



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.

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Giving Back to Western

Western Illinois University alumnus George Grice is no stranger when it comes to giving back to his alma mater.

Since 1985, Grice has established four Grice Family Education Scholarships, including the Wrenn R. & Evelyn J. Grice Scholarship, named in honor of his parents; the Jessie Ferne Routh Grice Scholarship, named in honor of his grandmother; the Carol J. Grice Major Scholarship, named in honor of his older sister; and the Leanne L. Grice Porch Scholarship, named in honor of his younger sister. Like George, each of these family members attended Western and became teachers. And now, George is establishing a fifth scholarship, the Charles William Sr. and Josephine Luman Grice Scholarship, in honor of his Uncle Bill and Aunt Jo. Similar to the other four scholarships, this new scholarship will assist Western students majoring in education, specifically those who plan to teach at the middle school or secondary levels.

"These scholarships affirm the importance of teaching and learning, and the role Western played in my family," Grice said. "Increasing the number and financial amount of scholarships enhances teaching and learning. Nationwide, fewer students are enrolling in K-12 teacher training programs. And those who do, often choose more lucrative careers in order to pay off student loans."

His Aunt Jo was one of three Luman sisters who attended Western, studying from 1938-40. She roomed with her sister, Evelyn. Valedictorian of her high school class, Jo studied education along with home economics. Bill joined his older brother, Wrenn, at Western, attending from 1936-40. He combined his love of science with a passion for music.

The Grice brothers would meet the Luman sisters at Monroe Hall and escort them to a movie at the Illinois Theatre, to the library and to campus events. Bill married Jo in Summer 1940, and Wrenn and Evelyn married the following year. Bill accepted a teaching position at Wyand High School, where he taught science and worked with the band and choir. But his work would soon be interrupted by World War II.

On Oct. 23, 1944, Bill's mother, Ferne, Wrenn and Jo took him to the CB&Q station in Galesburg IL, where he would begin the train ride to be processed for overseas duty. Wrenn would later remember this as "a last goodbye." On Nov. 6, 1944, the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise left Pearl Harbor with Bill aboard.

Mike R. Vining, SGM USA (Retired) wrote the following about the USS Enterprise, where Ensign Grice was assigned to the Mobile Explosives Investigation Unit:

At that time, the Enterprise was part of a task force supporting landings on Okinawa as part of Operation Iceberg. At dawn on May 14, 1945, the task force was attacked by about 28 single-engine planes as part of Japanese code name Kikusui (Floating Chrysanthemum). Six planes were shot down by anti-aircraft fire and 19 by the combat air patrol. Less than an hour later, one suicide kamikaze Mitsubishi used cloud cover and avoided five-inch and 40-mm anti-aircraft fire while approaching the carrier from her stern. The kamikaze pilot crashed through the carrier's forward flight deck and the resulting explosion blasted most of the ship's forward elevator more than 400 feet in the air. The Enterprise was put out of operation, but was able to maintain her place in the formation and fight off more attacks that day. Fourteen



L-r, Bill Grice, Wrenn Grice and Harry Grice.

sailors were killed-in-action, including Grice; another 68 were wounded. ENS Grice was buried at sea and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart Medal. *

May 24, 1945, was Jo's 25th birthday. The family had planned to celebrate the occasion quietly at the farm. They would wish for an end to the war. Jo looked forward to the day she and her 3-year-old son, Charles William Grice Jr., would be reunited with her husband. Those plans abruptly changed the morning of May 23. A telegram was delivered to the farm, informing Jo that her husband had been killed in action on May 14.

"It is a way to honor the past and invest in the future," Grice said. "Scholarships enable us to recruit, retain and reward quality teachers. I can find no better place to invest in this cause than WIU."

"George Grice has been so generous to Western Illinois University. We are grateful for his desire to focus his giving on helping future educators," shared Brad Bainter, vice president for Advancement and Public Services. "By assisting current education majors, George's contributions will not only impact today's Western students but the students they will educate in the future. This is a gift that will keep on giving."

