ONE SCHOLARSHIP, 37 NEW ‘GRANDKIDS’

Giving Back cover story
By Cathleen Hockman-Wert

When 37 electrical and computer engineering students received word last summer that they had received the Hal and Bev Brown Scholarship, they didn’t only gain financial assistance. They got a new grandma.

In 2008 Bev Brown of Beavercreek, Ore., created an endowed scholarship fund to honor her late husband Hal, a 1948 graduate in electrical engineering. While the endowment will grow over time and generate income to support students for generations to come, Bev realized that in today’s economy students could use some extra help right now. She decided to make another gift to be used immediately for additional scholarships.

“In this economy, there may be many grandparents who aren’t able to help their grandchildren as much as they would like. I thought, maybe I can step in,” she said.

Hal and Bev met at OSU in 1943. Their education and budding relationship were interrupted by World War II, but before Hal left for Germany, he asked Bev to marry him. After a four-year engagement while he finished his degree, they were married for 56 years.

Although the couple never discussed making a gift to OSU, creating the scholarship has enhanced Bev’s sense of connection to her late husband.

“I just know he would thoroughly approve; he was so thankful for the education he got at Oregon State,” she said. “I hope these students attain the success in their careers that Hal did. Maybe the scholarship can help them get there.”

At a lunch with 17 Brown Scholarship last October, Bev described her husband’s 31-year career with Pacific Northwest Bell. She urged the students to someday pay the gift forward and help others in need. For her part, she said, assisting them was a great joy.

“I’m so thankful I’m able to do this; it’s gratifying in all kinds of ways,” she said.

What makes the experience even more meaningful to her, Bev said, is knowing that students will continue to receive the scholarships long after she is gone. She has included the scholarship in her estate plans.

“I have grandchildren,” she said, “that aren’t even born yet.”

Bev Brown loves to visit campus to meet the students who benefit from her generosity.

PHOTO COURTESY OSU FOUNDATION

Previous page: Scholarship recipient Tawalin Opastrakoon majors in electrical engineering and computer science.
PHOTO BY JIM FOLTS

MEET THREE OF THE HAL AND BEV BROWN SCHOLARSHIP ‘GRANDKIDS’

TAWALIN OPASTRAKOON, Chiang Mai, Thailand, and Paisley, Ore.

“As a high school exchange student I spent two years in Paisley, a small town in south central Oregon. When I graduated, I didn’t want to leave Oregon.

“The electrical and computer engineering major is really time consuming. The scholarship allows me to concentrate on my studies and even live my life a little bit. I’m taking Italian and hope to study abroad for a term. The rest of my family is in Thailand, where my older brother just finished college and my younger sister will start next year. The scholarship is really helpful.”

On meeting Bev Brown: “I was nervous at first, but she was so friendly. She told me that I can tell my family in Thailand that she’s my other grandmother. It meant a lot to me.”

JARED LESTER, Portland, Ore.

“This engineering program has shown me there’s nothing I can’t tackle. I’ve developed a work ethic I didn’t have before. ... I’ll use those abilities all my life.

“My first few years at OSU, I wasn’t a great student. I eventually realized I needed to be working a lot harder, and I really buckled down and completely turned around my grades. The Brown Scholarship showed me that somebody had noticed. ... It means a lot if you can pick out diamonds in the rough — kids that want to succeed but are struggling a little — and say, we understand where you are and where you want to go.”

On meeting Bev Brown: “It reaffirmed my positive beliefs about giving back, and made me want to practice that mentality more, in all walks of life.”

CHRISTOPHER GERRITZ, Medford, Ore.

“Like Hal Brown, I’m finishing my OSU education as a veteran. I already served in the U.S. Air Force for three years. I was released from active duty in order to pursue my degree.

I’ll go back as an officer, be trained as a pilot, then go all over the world. “Hal Brown was a charter member of his fraternity, Delta Upsilon. I too am very involved with my fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi, and have served as its president for over two years. This scholarship has made it possible for me to have time for this volunteer role. I’m 25, a bit older than many of my fraternity brothers, so they look to me for leadership.”

On meeting Bev Brown: “Connecting the Browns’ story and what it took to make a successful gift — that enabled them to make this gift — makes the scholarship worth a whole lot more to me.”

Visit campaignforosu.org/fundraisingpriorities/scholarships to learn how to support scholarships for OSU students.
BUSINESS MAJORS GET WORLD VIEW

By Cathleen Hockman-Wert

When Andy Shelton went to Norway through OSU’s Arthur Stonehill International Business Exchange Program, he had no idea what to expect. He couldn’t have imagined he’d make a connection that would lead to a job offer from National Oilwell Varco, a Fortune 500 company based in Houston, Texas. Since his graduation in 2007, the company has sent him to work throughout the United States, Canada, and even back to Norway, with future travel possibilities in Dubai, China, Brazil and more.

“Clearly I never would have had these opportunities without the Stonehill exchange program,” Shelton said. “Going to Norway also built my confidence and helped me mature as an individual.”

A $1 million gift from alumnus Joe Lobbato will help future business majors like Shelton have transformative international experiences as well as take courses on campus that give them a competitive edge.

A Corvallis native who lives in Thailand, Lobbato first ventured abroad at age 16, when he spent a year exploring South America. He earned his undergraduate and MBA degrees from OSU’s College of Business in 1981 and 1982 then headed to Europe. He was a founding partner of Accenture — a global management consulting, technology consulting and technology outsourcing company — and consulted in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom before eventually overseeing Accenture’s retail operations in Asia Pacific.

Part of Lobbato’s gift will support curriculum development on international topics in the College of Business. “Even graduates that work in Oregon businesses are competing in a global marketplace. They all need to understand the global economy and know how to work in diverse cultural environments,” said Steve Lawton, associate professor emeritus of international business.

