

# Outside The Box: Leslie Alexander

■ by Crystal Rawls

**He rarely misses a home game** – and this year, he’s making a special effort to attend as many road games as possible. In fact, he’s usually perched on the front row, caught up in the active excitement of art in motion; gleaning inspiration from the competitive sport. He’s more than just a basketball team owner, he’s a fan.

Leslie Alexander achieved his childhood dream and purchased the Rockets franchise in 1993, making him the longest-tenured owner of the highly successful basketball team. Although he admittedly spends a bit too much time at the office overseeing day-to-day operations, Alexander also donates a significant portion of his time and resources to charitable causes.

Team successes aside (two NBA Championships for the Rockets and four WNBA Titles for the Comets), Alexander has worked to set the standard for community service off the court.

“I’ve always believed that sports teams are in the unique position to make a real difference in their communities,” Alexander said. “When I bought the Rockets, that was my dream. I hoped to make a difference for the people of Houston, both emotionally and financially.”

At 63, he’s already amassed quite a resume of selfless dedication to his community. Soon after acquiring the franchise, Alexander established the Clutch City Foundation, an organization that funds and operates comprehensive programs benefiting thousands of children each year. Just two years into the organization’s existence, the Rockets received the “Leadership Houston” in Action Award for outstanding community service to youth and later education. In 1997, the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame honored Alexander and the Rockets with the Pro Team Community Award.

Today, the Clutch City Foundation continues to provide help, hope and inspiration to those who might otherwise be forgotten. Funded projects include: Kim’s Place M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, The Woodlands barrier-free playground, Boys & Girls Club, scholarships to area Houston students, the Read to Achieve Accelerated Reader (AR) Rewards Program, the Slam Dunk Story Contest, and the Houston HopeFest, among others. The initiative has resulted in nearly seven million dollars in donations to local charities impacting tens of thousands of Houstonians each year.

For Alexander, it’s a simple concept: “The more you give in life, the more you enjoy life.” And it’s the quality of life that keeps Alexander motivated to personally help others.

For three years, Alexander has been a member of The Children’s Assessment Center’s (CAC) Board of Directors, donating his time and resources to support sexually abused children in Harris County.



“The Children’s Assessment Center is dramatically altering the cycle of child abuse in Houston and Harris County,” he said. “The CAC’s programs reduce the risk of continued abused and help children rebuild trust so that they can overcome their abuse and move on to become healthy adults.”

“It is a true privilege for The Children’s Assessment Center to have Leslie Alexander on our Foundation Board of Directors,” said Executive Director Elaine Stolte. “Through his leadership and support, Leslie has made it possible for us to provide the healing our children need to recover from their abuse. He continues to send a powerful message throughout the athletic and philanthropic community about making a difference in the lives of abused children; so that together, we can provide them the opportunity to embrace a future full of hope and promise. We are truly grateful for his vision and support for our program.”

Recently listed as one of Forbes’ 400 Richest Americans, Alexander reflects on a few of his own habits in offering advice for hopeful youth who dream of achieving a successful future.

“I have read the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* since I was 12. It taught me how the world works, what to expect, what was going to happen next. So, when things come up in politics, business, your life and the world, you know what to expect and how to work through it,” he said. “This gave me the prelude to our world and the diagnostic tools ... a good predictor if you want to achieve certain goals.” **N**

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