* Retired Army Sergeant Major Mike R. Vining has researched and published articles on Naval history and expeditions. ♦



Tomlinson Establishes Two Scholarships at WIU



Timothy and Kathleen "Robin" Tomlinson

"WIU was the source of our education and we were well prepared upon graduation," said Timothy Tomlinson, who has established two fully endowed scholarships to help Western Illinois University students. Tim wants to help grow another generation of "capable professionals," and he hopes the two newly created Tomlinson scholarships will do just that.

Tim, a 1971 and 1973 mathematics graduate, was commissioned in June 1971 through the WIU ROTC program as a Distinguished Military Graduate. He went on to a successful career in the Army, retiring in 1995 as a Lieutenant Colonel, and having commanded a battalion. His scholarship, the Timothy E. Tomlinson Mathematics Scholarship, will be awarded to a full-time undergraduate student majoring in mathematics with a career goal of teaching math to students.

"I had known since being in the Test and Evaluation Command that the military considered mathematics as a critically weak

area needing help. This was a great opportunity to do my part," he said.

Tomlinson's family is Leatherneck-strong. His father, Bill, graduated from WIU in 1943, with a degree in mathematics, and he was a classmate of WIU alumnus and long-time WIU Mathematics Professor Joe Stipanowich. His mother, Ruth, attended Western, but left when she married Bill as he went to serve in WWII. While at Western, Tomlinson met Kathleen "Robin" Adair, who graduated in 1974 with a degree in health science and one month later, became Tim's wife. Their marriage spanned more than four decades. When Robin passed away in March 2016, Tim found the perfect way to honor his true love.

"Our niece, a professor at the Citadel, was the one to suggest a scholarship at WIU to memorialize Robin," Tim said. "I was surprised a scholarship could be established so easily, so I decided to establish another in my name."

The Kathleen "Robin" Tomlinson Special Education Memorial Scholarship is available to WIU students majoring in special education and who show involvement within the department and/or the community. Robin was the consummate teacher throughout her life, whether substituting for any and all subjects at the secondary level in Arizona public schools where she followed her Army husband, or in the Department of Defense schools in Germany, or even just volunteering with the Scouts. When her husband retired and they returned to Illinois, she found her main calling in substituting as either a teacher or aide for special education.

"I wished to help the students at our University succeed in these times of limited

budgets and ballooning student debt," he added. "A memorial scholarship for special education was a natural as Robin had spent most of 20 years after our retiring from the Army substituting with special education. She was highly motivated to help and greatly gratified at successes of 'her kids.'

"These scholarships are structured to help and encourage students in their mid-course of study when initial scholarships tend to become 'honors only,' and the students have matured and settled on a truly-desired career. The intent is to help boost these capable, dedicated students who may need a little more financial help to realize their intended goal," he explained.

"We are grateful for Timothy's investment of \$50,000 to establish two endowed scholarships. His scholarship will help some of the brightest minds in our mathematics department. And then his creation of a special education memorial scholarship, in his wife's name, is a great way to honor and remember her," said Brad Bainter, vice president for Advancement and Public Services. "We appreciate that Tim wants to help our students succeed so they can become lifelong educators."

Tim added that he hopes this "rather small contribution," in his words, may help attract, hold and graduate key professionals, who in turn will help others.

"I want WIU to be at the forefront," he said. "I am proud to continue serving and trying to save this great country of ours. This is but one more step in that lifetime effort." ♦



Paying It Forward- Ronald and Audrey Thompson

It has been almost six decades since Ronald Thompson walked across the stage to receive his diploma from Western Illinois University, and during those 55 years post-graduation, he has devoted his entire professional career to the YMCA. That career, along with solid financial planning, has allowed Thompson

and his wife, Audrey, the opportunity to pay it forward to help future Western Illinois University students.

