Developments

This issue profiles individuals who have chosen to share their resources with Western Illinois University. The desire of these individuals to share their success with the University touches the lives of students on both of Western’s campuses.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Patton Scholarship in Humanities & Social Sciences; Fink International Scholarship

Soldier Statesman Scholarship

“The person I am today - an Army Major, husband, and father, was created here in these halls, here on this campus. The Army Major talking to a distraught soldier was created as an RA helping a resident through family issues. The successful communicator was created as a writer for the Courier. The husband met his wife on a PT run the first day of ROTC. I owe a debt to this institution that can never be repaid, but it is a debt that I am supremely thankful to carry.”

Those were the words of Major Erik Archer, a 2001 WIU history graduate, to the crowd gathered in Macomb on the evening of Oct. 29 for the announcement of the public phase of the $60 million campaign, Set the Standard: Higher Values in Higher Education.

Archer, along with his wife, Beth ’01, has established the Soldier Statesman Scholarship to recognize and reward a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Ranger Club who epitomizes the Army values and is a leader at WIU and in ROTC. Archer is currently the Fort Carson (CO) Provost Marshal, between his third and fourth deployment overseas.

“When Erik contacted me about funding the scholarship via payroll deduction earlier this year, he mentioned it might take a little time to set it up,” said Vice President of Advancement and Public Services Brad Bainter. “When I asked why, he said it was because he was currently serving our country in Afghanistan. That really hit home hard and fast,” Bainter continued.

“He was a fellow alum serving overseas, in a dangerous situation, with a wife and children at home. Yet, he took the time to remember Western and the thoughtful... cont’d

WESTERN ONLINE GIFT-GIVING

To give Western Illinois University alumni and friends another gift-giving option, Western has established an online giving site accessible from the WIU Foundation homepage. Our secure website features University colleges, academic programs, scholarships, and other giving opportunities.

- Visit wiu.edu/foundation and click on “Donate Online.”
- Provide your personal information (confidential).
- Click on the area you wish to support.
- Verify your information on the gift summary page.
- Submit payment information (secure form).
- Print the verification form for your records.
- A receipt for tax purposes will be mailed to you from the WIU Foundation.

If you prefer to mail your information, a form will be generated that you can enclose with your check or credit card payment – Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover are accepted – and return to the Foundation by U.S. Mail.

For more information about making a gift to Western, contact the WIU Foundation at (309) 298-1861.
action to make sure his scholarship would be funded, regardless of his location.”

“My wife and I were in a position to give back to the University and the program that gave us so much,” said Archer. “We wanted to help, in a small way, some cadets that may have been in the same position we both were in ROTC.

“The scholarship is designed to help a student who is struggling to scrape together funds to attend. Both my wife and I struggled financially and academically at points, and we want to help those who find themselves in the same situation,” Archer continued. “I’m not addressing the prototypical scholar, but rather the student who, partnering with the University, can overcome obstacles to succeed.”

Archer mentioned many things that Western gave him, besides an education: a wife, confidence, humility and compassion. “I came to WIU as a boy without direction and left a confident leader of men engaged to a beautiful fellow Leatherneck,” he said.

“We hope that this modest gift will encourage others to give, to enable WIU to continue to build a strong legacy of providing lasting learning experiences to students in a supportive environment,” say 1973 graduates Linda and Gerald Patton.

The Pattons have recently committed $25,000 to establish the Patton Minority Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Gerald and Linda have each served in various capacities in higher education over the past 30 years, including roles as faculty members and administrators. They embrace education as a core value and believe that education is a key to success in life. The Pattons have established their scholarship to provide encouragement and support to others to achieve their higher education goals.

The Pattons were already married with their baccalaureate degrees behind them when they came to Western to attend graduate school. While Linda completed a Master of Science in counseling and college student personnel, Gerald continued his study of history, earning a Master of Arts. The Pattons highly value their educational experiences at Western. For Gerald, Western was where he solidified his confidence and motivation to pursue a doctorate.

“It was at Western that I really came to understand history as an academic discipline,” said Gerald. “While there, my interest evolved into a passion. I was fortunate to encounter several professors from whom I received intellectual challenge and encouragement. Professors Victor Hicken, my thesis adviser, and Robert Elkin, who taught historiography, were two of them. I attribute my experience at Western with providing me with the necessary skills, intellectual and interpersonal, to achieve the next big challenge, the Ph.D.,” Gerald continued.

Linda, under the tutelage of Kenneth Sproull, her mentor, remains passionate about the importance of providing exceptional service in her chosen role in higher education. “This scholarship is my small way of honoring Dr. Sproull (founder of the counselor education and college student personnel program) and his memory for the impact he had on my
early professional development,” Linda explained. “I hope that it will assist students as emerging professionals to benefit from similar experiences and opportunities that were afforded me while at WIU, such as high quality education, psychological support, confidence building, and an opportunity for my first job working in the WIU Counseling Center.”

