



FRONTIER FIESTA

The History of Frontier Fiesta

In 1939, Frontier Fiesta was conceived by a group of ambitious students led by the Vice President of the University of Houston at the time, Dr. Walter Kemmerer. At its inception, Frontier Fiesta simply attempted to promote our budding University after its move from its downtown location to its present location. Frontier Fiesta's formative years were interrupted by World War II, but that did not stop the celebration from returning even more impressively in 1947.

Clearly that loss of time did not affect Frontier Fiesta's popularity, because in the 1950's, the event was drawing crowds of up to 200,000 people, bringing in celebrities and rock stars such as James Garner, Humphrey Bogart and Kenny Rogers, and eventually being titled, "the Greatest College Show on Earth," by LIFE Magazine in 1958. Behind the scenes, Frontier Fiesta was no less impressive, being run by such future giants as Welcome Wilson (member and former chair UH System Board of Regents and chair of the Welcome Group), Johnny Goyen (former Houston City Councilman) and Jack Valenti (press secretary to former President Lyndon B. Johnson and head of the Motion Picture Association of America).

Needless to say, Frontier Fiesta had become quite the spectacle. Unfortunately, it was discontinued in 1959 because the event was deemed an impediment to student success. Fast forward to 1991, and again it becomes evident that almost nothing can stop an ambitious group of students, especially when led by someone who believes in

them – in this case, Vice President for Advancement, David Keith. That year marked the return of Frontier Fiesta to UH, and it has continued to this day.

The City of Houston and UH Unite

The three-day event was re-established as an opportunity for University students and the surrounding community to celebrate the rich tradition of the University of Houston and the City of Houston. With cook-offs, bake-offs, student variety shows, family fun days and live concerts by some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry, Frontier Fiesta is an experience that many members of the UH community cherish as an integral part of their UH experience.



Students Learn As They Lead

Frontier Fiesta is an event that is student-led by a Board of Directors – a team of great minds working on it year round. Spearheaded by the Frontier Fiesta Board of



Directors, along with the advising team from the Center for Student Involvement, this annual program is thoughtfully planned and executed. In collaboration with the UH Alumni Association, the Frontier Fiesta Alumni Network and many volunteers, the goal of Frontier Fiesta remains to create a memorable experience each and every year for students, alumni and all members of the UH community.

An event like this, with so much student participation and planning, creates opportunities for the Board of Directors and all of the student volunteers to learn about leadership, character-building, planning, team work, budgeting and problem solving. These skills are useful and transferable to other areas of their lives, especially as they graduate and choose a career.

Areas of Need

The Frontier Fiesta association needs to create opportunities for alumni and friends to provide sustaining support for UH students. The Frontier Fiesta Program Fund and the Scholarship Fund will help to achieve our main goal, that of student success.

FRONTIER FIESTA PROGRAM FUND – Students planning the three-day event should have the peace of mind in knowing that they can seek artists and provide activities for the Fiesta that everyone will enjoy without being burdened by the associated costs.

FRONTIER FIESTA SCHOLARSHIP FUND – Scholarship money is raised each year, as a part of the rich tradition of Frontier Fiesta. These scholarships go to students that meet the necessary qualifications put forth by the committee. The students make a valiant effort, but a relatively small amount is raised each year. The Frontier Fiesta Scholarship Fund will allow for more scholarships to be awarded to deserving students who apply and can demonstrate financial need.

For more information,
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