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JCEF

Scholarship Foundation Tops \$4.2 Million in Funds! Original Board Member Retiring After 50 Years of Service.

Grants Pass, Oregon, August 5, 2014 – August 5th marks fifty years since the inception of a formal scholarship fund for graduating students in the area. But it was a 1914 Grants Pass High School Alumnus who really got the ball rolling. When Don Belding, the 1914 graduate and former year book manager donated a major trust fund of \$10,000, the District 7 School Board advised that this perpetual gift needed to be administered by an outside non-profit foundation. So it was that 1964 saw Josephine County’s Educational Fund come into existence. One of the original seven members, Bob Busch, still sits on the Board today.

During the initial years, the ebb and flow of donations, scholarships, and public awareness was often uneven. In 1982 Grants Pass High School faculty member Jim Savard teamed up with original Board Member Bob Busch to recruit a new board of directors, who would infuse fresh life into the scholarship foundation.

Savard recalls, “The Foundation’s charter was written to allow the handling of funds to include the (then new) Three Rivers District high schools of Hidden Valley, Illinois Valley, and North Valley.”

Busch goes on to explain, “Over the past 50 years the Foundation has also been involved in many key building projects as well as assisting with community fundraising. A good example is replacing the Grants Pass grandstand that was lost by fire. The Foundation also facilitated the construction of the Performing Arts Center at Grants Pass High.”

In 2008 JCEF began administering the scholarship funds for ‘College Dreams’, an organization that assists at-risk students to achieve their dreams for higher education.

2011 saw the expansion of the Foundation’s funds with two generous estate donations: The Dale Booth Trust fund added nearly one million dollars to the Foundation’s well-managed accounts, and the Ruggless Estate gifted an addition \$200K.

Ernest and Madge Bearss bequeathed \$272,000 to JCEF In 2012. And this July, 50 years after its inception, an estate gift of \$207,000 brought the scholarship fund over the 4 million dollar mark.

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This most recent infusion was made by long-time Elementary School Teacher, Jacqueline J. Wright – who taught at Lincoln Elementary School for over 20 years, and worked within Grants Pass District 7 from 1970 – 1999, when she retired. Jackie Wright’s scholarship criteria stipulated that it go to “a young man who is an average student who exhibits potential”. Her generous gift allows a \$5,000 4-year renewable scholarship to go to a Grants Pass High Schools student. This year’s recipient was Wen Li, who will be attending Portland State University in the fall.

Under the current Board’s continued prudent management, the growing funds provide an ever-increasing annual yield on investment.

Executive Director Rochelle Gauthier explains, “This year’s portfolio profits allowed JCEF to gift seniors in all four of the county’s high schools with a total of \$326,730. This does not include amounts awarded directly to students from Universities or military scholarships. In a community this size, these numbers are remarkable.”

According to current JCEF Board President Jack Davis, “Anyone who donates money directs its use and purpose and may opt to choose recipients. It is a meaningful place for both memorial scholarships and estate planning.”

As the Fund continues to grow, it will soon be embracing a new Board Member from the Illinois Valley High School Alumni and Friends Association. The IVHS Alumni and Friends Association recently moved its scholarship funds of \$115,000 under the umbrella of JCEF.

Another change to look forward to is an updated website which is on target for roll-out for the 2014-15 school year, promising to be user-friendly for parents, students, faculty, community members, and donors.

After half a century of service, Bob Busch, Secretary and Treasurer of JCEF, plans to retire this year. Says Busch, “I have always been a supporter of education. Over the years we have awarded millions of dollars to thousands of senior graduates. And along the way our Board members and volunteers have always had a great attitude - one of: *Let’s do what we can to make this a better place!*”

Busch adds, “I will be retiring from JCEF this year with a sense of thankfulness in being able to have been a part in its success.”

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For more information about Josephine County Educational Fund, Inc., contact Rochelle Gauthier at jocoedfund@hotmail.com, or visit www.jocoeducationfund.com

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Attached Pictures:

- Original Scholarship Foundation Board Members, 1965
- Bob Busch, receives Dale Booth Trust Fund Donation, 2011
- Teacher Jacqueline J. Wright, 1987-88
- Wright Classroom, 1990-91
- Wen Li, 2014 recipient of Jacqueline J. Wright Scholarship