Frank G. Jones ’63 grew up attending Rice football games and riding his bicycle through the city streets that crossed campus. His time as a Rice undergrad was a highlight of Frank’s formative years, and he has made it a priority to give back to an institution that provided him with a top-tier education. Now, as the president of the Association of Rice Alumni (ARA), Frank is committed to raising the profile of this important group. Part of his plan includes celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the ARA.

What shaped your interest in working with the ARA?
My mother went to Rice, and both of my parents were regularly involved in activities at the university. It was natural for me to be involved in Rice even before I was a student. Rice has been a really important part of my life, and volunteering is a way to stay in touch with the school and with friends. When you get the quality of education you get at Rice, you feel an obligation to give back and allow those who come after you to enjoy the same experience.

How do volunteers help to achieve the goals of the ARA?
We can’t engage our community or work toward a common goal without volunteers. We have an excellent staff at Rice supporting the ARA, but we need active volunteers to provide input as to how we can best serve the school and other alumni. We need volunteers to build our profile, to be involved in the activities and to support the staff.

President Leebron has focused on Rice being a part of the Houston community. As a result, our students are thinking about how to give back and how to help. When these kids graduate and join the ARA, that spirit of volunteerism will follow them.

You have called the ARA an exceptional community. What is the community like for you?
There are just over 60,000 members of the ARA, but you run into alumni wherever you go. It is a community that identifies with each other and that has mutual respect for each other. When you tell someone you went to Rice, that means something to people.
Dear Rice Volunteers,

It was just over a year ago that we first announced The Rice Investment, our historic financial aid initiative that expands support for low- and middle-income families. I am grateful to the Rice community, who rallied around this effort, broadcasting the message that talent deserves opportunity and volunteers to ensure our students are able to access and opportunity for all promising students. This fall, we welcomed the first group of students to benefit from this extraordinary program.

This fall also marks the 100-year anniversary of the Association of Rice Alumni (ARA). In 1919, 147 Rice graduates gathered to celebrate their connection to the university and cement their commitment to building an alumni community. These founding members set the stage for a century of growth, service and dedication to the grand project of enriching the Rice experience.

Generations of alumni have continued to take up that same mantle. The ARA, in partnership with the greater Rice community, exemplifies the very spirit of volunteerism and generosity that has sustained the university and that is integral to our future success. Our volunteers make alumni events relevant and valuable, encourage student engagement, expand the university’s reach and share Rice’s values with the world. You are essential Rice ambassadors.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our alumni, parents and friends for volunteering your time, intellect, wisdom and enthusiasm. Your contributions are essential to the growth and progress of the university. Sincerely,

President David W. Leebron

The first meeting of the Association of Rice Alumni was held on Thanksgiving Day 1919 in the Physics Amphitheater in Herzstein Hall.

Established in 1919, Rice Engineering Alumni (REA) is the oldest affinity group at Rice and is dedicated to providing support to the George R. Brown School of Engineering.

The first college associate started volunteering in 1937 while attending college.

The Graduate Student Association was officially created in 1969 in Valhalla. Since that time, the group has worked to further graduate student interests and to play a large role in university affairs.

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On October 12, 2016, the ARA launched sallyportal.org specifically for those in the Rice community to network, mentor and stay connected.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Over the past 100 years, alumni, faculty, staff, parents and friends have made their mark on the university by offering their time, expertise, commitment and enthusiasm. Here are just four of the thousands of volunteers who have worked towards a more engaged community, a more vibrant campus and a continuation of the unmatched Rice experience.

SONGYING FANG
Professor, Department of Material Science and Engineering

“The type of volunteer work that I typically do involves giving career advice to underprivileged students — helping them to navigate their educational journey and to play a larger role in the university. I also help students with developing communication skills, specifically for those making presentations on special challenges, particularly foreign students. As a former faculty member and having been a foreign graduate student, I see myself as having a unique role to play in helping foreign students navigate the Rice experience.”

KAY AND DAVID LASATER
Chairs of the Parents Leadership Council (Northwest)

“We volunteer so that we can be better connected to the people and places that are significant to our daughter’s experience. These opportunities also help us to understand and share our passion and vision for the mission of building and enriching the Rice community.”

AJ BEARD ’01
Volunteer Leadership Conference Coordinator, Rice Alumni in the Northwest (DAN)

“Volunteer Leadership Conference is an excellent opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. It’s exciting to listen to inspirational speakers at the conference and to network with a number of different groups. The conference is a great way to kick off the Volunteer Leadership Conference season, and each of these has helped support the continued success of the conference.”

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For more information or to apply, please visit OISS.RICE.EDU/slash.capIFR.