From WIU, the couple moved to the University of Iowa, where Gerald earned his Ph.D. and Linda worked in the university’s counseling center. Their careers have taken them from coast to coast – New York to California. The Pattons now live in San Diego; both work at California State University-Fullerton, Gerald as the director of assessment and educational effectiveness, Linda as director of the Office of Grants and Contracts.

The Patton Scholarship will benefit undergraduates in good academic standing with an interest in a career associated with the humanities and/or social sciences. Preference will be given to students from underrepresented groups.

“The College of Arts and Sciences is truly indebted to the generosity of Gerald and Linda,” said CAS Dean Sue Martinelli-Fernandez. “They are an inspiration to, and mentors for, our students, helping to make their dreams for success a reality.”

Fink International Scholarship

Rodney and Bertha Fink, longtime friends of Western Illinois University, recently committed $25,000 to establish the Dr. Rodney and Bertha Fink International Student Scholarship, which will be given to female students from emerging or developing countries majoring in agriculture or agriculture business.

Rodney’s ties to the School of Agriculture go back to 1968, when he joined the faculty as an associate professor. He went on to serve as chair of the department before being named dean of the College of Applied Sciences in 1974. Bertha received her master’s degree from Western and served as an instructor of health sciences from 1976 to 1981. Since Rodney’s retirement in 1993, he has spent 15 years working with projects associated with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and voluntary projects in many countries around the world. His USAID project work was primarily associated with project development and evaluation.

“When I was teaching agriculture in the early 1970s, we began to see an influx of international students in agriculture, particularly from Africa,” Rodney said. “In these countries, as well as in other emerging and developing areas, women do 70 to 80 percent of the farming,” explained Rodney. “Yet they were (and still are) often not afforded the same educational opportunities as their male counterparts.

“At the same time, women in this country were just beginning to formally study agriculture,” he continued. “It was an interesting time, in many ways. In my classes, I felt it was important for a student from Illinois to sit next to a student from Africa, and for the young men to consider the young women as equals. I was trying, back then, to diversify the student body.

“Bertha and I have been all around the world, and have witnessed the role of women in agriculture economies,” he continued. “We want to address the inequities for these women, and we want to do it here through Western. We have put a lot of ourselves into this institution, and have also received a great deal from it. Between Bertha and our four children (three of whom are daughters), our family
has earned a total of six degrees from Western. Our family has done well here, and we hope to help Western continue to do well.”

The Finks have a long history of generosity to the institution. In addition to each of their professional contributions, the couple has previously made other significant gifts. In 2008, they donated 77 acres of land to establish the Fink Environmental Studies Field Laboratory and Conservancy and, at the same time, created the Bertha Grieshaber Fink Scholarship in Nursing.

“We are grateful to the Finks, and pleased that they chose to make this commitment during International Education Week,” said WIU President Al Goldfarb. “This scholarship strengthens Western’s globalization initiatives and assists in recruiting international students.”

“We are very excited about this generous gift from Rodney and Bertha,” said Richard Carter, director of the School of Distance Learning, International Studies and Outreach. “The scholarships will be utilized to provide new educational opportunities for international students, who in many cases do not have the same access to higher education as students in this country.”

A New Way to Support WIU: Tix4Cause

Western Illinois University wants to put your sports, theater or music tickets to good use. Western has joined Tix4Cause.com – an innovative ticket exchange website – to offer a new way for individuals to support the university. Tickets anywhere in the nation are posted on its website and when sold, 100 percent of the proceeds are forwarded to Western.

“This is a new way for alumni and friends to support the university,” Vice President of Advancement and Public Services Brad Bainter said. “Whether you have tickets to sell or you are looking to buy, consider Tix4Cause and Western first.”

Tix4Cause handles customer service, including ticket processing and handling, and provides sellers with a letter documenting their donation. “When you have tickets you can’t use, you can donate them to Western Illinois University,” said Kevin Nemetz, CEO and founder of tix4cause. “You can also support WIU by purchasing tickets. If you plan on going to an event, you can go to tix4cause.com and have your purchasing dollar go to a great cause.”

Tix4Cause.com was founded in 2009 when Nemetz was inspired to turn empty event seats into something “good.” The website was born of a simple, yet innovative concept—to connect donors, charities, and interested buyers of entertainment tickets, and give 100% of the proceeds to a worthy cause. “We are excited to be a part of Tix4Cause and make it easy for ticketholders to give generously to Western Illinois University,” Nemetz said.

To donate or purchase tickets anywhere in the nation to benefit Western, visit www.wiu.edu/giving and press the Tix4Cause icon, or go directly to www.tix4cause.com.