of these days, when you can afford it, find someone else, another young person in need, and help get them started in the right direction too,’” Skokos said. “We try to do it on a regular basis. He instilled that in the back of my mind and I’ve never forgotten it.”

Riley, now 87 and still living in Little Rock, said he’s not surprised by Skokos’ success and generosity.

“I really can’t claim that — whenever you do help somebody and you ask them to help somebody, it really then comes down to them,” Riley said. “They have to be personally devoted to doing it and moving forward. But if you influence someone, that’s good.”

What’s funny, Riley said, is that when Skokos graduated from law school, he turned around and sold the condo, and ended up making a profit.

“Good things happen to good people, I guess,” Skokos said.

The Skokos Foundation recently donated \$1 million for Super Bowl XLV charity efforts, with half of that going to SLANT 45 — an education-through-public-service initiative that organized 44,000 North Texas children to complete more than 440,000 hours of community service in 2010.

Through individual assistance and large-scale programs such as SLANT 45, Skokos is passing “The Riley Rule” on to a new generation.

“I hope that the young people we help — not only those that we just find along the way that we help through college, but also the young kids in the SLANT 45 program — we hope that they will remember these messages as well, and someday they’ll turn around and help someone else too,” Skokos said.

Riley said he was touched that Skokos has continued to follow “The Riley Rule” after all these years.

“That’s nice to hear that,” he said. “And as she goes along, some other people will name it after her — “The Shannon Rule.””



SportsDay Staff

[✉ websports@dallasnews.com](mailto:websports@dallasnews.com) [🐦 @SportsDayDFW](https://twitter.com/SportsDayDFW)