Lawton noted that all juniors enrolled in the college must take an international business course. “We have become a very internationalized school over the years, and intend to become more so,” he said. “This gift will move us in that direction.”

Lobbato’s gift also will provide scholarships for the Arthur Stonehill International Business Exchange Program. The largest program of its kind in Oregon, it was founded in 1987 by Stonehill, who taught finance and international business at OSU for more than 20 years. Each year 60 to 80 College of Business exchange students enroll in universities in Austria, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and Thailand.

“Well over 1,500 students have taken part in the program, and when they come back they all say the same thing: that it’s been a life-changing experience,” Arthur Stonehill said. As Shelton’s case illustrates, the program makes graduates much more attractive to employers, Stonehill noted. “They are looking for people with cross-cultural education and broader experience of the world. Our program gives students a very rich experience.”

It means a lot to Stonehill to see one of his former students providing opportunities for future business majors. For many students, a study abroad experience isn’t possible without scholarship support. While exchange participants from Oregon still pay in-state tuition, travel and the higher cost of living can be prohibitively expensive. Depending on the location and the value of the U.S. dollar, the total cost of a four-month term can exceed $10,000.

When studying in Norway, Shelton got to the point where he couldn’t afford to stay in the university dorm. “I ended up asking my parents to sell two mandolins I had at home, but it still wasn’t enough. I likely would not have been able to complete the program without the additional generosity of others when expenses pressed in on me,” he recalled.

“Mr. Lobbato’s gift will make a big difference for students.”

See www.bus.oregonstate.edu/services/exchange.htm for more on the Arthur Stonehill International Business Exchange Program.
Destination OSU 2010 was a time for reconnection and celebration as more than 200 alumni and friends of the university met in the California desert March 1 and 2.

This annual gathering featured a golf tournament at the Indian Wells Golf Resort, presentations by OSU faculty on the psychology of wine marketing and on new media ethics, plus an awards gala honoring three extraordinary friends of Oregon State University.

Visit campaignforosu.org/events/dosu to learn more about Destination OSU.
As students, almost 20 percent of OSU alumni belonged to a sorority or fraternity. Compared to the average giving among alumni, these “Greeks” are twice as likely to give back to their alma mater. This tendency doesn’t occur only with alumni from the Greek system. With few exceptions, students who are involved in group activities tend to be more supportive of the university in their later years.
By Gregg Kleiner

Thanks to a visionary Burlington Northern CEO who had a passion for higher education, former Oregon State University President John V. Byrne and his wife Shirley have facilitated a $550,000 gift from Conoco-Phillips to OSU.

The gift, which is not from the Byrnes directly but is tied to John Byrne's service as a board member of Burlington Resources years ago, will help support OSU's Valley Library, music programs, the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, as well as an endowed professorship in earth science.

The money might not have materialized, however, were it not for the Byrnes' love of piano music, creative thinking and persistence. Here's what happened.

When John Byrne served on the board of Burlington Resources in the 1980s and '90s, the CEO at the time, Richard Bressler, created a unique program by which retired board members could direct, upon their death, a $1 million contribution to a college or university of their choice.

"Dick Bressler was a huge supporter of higher education," John Byrne said. "He understood the important role universities play in this country.

The program he set up is a visionary example of how corporations can support institutions of higher learning."

In the mid-1980s, the Burlington Northern Holding Company separated the railroad from its other companies, creating Burlington Resources, Inc., in the process. Through a series of corporate mergers, acquisitions and divestments spanning a number of years Burlington Resources spun off all but their oil and gas company, which ultimately became part of ConocoPhillips, currently the third largest integrated energy company in the U.S. and the fifth largest refiner in the world.

In 2006, ConocoPhillips sent a letter to its retired directors, including Byrne, offering an option to exercise the higher education gifts set up by Bressler while the directors were still alive. But they had to act within 60 days.

"Well, Shirley and I didn't take advantage of that option and time passed," John Byrne said. "But recently, when we were thinking about how we might help fund the OSU Steinway Piano Series, we remembered that option and wondered if the company might still honor it."

When the Byrnes contacted ConocoPhillips, the company agreed to renew the option, and in a matter of weeks the Byrnes were able to direct the funding to OSU.

"The piano series was really the catalyst to call ConocoPhillips and get this thing going again," John said. "Music has always been an important part of our lives."

Their shared love of music is the reason $100,000 of the gift establishes the endowed Shirley and John Byrne Piano Program Fund and another $100,000 establishes the endowed Shirley and John Byrne Corvallis-OSU Symphony Concertmaster Fund.

"John and I are delighted to be able to support the wonderful music programs at OSU," said Shirley Byrne, who has taught piano for years and served for 11 years as the accompanist at the OSU Department of Music, long before her husband became president of OSU. "We're fortunate to live in a community that values music, libraries and education so highly."

The gift also includes $100,000 to establish the endowed John and Shirley Byrne OSU Library Support Fund; $100,000 to establish the endowed John and Shirley Byrne College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences Fund; and $100,000 toward the Hollis M. Dole Professorship Fund, to which the Byrnes have contributed regularly.

John Byrne was president of OSU from 1984 through 1995 and served as first dean of the School of Oceanography, now the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences. He said his time at OSU made his decision about the gift easy.

"Since 1960, I've spent 35 years of my life at Oregon State, so there was no question about where this gift was going to go," said Byrne, who is pleased to see the money distributed during his lifetime.

"My role in all of this was simply to select OSU as beneficiary, then Shirley and I worked with the OSU Foundation to determine where the money — which really came from Conoco-Phillips — should go."
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