In 2015, the Thompsons approached WIU's Vice President for Advancement and Public Services Brad Bainter with their desire to establish a scholarship.

"We left it up to the institution to determine the final use of the money. The gift is in the form of a second-to-die insurance policy. Upon the death of both Audrey and myself, Western will receive approximately \$450,000," shared Ronald.

In the meantime, the Thompsons have pledged

to pay the annual premium. So how did the decision to share their gifts with WIU come about?

Ronald's story starts in 1948. That was the year a new YMCA opened in his hometown of Harvey, IL.

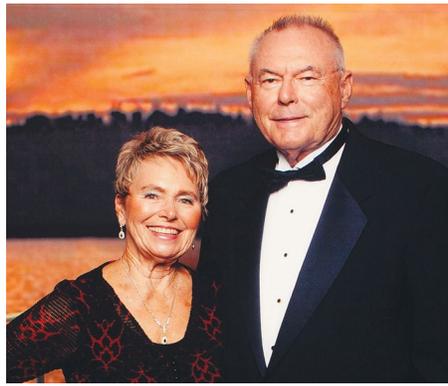
"The Harvey Tribune had a full page picture of me being the first person to jump into the new swimming pool from the new fiberglass diving board. As it worked out, this was to become the beginning of a long relationship between me and the YMCA," shared Ronald.

Fast forward a few years and one of Ronald's neighbors, who had attended Western, suggested he visit the campus to see if WIU would be a good fit. Ronald, the youngest of four boys, was the first person in his family to continue his education beyond high school.

"One of my teachers, Dr. Beu, was president at the University and he taught a daily class on a year-round basis. It was refreshing to be able to talk directly with any of your teachers at any time if you needed some help or direction. It did seem to be an extended family that wanted to help me succeed," Ronald recalled.

Ronald majored in physical education, with a double minor in speech and biology. To pay the bills, Ronald applied at the Macomb YMCA and got a job going to a different school every day to teach football, baseball and soccer ... a task that was easy to achieve since he had previously worked at the Harvey Y during high school. That, along with two on-campus jobs, one as a resident assistant and another in the physical education department, as well as scholarships and a few student loans, enabled Ronald to pay his entire way through school.

During his summer breaks, Ronald worked for the Chicago YMCA, and before graduating, he completed his student teaching at Colchester High School, where he also coached the



Audrey and Ronald Thompson

baseball team. Thanks to recommendations from two of his mentors, Lou Saben and Joel Collier, Ronald was offered an assistantship at Eastern Illinois University, coaching its JV basketball team.

But before he traded his purple and gold for Eastern's blue and grey, a man by the name of Solon Cousins, who later became the president of the National Counsel of YMCAs, came knocking on Ronald's door at Western. Cousins was there to tell Ronald he had been chosen to work for the Chicago YMCA.

"After telling him what our plans were, he told me that I did not understand -- I had been chosen -- this was like being called to the ministry," Ronald explained.

So Audrey and Ronald packed up and headed north. Ronald started in the West Communities YMCA in 1960, and opened a new building there in 1962, while serving as their program director. It was at that time Ronald made an appointment with the president of the Chicago YMCA, sharing his goal of getting into the administrative side of the Y.

"My friends and co-workers told me that you just do not go to the top of the organization like that and I probably had closed future opportunities altogether. The thing they did

not know was that the president was my original mentor at the Harvey YMCA when I was 10 years old," he laughed.

That conversation worked for Ronald because just two months later he was hired as the youngest executive director in the history of the Chicago YMCA. Due to his hard work and accomplishments there, Ronald and Audrey, his high school sweetheart turned wife, decided to relocate to a smaller city to raise their children. So off to Flint, MI went the Thompsons, where Ronald's assignment was to put the YMCA on an even keel or sell the camp and try to use those funds to reestablish a strong YMCA movement in Flint.

