Denise and Jordan Zimmerman Family Foundation give million dollar gift for School of Mass Communications advertising program - largest in its history

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TAMPA, Fla. (Aug. 7, 2006) – Advertising powerhouse Jordan Zimmerman, a graduate of the University of South Florida and founder/chairman of the largest advertising agency in the southeastern United States, and his wife Denise, have presented USF with a gift of one million dollars. The endowed fund will enable the university to secure an additional $750,000 match from the State of Florida.

This gift, the largest donation in the history of the mass communications program at USF, will support the Zimmerman Advertising Program (ZAP) in the School of Mass Communications. ZAP consists of cutting edge undergraduate classes in advertising and marketing presented in a distinctive framework that is shaping the future of advertising education.

As part of the program, Zimmerman and members of his executive team from Zimmerman Advertising fly in from Ft. Lauderdale every Friday to teach students and share their real-life experiences in the world of advertising.

“This unique approach reflects Jordan Zimmerman’s creative, energetic, innovative thinking and his leadership in advertising,” said USF President Judy Genshaft. “Just as he has set a new mark in the field of advertising, so will the Zimmerman Advertising Program set a new standard in education.”

In the first course, last year, students made account-winning presentations to the founder of Papa John’s Pizza, John Schnatter, whose company served as their semester-long case study. In the second offering last semester, competition among the students resulted in one winning a brand new car for her work in a course that studied advertising and marketing in the car industry. Some students have gone on to work for Zimmerman.

“We’re being given a wonderful opportunity to build in an important area of Mass Communications,” said College of Arts and Sciences Dean John Skvoretz. “It’s an area that is already quite strong here at USF and this gift serves to make it even stronger.”

A $200,000 gift from Zimmerman established ZAP last fall. Zimmerman’s very first gift to USF was $20,000 to finish the $100,000 Endowed Advertising Scholarship Fund. It, like his one million dollar gift, was also eligible for matching state funds. Zimmerman’s total giving, including the state matches, totals $1,980,000.

“As a result of Jordan Zimmerman's past generosity, USF advertising students have access to many new elective courses in their field and to world-class experiences that are preparing them for key positions in the advertising profession,” noted Edward “Jay” Friedlander, director, School of Mass Communications. “The new gift will further enhance the experience for
students. To put it simply, Jordan Zimmerman has made a gift to USF that eventually will transform the nature of advertising education in the United States.”

Zimmerman Advertising, an Omnicom Group Company, based in Fort Lauderdale, currently ranks as the 17th largest advertising agency in the United States, with just under $2 billion in billings, more than 860 full-time associates and 22 offices throughout the country. Some of Zimmerman’s clients include Nissan, Papa John’s Pizza, the Miami Dolphins, S & K Menswear and Office Depot.

The University of South Florida is one of the nation’s top 63 public research universities as designated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. USF received more than $287 million in research contracts and grants last year, and it is ranked by the National Science Foundation as one of the nation’s fastest growing universities in terms of federal research and development expenditures. The university has a $1.3 billion annual budget and serves nearly 43,250 students on campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota/Manatee and Lakeland. In 2005, USF entered the Big East athletic conference.