

Frank Ruttenberg

Q. What is Las Casas Foundation?

A. Las Casas is a nonprofit foundation formed to assist our community with its development of the performing arts. Our original mission was to save and restore two very important architectural treasures, the Majestic and the Charline McCombs Empire Theatres, and to assure these theaters would be repurposed for the advancement of the performing arts in our community. Based on our success, we expanded our mission to focus on performing arts education and scholarships through the Las Casas Performing Arts Scholarship Competition.

Q. How did you become involved with Las Casas Foundation?

A. San Antonio is a terrific city with a great history that can be seen in our historic structures. As a child, my father and grandfather officed downtown, so I grew up with these historic structures. Early in my career as a real estate attorney, I was lucky enough to work with Hap Veltman and others who valued historic preservation. Their interest in adaptive reuse was infectious. When I was presented the opportunity to assist Las Casas, I considered it a great opportunity. We all work to excel in our professions, but there needs to be more — we should all look for ways to give something back.

Q. What is the Las Casas Performing Arts Scholarship Competition?

A. The competition provides scholarships to high school students who have a desire to pursue their education in the performing arts. Each year more than 100 high school students compete for scholarship funds. The final determinations are made when the top students perform live on stage at the Charline McCombs Empire Theatre before a panel of world-class members of the performing arts industry. Since its inception in 2009, the competition has awarded almost \$300,000 in scholarship funds to San Antonio-area students.

Q. What makes the Las Casas Performing Arts Scholarship Competition important?

A. Las Casas' scholarship program is contributing to our community's efforts to elevate the opportunities for students of all walks of life. We do this by expanding access to professionals in their field, creating a greater opportunity for them to exhibit their artistry, and for a large percentage of the participants, by providing financial support for their education.

Q. Why do arts matter in San Antonio?

A. While I appreciate the arts, I am also a businessman. There has always been a direct tie between the growth and success of the cultural arts and the economic development of a community. Every major study that reflects on the impact cultural arts have on a community confirms that the investment in cultural arts positively impacts the local economy, enhances educational opportunities for its youth, promotes innovative and collaborative thought and furthers cultural understanding. More than any other investment a community can make, the arts inspire and can transform neighborhoods, communities, minds, hearts and lives.

Frank Ruttenberg is chairman of the board of directors of Las Casas Foundation and shareholder at Winstead PC. He has been involved with the Las Casas Foundation since it was founded in 1988 and helped create the organization's scholarship program. Ruttenberg's community service includes serving on the San Antonio Zoo board of directors and helping create the San Antonio Children's Museum.



About Las Casas Foundation

Founded in 1988, Las Casas Foundation is dedicated to the development of the performing arts through education and scholarships and the restoration and preservation of historic theaters. For more information, visit www.lascasasfoundation.org.