



engaged

a newsletter from the Montana State University-Billings Foundation
for Alumni & Friends

vol. no. 2 winter 2003



A Letter from the President



Marilynn Miller, President & CEO
MSU-Billings Foundation

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Montana State University-Billings Foundation, which was initially incorporated as the Eastern Montana College Educational Foundation in April 1967. The first fund-raising effort was launched in 1968, and by 1970 the Foundation was able to award four \$500 scholarships to entering freshmen and contribute \$2,700 to college research projects. Annual contributions to the Foundation averaged \$45,000 a year by the early '70s.

A lot has changed since those early days. Eastern Montana College is now Montana State University-Billings, and the MSU-Billings Foundation receives more than \$3 million annually for student scholarships, University projects and programs. Many gifts are used immediately for student and University needs, but an increasing number of donors are choosing to invest in endowment funds to assure permanent support for the programs they care about. The MSU-Billings Foundation currently holds assets in excess of \$12 million, the majority in donor-restricted endowments.

One thing has remained constant throughout the years of change and growth. As always, the Foundation's goal to support the University is achievable only through the generosity of alumni and friends. Those of you who receive this *Engaged* newsletter comprise that group of loyal donors who help the University carry out its mission of changing lives through higher education. Thank you.

The stories in this issue relate to other realities that have remained constant through the years: the generous hearts of philanthropists like Tom and Irene Powell; the inspiring resolve of students like Kevin Charlson; and the ongoing importance of corporate and private foundation support, as demonstrated by Briggs Distributing Company, Inc., and the Haynes Foundation.

Best Regards,



Foundation 35th Anniversary Facts

The Eastern Montana College Educational Foundation was created by faculty in 1967, the same year as the College's 40th anniversary.

In 1973, the Foundation sponsored the Indian Career Counseling program.

The Foundation contributed to the expansion of the campus radio station, KEMC, in 1979.

Tom & Irene Powell

reflections on MSU-Billings



Dr. Thomas H. and Irene Powell have had a lasting impact on Montana State University-Billings, beginning with their arrival on campus in 1974. They have great memories of their experiences at the University as students and while Tom was a special education professor and Dean of the School of Education. Because of their special bond with the University, we recently asked Dr. and Mrs. Powell to reflect on their experiences at Montana State University-Billings. Here is what they had to say:



Dr. Thomas and Irene Powell. Currently, Tom is President of Glenville State College in Glenville, West Virginia. This summer, he will take a new position as President of Mount St. Mary's College and Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Dr. Thomas H. Powell

The decision to travel from Alaska to attend Eastern Montana College was among the best decisions my wife, Irene, and I have made in our 31 years of marriage. At the time we were searching for a college that focused on special education, particularly on the education of people with mental retardation. Numerous people around the country touted the excellent program and faculty at Eastern Montana College. Our move to Montana has been a source of joy, pride and thanksgiving ever since.

Reflecting on what I treasure most about my experience at Montana State University-Billings, it comes down to the people. They are the University. The talented faculty provided thoughtful mentoring and demanded rigor and excellence. They insisted that new skills be practiced in the community to improve the lives of others. Their teaching set examples which continue to inspire and guide me.

Tom earned his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in special education in 1976 and 1979 respectively. Irene earned a Master of Science in elementary education in 1979. Tom served as a professor of special education and later as the Dean of the School of Education during his tenure at Montana State University-Billings (1990-1994).

I began to fully appreciate the experiences I had at Eastern when I later attended Vanderbilt University. It was apparent that my education was better than most, and provided a strong foundation for advanced study and research. No learning experience has ever equaled the education I received at Eastern.

Today, MSU-Billings is as vibrant as ever. Thanks to the progressive vision and leadership of Dr. Ron Sexton, the University continues to excel in teaching, scholarship and service. As I visit the campus today, his leadership is clearly evident in all areas of my alma mater.

Those of us who were fortunate to be a part of Montana State University-Billings owe a debt of gratitude to our alma mater. Without a doubt, I am who I am today in large part thanks to the teaching and mentoring I received at this wonderful University. Repaying that debt will be a lifetime obligation. As alumni, we need to *step up to the plate* and help Dr. Sexton, the faculty and staff continue to teach and inspire students through the next century. The time is now and the responsibility is ours.

Tom & Irene Powell

continued...



