

BREAKING NEW GROUND



Farmers use more tools than perhaps any other profession. They also are masters of adapting everything they use to fit the needs of their particular operations. That is why it is not uncommon to see farm machinery that is a combination of the familiar manufacturers' colors.

For 130 years, Mississippi State has also been adapting new technology and educational programs to fit the needs of Mississippians

As the director of development for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at MSU, it is my job to help individuals, couples and families adapt the many ways of giving to fit their particular situations.

Some may wish to make outright gifts of cash, but for others, gifts such as appreciated securities, corporate matching gifts, in-kind gifts, real estate gifts and gifts of personal property may be more appropriate.

An often overlooked method of giving is planned gifts, or gifts that will not be received by the university until after the donor's death. Examples of planned gifts include bequests, charitable gift annuities, life insurance and charitable remainder trusts. Planned gifts provide significant tax advantages and potential life income.

Choosing the right tool and making it work to fit your needs is just as important in charitable giving as it is on the farm.

Jud H. Skelton
Director of Development
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

CVM Fund Supports the CARE of Animals

Animals have a profound influence on nearly every aspect of our lives as humans and we on theirs.

Reports show that Americans spend approximately \$40.8 billion each year on pet products, veterinary care and animal charities. Recent research indicates that human happiness, good health and emotional stability are directly related to the relationships individuals hold with their family pets.

The faculty and students at the College of Veterinary Medicine Health Center recognize the impact of the human-companion animal bond, and they understand that these pets are considered family members by their owners.

When a companion animal passes away, an owner can feel lost. That loss is a reminder that even with special attention, a pet cannot always be saved from injury and disease. There is much to be learned, taught and practiced in veterinary medicine despite the phenomenal discoveries and advances of the last 25 years.

The fund for Companion Animals Require Excellence (CARE) at the MSU CVM was created in 1989 to assist in addressing the need for constant advances in veterinary medical teaching, research and services.

Many veterinarians across the region make gifts to the fund in memory of clients' pets. Pet owners who want to make a difference in companion animal health can also support the fund through outright gifts or as part of estate planning.

"More and more individuals use this program to memorialize the pets of friends or relatives. Frequently, pet owners make their own gifts to the college when they learn their pets were memorialized by others through the fund for CARE," said Melissa Montgomery, CVM advancement coordinator.

A longtime supporter of the fund is Dr. William S. Nalley, a veterinarian from Long Beach.

"We have a tremendous response from owners who are very touched that we are willing to donate money on their pets' behalf. I feel that CARE is a valuable service that helps ease the pain of losing a pet," Nalley said.

To learn more about how you can support the CARE fund in memory of a deceased pet or in honor of a living companion animal contact Melissa Montgomery at 662-325-5170 or Keith Gaskin at 662-325-3815.

Department Head Invests in Education

Bruce Leopold, head of the university's wildlife and fisheries department in the College of Forest Resources, is one Mississippi State faculty member who believes in giving back to the institution.

For a number of years, Leopold has consistently supported the university through financial commitments. The reason he gives is quite simple—the 20-year faculty veteran says he's reciprocating the commitment Mississippi State has made in him.

"MSU and its administration welcomed me into its fold from the first day I walked into my office and has continued with that level of support. My professional development as a research scientist, then as department head since 2000, is because of the tremendous support I received from MSU," Leopold said.

A recent gift of property from Leopold—approximately 140 acres in Noxubee County—will become part of Mississippi State's Bulldog Forest program, which allows landowners to create a lasting heritage by giving land to the College of Forest Resources. The Bulldog Forest properties are used as living laboratories in which forest management practices provide teaching, research and demonstration opportunities for students of all ages. The land holds special meaning for Leopold.

"There is something magical each time I walk on it, and I realize that it belongs to me. Also, land is one commodity that is limited on this planet, but it continually produces products such as wildlife and timber," he explained.

"I know the College of Forest Resources will take good care of the land and will enjoy the income it will generate many, many years after I pass on," Leopold said. "It's a way of ensuring that groups of young professionals will benefit from my good fortune and success as a wildlife biologist, and it is the one way I can return something to an institution that I love deeply."

Future earnings from the property will support an endowed scholarship for wildlife and fisheries majors. Additional proceeds will endow the Leopold Fund for Excellence which may support endowed positions, scholarships and fellowships, faculty development, equipment and other enhancements within the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

There are numerous options for supporting the College of Forest Resources. For more information, contact Jeff Little, the college's development director, at jlittle@foundation.msstate.edu or 662-325-8151.

College of Forest Resources

Bakers Nurture Relationship with University Through Scholarship

A picture of Old Main hangs on the wall of Bill Baker's home in Starkville as a reminder of his time spent at Mississippi State.

After transferring from then-Holmes Junior College, the Montgomery County native spent his first year at then-Mississippi State College as a resident of the massive dormitory. His second-floor room faced the east, looking out over the parade grounds.

The overwhelming majority of students on campus at that time were World War II veterans like Mr. Baker. A 1950 agriculture graduate, the education he received and the relationships he developed along the way translated into an invaluable part of his life.

When Old Main burned in January 1959, Mr. Baker was working with the Louisiana State University Extension Service, where he spent 5 years as an associate. He devoted the next 48 years to the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States. He was first active in making long-term farm loans and later switched to selling insurance and investments throughout northeast Louisiana, the Mississippi Delta and south Mississippi.

Mr. Baker and his wife Cleo lived in Louisiana for a number of years before moving to Greenville. They have been married for more than 50 years and share many things, including a respect for Mississippi State.

"My wife and I feel very strongly about the education our universities provided, which enabled us to earn a living and serve our communities," he said. "We are now in the process of giving back as our resources will allow."

With proceeds from an outright gift and an annuity, the Bakers have established the William D. and Cleo W. Baker Endowed Scholarship in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Because Mr. Baker was knowledgeable about gift annuities, they decided to use this giving method since it would also provide income for them.

"We gave a life insurance policy at Iowa State, and we wanted to do something along those lines for MSU as well," Baker said. "It is our pleasure to provide resources for someone else."

Mrs. Baker is a 1938 graduate of Iowa State with a Bachelor of Science in home economics and a 1941 graduate of Kansas State University with a master's in home economics. She worked for the Duluth State Teachers College in Duluth, Minn., and later for LSU as an instructor in home economics. She concluded her active professional career as the head dietician at Delta Regional Medical Center in Greenville. She also served a term as state president of the Mississippi Dietetics Association.

The Bakers became Starkville residents in 1992 after his retirement. The move was Mrs. Baker's idea, but he was definitely on board. The couple and their three children enjoy attending MSU events, and Mr. Baker serves as a volunteer ticket-taker for home baseball games as part of his commitment to the Starkville Lions Club.

The Baker scholarship will benefit full-time undergraduate students enrolled in the college with preference given to applicants within the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences or the nutrition majors in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion. The scholarship is an open fund in the MSU Foundation that may be increased through additional contributions. For more information, contact Jud Skelton, director of development for the agriculture college, at 662-325-0643 or jskelton@mssstate.edu.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences