Blessings with interest

This story is excerpted from “Celebrating Gonzaga: The University and Its People,” a hardbound book coming out this fall that recounts many of the stories that have provided the tapestry and texture of Gonzaga’s glorious 125 years.

Growing up in Western Montana, Don Herak learned from his father about the importance of giving back. “He was an immigrant to this country who became a very successful farmer,” Herak said. “My father taught us that hard work was a big part of success but that good fortune also played a role. If you were blessed with good fortune – opportunities that came your way or a certain place or people who helped you improve your lot – you needed to repay that blessing.”

Herak counts Gonzaga among the blessings in his life – and he has repaid that blessing with interest.

The 1946 civil engineering graduate has long given generously of time and money to the University. A member of the Board of Trustees since 1984, he headed the development campaign for the School of Engineering and made a leadership gift of $1 million for expansion of what was formerly known as Dillon Hall. To honor the hard work and generosity of Herak and his wife – their giving also supports the Fund for Gonzaga, the James McGivern Scholarship Fund, the Dussault Foundation, the Jepson Center for the School of Business Administration, the athletic department and a variety of memorial funds and unrestricted endowments – the University rechristened the building the Donald and Carol Herak Center for Engineering.

What’s good for Gonzaga is good for Spokane and good for industry as well, Herak said. “I believe Gonzaga provides an invaluable link between industry and education. Gonzaga is doing a superb job of educating future engineers – those engineers so desperately needed to keep our nation’s technological achievements at the cutting edge. I want to see this excellent work continued.”
Forethought for others
[Planned Giving]

“I bequeath unto Gonzaga University all of my property and possessions, both real and personal, whatsoever this may include.” Bud Driessel, class of 1912, wrote that statement in his will in 1973, ultimately establishing the Driessel Family Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship is directed for “young men and women who are industrious, worthy and in need of some assistance to obtain a college education, particularly at Gonzaga University.”

First awarded in 1983, the Driessel Family Scholarship has blessed bright and industrious students such as Lindsay DeLong (’13). Studying special education and philosophy, DeLong volunteers at numerous schools in the Spokane area, as well as Center Pointe, a local non-profit organization that provides positive social, recreational and educational activities for people of the Spokane community with diverse disabilities. “I can’t imagine living a life without service and I know this will always be an important aspect of who I am,” she says.

Through Driessel’s long-term planning and generous estate gift, this scholarship continues to provide students such as DeLong access to their dreams. To date, the Driessel scholarship has made 526 awards totaling $862,664.

Estate gifts open the door to unique giving opportunities and are easy to set up. Learn how you can create the kind of legacy Driessel established by contacting Judy Rogers in the Planned Giving office at (800) 388-0881 or visiting gonzaga.edu/plannedgiving.
What have you identified as an opportunity for your office?

It’s clear that people on campus, whether students, faculty or staff, all embrace the mission of Gonzaga. But they also feel the need for a clearer idea of what it means to be Catholic and Jesuit. I have been trying to meet with a number of groups on campus to help them understand their roles in carrying out the mission.

What is an area of focus for you?

One of my goals is to have everyone on campus share in the responsibility of living and spreading the mission. The mission doesn't belong in one office on the first floor of College Hall; it is for everyone associated with the University, including all our alumni, parents and friends.

How is Gonzaga maintaining its Catholic identity?

There are many ways, but in short, the University's Core Curriculum and academic commitment is squarely within the Catholic intellectual tradition. The Society of Jesus remains a religious order of the Catholic Church and we foster a positive relationship with the bishop of the Spokane Catholic Diocese. As for student life, the University Ministry office provides a wide array of retreat and worship services including daily Mass.

Gonzaga’s mission has endured 125 years; how will it carry into the future?

I chair the committee that is reviewing the University’s Mission Statement. While the statement may end up being altered, the mission itself will remain intact as we continue to do serious strategic planning in its light in order to achieve the aspirations and goals encompassed by the mission.

Endowment performance beats average

Gonzaga University’s Endowment Fund performed with a strong return on investment for donor intentions and University priorities in 2011. Gonzaga achieved a 24.2% one-year investment return, measured as of June 30, 2011, when reviewed by the NACUBO-Commonfund Study of Endowments® (NCSE), the most comprehensive study of the nation's institutions of higher education with endowments. This outcome bested the 19.2% average return of 823 participating college and university endowments and foundations.

Through the tremendous generosity of benefactors and prudent investment, the Gonzaga Endowment Fund has grown to over $150 million. While this is an impressive figure, the fund's returns are significantly lower than endowments of institutions with which Gonzaga most often competes for students and faculty. The Endowment Fund is strategically managed by a 19-member Investment Committee from the University, which is comprised of members of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents who have expertise in financial markets and investment management.

Historical pooled endowment returns

Gonzaga University’s Endowment Fund is managed for the long term, therefore performance over three- and five-year periods is most meaningful.

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Year 2011 NCSE Policy Index * Gonzaga
5 year 4.7% 4.3% 4.2%
3 year 3.1% 2.7% 3.3%
1 year 19.2% 23.2% 24.2%
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*The policy index represents the composite benchmark for the pooled endowment fund.

For additional information, or to make an endowment gift, visit gonzaga.edu/endowment or contact Pat Reese at (509) 313-6134.

More Q&A with Fr. Frank Case, S.J., at: blogs.gonzaga.edu/gonzagagiving/QA
Students today transform Gonzaga’s future

Today’s college students are facing unique challenges. Growing up in a different world, these students are technologically savvy; they crave authentic teachings and they are confronted with fierce competition for limited career opportunities. These are the students who are shaping the way Gonzaga approaches its education and plans for the future.

Gonzaga has commenced what will be one of the largest transformations the University has undertaken, starting with a slate of 125th Anniversary celebrations over the next year. With a theme of “Tradition and Transformation,” Gonzaga moves forward by honoring the traditions of the past, yet focuses on the transformations needed to propel the University into the future. This includes, but is not limited to, providing world-class academics through quality faculty and programming, access to scholarships for the best and brightest students and reimagining the delivery of Jesuit education in line with a 21st century student experience. To accomplish these goals, initiatives such as developing the first master campus plan in 100 years, a new strategic plan, an updated Core Curriculum and a review of the University’s Mission Statement are all under way.

Students at Gonzaga are already transforming the University, seeking innovative teaching and technology, study abroad opportunities and practical application. To meet them where they are, the University must transform as well – and that starts with you. Thank you for being part of this chapter in Gonzaga’s story.

Upcoming Events

125th Anniversary Celebration Week
Sept. 12-20, 2012

Zagapalooza All-Class Alumni
Reunion & Fall Family Weekend
Oct. 19-21, 2012

National Gonzaga Day
Winter 2012-13

125 Service Projects
Year-round opportunities

For a complete list of events, visit gonzaga.edu/125

Did you know?
Gonzaga-in-Florence (G-I-F) turns 50!
Celebrate in 2013 with the 6,000 alumni who have participated in the Gonzaga-in-Florence study abroad programs.

G-I-F reunion dates and celebration details are now available online at gonzaga.edu/gif50th.