*Through their words, Thomas and Irene Powell articulate their passion for MSU-Billings. They also demonstrate their passion through their generosity. Recently, they established the **Thomas and Irene Powell Enhancement Fund** to provide the Chancellor with funds for projects advancing the mission of Montana State University-Billings.*

The Powells are supporting the University during their lifetime and beyond. In their Will, the Powells have named Montana State University-Billings Foundation as a beneficiary of their estate. Their bequest will provide additional funding for the Thomas and Irene Powell Enhancement Fund.

Irene Powell

Sprawled below the Rimrocks is the campus we claim as home. By whichever name – Eastern Montana College, now Montana State University-Billings – this is where we came in 1974 in search of an education in education. We knew we wanted to be teachers, and Tom found EMC, a school that especially enjoyed an excellent reputation in special education. Our decision to attend Eastern Montana College was a deliberate one, and we have never regretted the choice.

I recall with fondness and gratitude the many faculty members who encouraged creativity, fostered excellence, expanded my vision and honed my skills. No matter where we have lived since, I have carried with me the lessons learned at Montana State University-Billings.

We are truly happy to be able to give something back to our alma mater, and encourage others who have benefited in their formative years from the education obtained at Montana State University-Billings to do the same – “pay it forward.” Our collective future depends on providing bright, eager, creative students access to excellence!

**PLEASE CLIP AND MAIL TO MSU-BILLINGS FOUNDATION
1500 UNIVERSITY DRIVE, BILLINGS, MT 59101**

_____ Please send me information about making a gift through my will.

_____ I have included the MSU-Billings Foundation in my estate plans.
Please add my name to the Heritage Circle.

_____ Please contact me for a personal visit.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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If you prefer to telephone us to discuss any of the above items, please call Dick Buckley, Development Officer, Jon Egeland, Director of Operations, or Marilyn Miller, President & C.E.O. at (406) 657-2244 or (888) 430-MSUB.



Benefactors Receive Awards

Montana Philanthropy Awards

Each year, the Montana chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals confers Montana Philanthropy Awards on those who have made significant efforts to further philanthropy in our state. This year, two organizations nominated by the MSU-Billings Foundation were recognized: the Haynes Foundation received the Outstanding Foundation Award and Briggs Distributing Company, Inc., was honored as Outstanding Philanthropic Corporation.

Outstanding Foundation – Haynes Foundation

Recognizing early on that an investment in higher education yields great returns, the Haynes Foundation, established in 1958 by Jack and Isabel Haynes of Bozeman, has provided extraordinary financial assistance for thousands of Montana college students.

The first Haynes Scholarships were provided to University of Montana and Montana State University-Bozeman students. By 1982, the Haynes Foundation was supporting student scholarships at Montana State University-Billings, Carroll College, MSU-Northern and Montana Tech. The Haynes Foundation currently provides scholarship funds to every accredited four-year college and university in the state of Montana. Since 1982, the Haynes Foundation has contributed \$681,000 to MSU-Billings alone, providing over 620 student scholarships.

Outstanding Corporation – Briggs Distributing Co. Inc.

The philanthropy of Briggs Distributing Company, Inc. has had a significant impact on Billings, the Yellowstone Valley and this region for many years. Owner John Decker and his company support organizations that contribute to the quality of life in their primary service area. Montana State University-Billings is among the recipients of their generosity

The MSU-Billings Wine Festival has netted \$1.25 million over the past ten years. Briggs Distributing Company, Inc., taking the lead with their involvement in the Festival, has played a critical role in the development of this premier regional event by providing more than \$150,000 in support over the Festival’s ten-year lifespan. In addition to their financial contributions, John Decker and his staff at Briggs Distributing donate expertise and manpower to the Wine Festival during all planning and execution phases, twelve months a year.

The beneficiaries of Briggs Distributing Company’s support of the MSU-Billings Wine Festival are many. Through scholarships, students are able to continue their quest for a better life through education; cutting-edge technology and modern labs and classrooms provide a dynamic, up-to-date learning environment; and investment in faculty development supports exceptional faculty who encourage and challenge our students.



Foundation 35th Anniversary Facts

The Foundation purchased the building on Poly Drive and Broadway that was to house the College of Business in 1996.

In 2002, Foundation assets totaled \$12,500,000.

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Montana State University-Billings Foundation

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