I’ve heard that you can tell a lot about what a person is like simply by the contents of their closet. Everything in a persons closet tells a little but about them—things like their creativity, their background, their passion for a certain sports team, their dedication to a certain band, and their ability to think outside of the box. A closet can also tell you a person’s social status, job field, age, or race as well. But the most important things inside closets are the things that people keep buried in their drawer dedicated to their secret indulgences (like the Jonas Brothers T-shirts that I may or may not have at the bottom of my t-shirt drawer) and the items that a person keeps with him or her their entire life.

If you walked into my father’s closet, you would notice a vast amount and a large variety of button down shirts. If you knew my dad, you could definitely vouch for me that I am correct when I say that my father always wore collared shirts. Has anyone ever seen my dad in anything but collared shirts? I didn’t think so. His drawers hold his collection of elephant ties purchased mostly by myself for every gift-giving holiday for 14 years. You would also see his collection of work clothes, business suits, and khakis that numbered in the hundreds. At this point, I bet you’re wondering “why on earth is this crazy girl rambling on and on about closets.” Well let me tell you why. If you push a couple business suits aside and moved some button down shirts, you would find one very important thing in the back of his closet: a pair of very worn in, cared for cowboy boots.

My mom and I joke that although my dad hailed from Ohio, he was born to be a Texas boy. I could easily see him being a classy countryman through and through, but he would have to be wearing a collared shirt. Without it, the image of him
herding cattle would just be plain unnatural. But I think that the only reason I can picture him today living in that lifestyle is because he attended the University of Texas. I can’t even joke about how much he loved this school. Throughout my fathers life, he lived, worked, and visited so many places on earth—Cairo, London, California, Chicago, New York—yet within five minutes of talking to him you knew that he went to the University of Texas. I know that if my father had a choice of where my brother and I would attend school and what we would major in, he would have us shipped off to UT school of Petroleum Engineering with all of our personal belongings in a heartbeat.

Not only was my dad the number one fan of the school of petroleum engineering, but he also was what I would consider a number one Texas sports fan. If my father were invited to say, a cowboy’s game, he would say he would love to go and see if it could fit into his busy schedule. But if he were invited to a UT football game, he would be down at Austin with his son in tow faster than you could say “Wait you forgot your cowboy hat”. Even the chairs in our family room are decorated with UT pillows. His love for UT sports is also what I think began the spark in my brother for his love for all sports. If UT is playing, my brother will turn on the TV, kick his feet up on the couch, lean back and watch the game, even if it is at the most inconvenient time. This is a pose that Brian Junior must have picked up from Brian Senior, after watching my dad do exactly that for the first eleven years of my brother’s life. Although I did admire both their dedication to UT sports, the constant reel of ESPN can be very, very annoying.
As you have hopefully picked up by now, my dad’s years at UT did not just stay with the person my dad was in the past, but continued to live in him. Like those cowboy boots, the experiences my dad gained from his years at UT were something that he never forgot, never left behind, and never took for granted. My dad taught me so many lessons that have shaped me into the person that I am today, some that were probably taught to him when he was at UT that made him into the man that he became. One of the most memorable things my father ever said to me was “I am giving you the tools to change the world, you just have to go out there and do it”. This one sentence has shaped me dramatically since he said it to me a little over a year ago. I now realize that he almost recited to me the goal of the University of Texas.

My family and I are so proud to underwrite this chair that will belong to a person specializing in giving his or her students the tools to change the world. I know I am proud to be associated with a school that continues to find the brightest, most innovative and most creative young men and young women in the country so that they may grow under the eyes of Texas into the people they were born to be. Wherever my dad went, he left boot shaped footprints in the dirt, not only leaving his mark on the world but also the mark of the university. Thank you all for coming out here tonight to celebrate the dedication of this chair in my father’s name. It means the world to me. I know if he were here, he would thank you too. I don’t know exactly where he is right now, but I guarantee you that he is probably wearing a button down collared shirt and a very worn in, cared for, pair of cowboy boots. Thank you Go Longhorns