"My original plan was to go to Flint for 10 years, as our family was growing up and then onto another challenge, but this job became so challenging I found that 20 years had gone by and it was time for me to retire in 1995," Ronald said. At that time, they left the Michigan cold for the Florida sun, landing in Winter Haven, FL, where they are enjoying their retirement years. Left in Michigan are their five children and 10 grandchildren, who they are lucky enough to visit often.

Now, thanks to that professional success, Ronald and Audrey are able to share their good fortune with his alma mater.

"Our reason for choosing Western was that we found the Foundation to be progressive and willing to look at our wishes, and at the same time, being able to provide a great future gift for the University," Ronald said.

"We are so appreciative of Ronald and Audrey for their foresight and their desire to help future students by establishing this insurance policy," Bainter said. "This is quite a simple way to pay it forward so future generations will benefit from this gift. We are grateful the Thompsons put their trust in the Foundation to determine how to best use their gift." ♦



Gordon W. Kirk Associated Students of History (ASH) Endowment Fund

Transformational learning experiences happen throughout a Western Illinois University student's experience both in and out of the classroom, and thanks to the generosity of a retired WIU Department of History chair, faculty member and administrator, those experiences will soon be expanded.

Retired Associate Provost, History Chair and Professor Emeritus Gordon Kirk has established the Gordon W. Kirk Associated

Students of History (ASH) Endowment Fund, to support the organization's activities and experiences.

"I've created scholarships for students previously, so I wanted to look for something else that I could do to help Western students. Student organizations have a lot to offer students and faculty, and by programming various activities, both on and off campus, bringing the two groups together (students

and faculty), in a different setting, this type of interaction serves a function," Kirk said.

The endowment will support such activities and programs as field trips and lectures. This past year, the group traveled to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum in Iowa. Kirk hopes more trips like that can be added to the schedule to supplement classroom learning.

(ASH) ENDOWMENT FUND cont'd

“In these tight budget times, trips like this might not get funded or faculty might have to pay for it out of their pocket,” he added. “Students need these out-of-classroom opportunities, and that’s why I decided to establish this endowment.”

While at Western, Kirk was a professor of urban history and was instrumental in the establishment of the University Honors Program in 1983, serving as its first director.

He was the chair of the Department of History from 1984-1986 and again from 1989-1999. He also served as assistant provost from 1986-1989, and was active in the faculty union, serving as chief negotiator for two contracts, and faculty governance, serving four terms as chair of the Faculty Senate.

The Associated Students of History organization is designed to promote history both as a field of study and as a hobby. ASH members include history majors and minors, education students with concentrations in history and others interested in the study of the past. Members meet on a regular basis during the academic year to discuss historical and professional topics and to participate in the variety of history-related programs, lectures and movies.

According to WIU Department of History Chair Jen McNabb, during Dr. Kirk’s career at Western, he sought the empowerment and excellence of students and faculty.

“Dr. Kirk continues to serve as an exemplary ambassador for the WIU Department of History,” McNabb said. “This generous new endowment, in support of ASH, is a testament to his ongoing commitment to provide WIU students with enriching professional development activities that cultivate lifelong learning and career success.”

“With hundreds of student organizations to choose from, it’s easy for WIU students to find something to belong to. The benefit of joining an organization in their field of study is two-fold: it allows them to continue learning about their academic area and gives students an opportunity to get those out-of-classroom experiences,” said Brad Bainter, vice president for Advancement and Public Services. “Having taught at Western, Gordon knows how important these organizations are to students and we are grateful for his generosity ... not just with this new endowment, but with the generous support he has shown WIU for many years.” ◆



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L-r, History Chair Jennifer McNabb; History Major and ASH member Maddie Olejnik; Professor & Chair Emeritus Gordon Kirk; the late CAS Development Director Bryce Dexter; Vice President for Advancement & Public Services Brad Bainter [Editor’s Note: CAS Director of Development Bryce Dexter passed away Sept. 20, 2017 following a long battle with cancer.]

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