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Bowling Green State University

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Robert and Ellen (Bowen) Thompson, center, talk with students at the presentation of the couple's $3 million donation to help fund the renovation and expansion of the Student Union. The gift significantly forwards the fund-raising effort for the project.

Student Union receives $3 million donation

A Plymouth, Mich., couple has given $3 million to the University to expand and renovate the Student Union. With the help of their latest gift, the facility will nearly double in size.

Robert M. and Ellen (Bowen) Thompson, both BGSU graduates, formally presented the gift to the University on Dec. 15.

The contribution is the largest ever received by the University, according to Marcia Latta, director of development.

"This gift from the Thompsons will impact every student at the University because they taught us by example on campus," Latta said.

Moments before the announcement of the $3 million gift, the University's Board of Trustees voted to name the facility in honor of the Michigan couple. The Bowen-Thompson Student Union is expected to open in January 2002.

A 1953 graduate of the University, Robert Thompson is president and former sole-owner of Thompson-McCully Co. in Belleville, Mich. Ellen Thompson earned a bachelor's degree in education at Bowling Green in 1954.

"My college education was a very pivotal time in my life," says Robert Thompson. "My mother wanted me to have a college education to build my confidence." Although not a very serious student in high school, "I worked like crazy (at BGSO) and my self-confidence did grow. I also met my wife. My college education was a life-altering experience."

Of the couple's decision to contribute to the Student Union project, which is being financed by private donations and student fees, Ellen Thompson said, "It just seemed this (gift) would increase our happiness and our happy memories of Bowling Green."

In thanking the Thompsons for their gift, President Sidney A. Ribeau praised them for demonstrating the very values the Bowling Green learning community seeks to instill in its current students.

Both of the Thompsons were teachers when they started their successful asphalt business in 1959 with an uncle, Wilfred McCullar. What began as a small paving company grew into a sizeable corporation that was sold last year to an Irish firm. At the time of the sale, the Thompsons turned over $128 million in profit sharing to their 550 employees as a reward for the their hard work and dedication.

Yet even before the sale of their company, the Thompsons were giving back to the communities where they had prospered. Nearly 20 years ago they established the Robert and Ellen Bowen Thompson Scholarship at BGSO. The scholarship is given annually to six financially needy students who have at least a 2.8 grade point average and who are employed for at least 10 hours a week. They are also members of the President's Club, and Robert Thompson is on the board of the BGSO Foundation Inc.

New addresses will speed student mail delivery

Beginning Jan. 15, all those eagerly awaited packages and letters from home will reach BGSO students more quickly with the advent of a new address system for residence halls and Greek units, says Cheryl Purdy, director of materials handling.

Each residence hall and fraternity and sorority house has been assigned a street address which will allow for more automated mail sorting by the United States Postal Service and reduce the amount of handling by University postal service employees.

The new addresses will also aid the Bowling Green Fire Department in identifying and locating buildings in case of emergencies, Purdy said. "I think it will be a positive step for everyone involved," she said. "This pre-sorting will enhance mail delivery to students and the entire campus community."

She added that the changes will not affect the process of inter-campus mail addressing and delivery.

Purdy has been collaborating for the past year and a half with the U.S. Postal Service. Bowling Green City Planner Rick Ketelhut, and acting assistant fire chief Jack Nimke to develop an address system for campus residences. The offices of capital planning and residence life have participated in the addressing process as well.

Since the University has its own ZIP code, those mailing mail in the past was simply placed in tubs by the postal service and picked up at the city post office by BGSO postal employees. Then each piece had to be handled three to four times to be separated.

"It's a very labor-intensive process, but we didn't want to lose the unique identity of our ZIP code," Purdy said. "The new partnership with the USPS will allow the University to make use of the USPS's automation to separate student mail from the University's business mail."

Since freshmen tend to receive the most mail (an average of 6, 841 pieces a week), the biggest impact will be felt in that area, Purdy said.

Students living on campus received a letter about the changeover before they left for winter break, and their parents also were sent a letter discussing the proper format for addressing mail to the students. The post-service address for buildings is still being discussed, Purdy said.

The upcoming issue of auxiliary services' quarterly newsletter, Service Attractions, will contain a listing of all the addresses.

Firelands dean candidates to visit

Four candidates for the position of dean of BGSO Firelands will visit BGSO this month, with interviews on both the Firelands and main campus.

All will begin their visits by meeting with Provost John McCullum and Dean Morey Savage, dean of the College of Technology and chair of the dean search committee.

"I am totally impressed with all four candidates," Savage commented, and I feel certain we have our next dean from among them."

All open forums for the four candidates will be held at 3 p.m. in the East Lounge at Firelands.

• James Ciccarelli is dean of the Walter E. Heller College of Business Administration at Roosevelt University in Chicago. He will interview and hold his forum at Firelands today (Jan. 16) and will be on main campus tomorrow (Jan. 17).
• Larry Froehlich is executive dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Marshall University in West Virginia. He will be on main campus Thursday (Jan. 18) and at Firelands on Friday (Jan. 19) for meetings and his open forum.
• Paul Panek, academic dean at Ohio State University at Newark, will be on the Firelands campus Jan. 22, when he will hold his forum, followed by an interview on main campus Jan. 23.
• James Smith, dean of the College of Education at Indiana University at South Bend, will be on main campus Jan. 24 and at Firelands on Jan. 25, including his open forum.
Deadlines for faculty grants announced

The Faculty Development Committee is accepting proposals for Faculty Development and Instructional Improvement grants. Faculty Development grants are due Jan. 29 and Instructional Improvement grants are due Feb. 26.

Faculty Development grants are awarded on a competitive basis for projects between $350 and $2,500. Instructional Improvement grants are awarded in amounts up to $1,000 for projects that lead to a demonstrable improvement in pedagogical skills and have a positive effect on student learning.

Copies of the guidelines are available on the Wdroot website at www.bgsu.edu/offices/provost/facdev/grants.html or by calling the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at 2-9399.

in memory

Elizabeth Cobb, 70, associate professor emeritus of music, died Dec. 26 in Bowling Green. She joined the music faculty in 1961, retiring in 1998.

Memorials may be given to the College of Musical Arts.

Maurice Sandy, 72, associate professor emeritus of health, physical education and recreation, died Dec. 31 in Sandusky.

A 1953 graduate of BGSU, he joined the HPER faculty in 1962, where he taught until his retirement in 1985.

job postings

So close ... United Way nears its goal

The University is only a small step away from earning a Pillar of the Community Award and reaching its goal for donations to the United Way, says JoAnn Kroll, director of career services and BGSU United Way 2000 campaign manager.

The benchmark for the Pillar award is $100,000, and BGSU has raised $93,000 so far. A record 700 employees have donated or pledged to the campaign, Kroll said.

"BGSU faculty, staff, retirees, students and their parents have given so much. We want to bring this award home as the ultimate recognition of their generosity," she said.

The deadline for the award is Jan. 24. Kroll urges all who have not yet pledged to act now to help reach that goal. For more on how to participate, call Kroll at 2-2356.