Lasting impact
Gift supports students studying marine science

She only dropped in once—twenty years ago—to see what went on at the UO’s Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston but the late Laura Bickerstaff’s generosity now helps as many as five UO students a year.

Jan Hodder, a marine science professor, remembers giving the Coos Bay woman a tour. It was the only contact until Hodder learned Bickerstaff had left the institute about $60,000 in her will. No strings attached, and no explanation.

“What an amazing thing to do,” Hodder said. “Her gift has created the means to fund student awards of $500 to $1,000—amounts that make all the difference for students struggling to afford college.” So far, Bickerstaff’s gift has helped thirty-four UO juniors and seniors.

For Clark Honors College senior Katie Thomas a $1,000 Bickerstaff Award meant freedom to focus entirely on the academic experiences offered by the institute without worrying about how to pay her bills. She graduates in June and plans to pursue a graduate degree in marine studies.

“I cannot express how appreciative I am for the financial support that donors have provided to me,” said Thomas. Scholarships have

Continued on Page Two

“A gift allowed senior Katie Thomas of Salem to spend the summer studying marine life such as this sea cucumber.”

Call us to learn more!
UO OFFICE OF GIFT PLANNING, 541-346-1687 OR TOLL-FREE 800-289-2354
Helping students

Former librarian’s gift supports scholarships and PathwayOregon

Willa Morris is leaving a gift to support PathwayOregon students plus scholarships for students majoring in music or history.

You could take as many classes as you wanted for $64 a term when Willa Morris earned her history degree at the University of Oregon in 1958.

“My education was virtually free because I lived with my parents,” said the former history teacher and librarian.

If Morris were a freshman now, her tuition would be about $2,142 per term. Adjusting for inflation, that’s four-and-a-half times more expensive than in 1958. She wonders, if college had been that expensive in her day, would she have followed her passion and majored in history?

That’s why Morris is giving a portion of her estate to support PathwayOregon students along with Presidential and Dean’s scholarships for music and history majors.

“It’s important that people get as much education as they want, because it enriches their lives so much,” she said.

A violinist, Morris planned to major in music until she took a class on the Civil War taught by the late Wendell Holmes Stephenson, an immensely popular UO history professor.

“That was the turning point in my life,” she recalled. “I changed my major.”

Morris’s experience as Stephenson’s undergraduate teaching assistant helped her decide to become an educator. What she could not have foreseen, however, was how influential he would prove to be years later, when she applied for her dream job as a high school librarian.

After graduation, Morris moved to southern California to teach high school history. She loved it but wished she could spend more time working one-on-one with students.

When a new high school opened in Marin County, she applied for the librarian job and asked her former professor to be a reference. After she was hired, the principal said Stephenson’s recommendation letter was the finest he had ever seen.

Throughout her career, Morris traveled overseas nearly every summer. She’s ridden the Trans-Siberian Railway and followed the Silk Road in the course of visiting sixty-eight countries to date. However, she always knew that her travels would lead back to Eugene, where she’s enjoying an active retirement.

“If I hadn’t studied history, I probably wouldn’t have been as interested in seeing all these countries and cultures,” she said. “The University of Oregon has made a tremendous impact on my life. I’m just very grateful.”

“The University of Oregon has made a tremendous impact on my life.”

—Willa Morris

REMEMBER WHEN

Thanks to our readers for identifying two men in this 1955 photo: 1958 Rose Bowl team members Jack Stone (center) and Bob Heard (right). It triggered memories for Sam Sorensen ’57:

“There was an unusual snowstorm prior to the Civil War game. About six inches blanketed the campus. Many thought the game would be played in the snow. A warming trend hit, and Hayward quickly turned into a quagmire of mud. The Beavers were huge favorites but Coach Len Casanova’s no-huddle game plan took them by complete surprise. The Ducks won, 28-0.”

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Building legacies

covered nearly all her college costs.

“I am motivated and driven by the knowledge that UO donors find my academic pursuits to be worthwhile,” she said. “I hope that my contributions in the future are worthy of their investments in me.”

www.giftplan.uoregon.edu
ELEVEN AND COUNTING

Guest columnist Bill Triska of Cottage Grove, Oregon, tells why he and his wife, Mary, like charitable gift annuities.

Back in the early 1980s, a friend told me about a charitable annuity he set up with his church. He gave them some money, and in return, he received a tax deduction and payments every month. He said I should look into it.

“Our gift annuities have given us peace of mind in our retirement.”

Mary and I wondered if we could make the same kind of arrangement with the University of Oregon. We don’t have children, and we liked the idea of helping others’ children attend the university. We also saw this as a way to give something in return for the enjoyment we get from UO student athletics.

When we called the UO, we were directed to the Office of Gift Planning. We learned that what our friend had set up was a charitable gift annuity. By funding one to support the university, we would receive payments for the rest of our lives.

We knew that these types of gifts were new for the UO at that time, but we decided to put our trust in the university. Now, here we are thirty years later with eleven charitable gift annuities.

Our gift annuities have given us peace of mind in our retirement. Every month we receive payments from them, and a portion of these payments comes tax-free.

We are particularly glad that if one of us dies, the payments will continue for the rest of the other’s life.

Mary and I have been able to make these gifts to help future students because of the benefits we receive from our charitable gift annuities. Without this giving option, we wouldn’t be able to support the UO as we have, and we wouldn’t have the income that we do.

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(Single donors) effective 2/1/09

Good things come to those who wait!

Thank you to long time UO supporters Bill and Mary Triska for sharing your giving experience with us in this issue.

The sample rates to the left are for immediate charitable gift annuities, as Bill describes. Your payments from this type of annuity begin when you create your gift.

You can receive even higher payout rates by deferring the start of your payments for a period of years.

A “deferred” charitable gift annuity lets you choose a future date to start receiving payments, allowing you to consider retirement income needs and other issues such as long-term care expenses.

The longer you wait, the larger your payments will be.

Choosing to defer payments will also increase your charitable income tax deduction.

To learn more about charitable gift annuities, call us at 541-346-1687 or 800-289-2354, or e-mail giftplan.uoregon.edu.

Estate Donors

Anita Summers ’43 left, through her living trust, $1,751,900 for UO Libraries.

George Shirley ’57 left, through his will, $25,000 for the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

Allice Tower ’40 left, through her will, $1,000 for the School of Music and Dance.
Super gift

From her work-study post at the visitor's desk in the UO's Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA), Shenea Davis sees how gifts help expand the museum’s impact beyond its walls.

A bequest from William C. Mitchell, UO professor emeritus of political science, enabled twelve academic departments to tie their curriculum into last fall’s major exhibition, Faster Than a Speeding Bullet: The Art of the Superhero.

Davis looks forward to a new round of lectures and other public events associated with One Step Big Shot: Portraits by Andy Warhol and Gus Van Sant on view May 16 through September 5, 2010.

“Ours is the only university in the state with an art museum of this caliber,” said the freshman from Orange County, California. “People with a passion for art make this possible. We appreciate your contribution.”