Foundation Marks Milestone

The value of the Stout University Foundation, Inc., has surpassed $20 million, the Foundation’s board of directors will announce at their annual meeting in late September.

“Through the expressed generosity of a widening group of friends and alumni, the Foundation has reached a significant point in its growth,” said Kim Entorf, president of the Stout University Foundation board of directors. “Our growth underscores our readiness and ability to help Stout in areas critical to its mission.”

Chancellor Charles W. Sorensen praised Foundation donors, the Foundation’s board of directors and the professional staff. “It became apparent that the Foundation was enjoying immense success when it received two national awards in successive years (1994 and 1995) for its work,” Sorensen said. “Nevertheless, $20 million is a milestone. The level of support for the university, the Foundation has reached a significant point in its growth underscores our readiness and ability to help Stout in areas critical to its mission.”

Since its founding in 1963, the Foundation has experienced steady growth. The Foundation was organized at the urging of William J. Micheels, following his selection as university president in 1961. An organization was needed, he felt, to promote giving to the university, to recognize donors and to specify uses for the funds.

In 1962, the first organization formed was the Stout Development Associates, Inc., a not-for-profit group that selected G.S. Wall, a member of the graduate college faculty, as president. By 1966, the organization had changed its name to the Stout State University Foundation, Inc., and launched a three-year $150,000 fund drive to coincide with the university’s Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1968. Later, the Foundation would undergo another name change, dropping “state” from its name after the old state university system merged with the University of Wisconsin System.

Early executive directors of the Foundation were John Furlong, who was hired by Micheels and later succeeded by Lloyd Trent and Jack Wile, who were solid development administrators and had a major influence on the growth of the young organization. Robert S. Swanson, Stout graduate dean, was selected to succeed Micheels as chancellor following Micheels’ resignation in 1971 because of poor health. Swanson, who would serve as chancellor until 1988, shared Micheels’ enthusiasm for the work of the Foundation. Following the death of Jack Wile in 1981, David Williams came to Stout as executive director from the development office at Ripon College. Swanson and Williams hired Patricia W. Reisinger, a Stout graduate, to join the team as assistant director of Development and Alumni Services.

The nineties proved to be a new era of giving. UW-Stout, its mission and its programs were maturing. Under the leadership of a new chancellor, Charles W. Sorensen, and a new executive director of development (now assistant chancellor of Development and Alumni Services), Patricia W. Reisinger, the time had come for the Foundation to set its sights even higher. A $80 million campaign to equip Fryklund Hall as a modern manufacturing center was announced. The campaign had tremendous support from business, industry, alumni and friends. Foundation leadership and professional staff felt confident the goal could be achieved. They were right, and then some. The goal was surpassed by $3 million.

This also was a period when the Foundation received a number of million dollar gifts including its largest, a $1.6 million gift from the estate of Koyo Nakatani in memory of her son, Arthur BS ’71, MS ’72. The gift has funded the Nakatani Center for Learning Technologies.

Alumni and friends were finding new ways to serve the university. Participation in the annual fund was growing. There were also gains in other areas. The Stout Technology Park, a venture that began in the mid-60s to develop a research and training park east of Menomonie on Foundation owned land, began to experience growing success. The Foundation, Northern States Power Company and the city of Menomonie had formed a partnership with the university to develop the land. With the help of Philips Plastics Corp., a major client, the park has evolved into a model for developments of this kind.

In 1994, the work of the Stout Foundation was no longer a well-kept secret. The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), Washington, D.C., named the Foundation to “its circle of excellence for educational fund raising.” A national panel cited the Foundation for gains made from 1990 to 1993. Indeed, it was a high honor. It had taken the Foundation 30 years to earn the award, but it would not have to wait as long for its second. That came the following year. Sorensen summed up the feelings of many when he said “to repeat in consecutive years is remarkable.”

In a story reporting on the success of the Foundation, the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram noted that Stout ranked third in fund raising in the UW-System behind only Madison and Milwaukee.

The Foundation has two major campaigns underway, a $6.5 million campaign to expand the mission and influence of the packaging program, and a cooperative effort with city and county government and the Menomonie Public Schools to build a recreation and athletic complex. Stout students have agreed to fund 50 percent of the costs through student fees. “Obviously, Stout’s growing reputation and its specialized mission have helped us attract broad support,” Reisinger said. “We are extremely appreciative of our donors and the help they are providing.”

“Commitment to the Foundation.”

Charles W. Sorensen

Kim Entorf, Foundation President, Pat Reisinger, Assistant Chancellor for Development; and Charles W. Sorensen, Chancellor.

Off-Road Race Challenges SAE

Despite a broken drive belt, team learns valuable lessons.

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Gift Benefits Athletic Complex

Mark Peddecore continues his support of community and athletic program.

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Reunions Highlight Homecoming

Mark your calendar now if you’re from the Classes of ’59, ’69, ’74, ’79 or ’89.

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