

Continuing a family legacy

Campaign gift helps NMU students

Allyn Roberts '50 grew up, literally, at the edge of a theater stage. Some of his earliest memories are of being three or four years old and tagging along with his parents, Forest and Esther Roberts, to old Kaye Hall for play practice.

"I grew up with theater. It's in my blood," said Roberts.

Recently, the Roberts family made a gift to *This Decisive Season: The Campaign for Northern Michigan University* of more than \$14,000 to establish the newly created Forest Roberts Family Endowment. The endowment will provide scholarships for Northern students majoring in theater or speech.

"As well as being the place where my mother and father dedicated their professional lives, Northern is also my alma mater, and I personally wanted to do something to support its theater program," said Roberts. "When my daughter died, I decided this fund would be a good way to honor Forest and Esther Roberts and Cheralyn Roberts Ramirez — Forest's granddaughter."

Forest Roberts came to Northern in 1928 as an English professor. During his four decades at Northern, he helped establish the Department of Speech (now Communications and Performance Studies) and served as its department head, was Northern's director of forensics, director of the Upper Peninsula Forensics and Debate Leagues, manager of the U.P. Debate League, and served as an official Certification Officer for the Michigan State Department of Speech Pathology. He also taught NMU's first drama courses and directed many university theater productions.



Allyn Roberts '50, Troy Roberts Ramirez (who will be a freshman at NMU this fall), Forest Roberts, and Cheralyn Roberts Ramirez.

In 1969, Northern honored the longtime professor by renaming the university's Little Theatre as the Forest Roberts Theatre.

"I believe that support for the university's performing arts is very important," said Roberts. "Skills learned from participation in the arts are beneficial to so many different careers."

Allyn Roberts, who majored in chemistry and psychology at Northern, is a clinical psychologist and currently serves as the clinical service director of Psychology Associates in Madison, Wisconsin.

But when he goes wandering down memory lane, he often finds himself back with his father near the NMU stage.

"I remember one time — I must have been about seven or eight — and Forest was directing a George Bernard Shaw play at Kaye Hall. There was this young man in the play who was

having a terrible time remembering his lines, so he'd ad lib. His ad libbing increased through each scene. Finally, Forest halted practice and dramatically announced, 'As this performance goes on it has become less of a Shaw and more of a Lowenstein.' I ran into **Aaron Lowenstein '33** — who went on to become a lawyer — one summer many years later and he started telling me that story and I said, 'I remember that. I was there.'"

When he recalls his own Northern experience, Roberts says he received a quality education that helped him build a strong foundation for his graduate and doctoral studies.

"There was a lot of interaction between the faculty members and students," he said. "I appreciated their time and attention. I hope today's NMU students still experience that kind of interaction because it is part of what made Northern special."

Taking a chance to give

A few weeks ago, **Diana (Hannuksela) Bennett '89**, the administrative assistant for NMU's Board of Control and Development Fund, was organizing the 2001-02 application for funding forms submitted by students, faculty and staff to the NMU Development Fund Office.

Each spring the Development Fund's Executive Board reviews the requests, then uses undesignated gifts from the Annual Fund to support as many projects as possible. The cost of the proposals range from a few hundred dollars to thousands, but each represents a need or idea that comes directly from NMU community members.

As Bennett rifled through the sheets, she kept returning to a request from an Art and Design professor to take his students to a special art exhibit at a museum in Green Bay. Cost of the request: \$275. But the exhibit itself was going to happen before the committee would meet to

recommend funding.

"I kept looking at that sheet and I thought, 'Those kids might miss that opportunity because of unfortunate timing.' My next thought was, 'I could fund this,'" Bennett said. So she walked into the adjoining office and told her co-worker, "I'd like to make a gift to Northern to send these students to this exhibit." Back at her desk a few minutes later, Bennett wrote across the top of the application, "Funded by a private donor."

"I didn't do it to get publicity," said Bennett, who pointed out that 60 percent of Northern faculty and staff, a third of who are alumni, contribute to the university annually. "But I guess what other alums should know is you don't have to build a building to help a Northern student. The biggest gift to Northern is getting involved — in whatever way is best for you."

To obtain a list of unfunded requests, e-mail devfund@nmu.edu or call the NMU Development Office at 906-227-2627.

Ninety percent!

At the close of January, *This Decisive Season: The Campaign for Northern Michigan University* surpassed \$27 million in gifts and pledges, thus putting the fundraising effort at 90 percent of its \$30 million goal.

"Hitting this milestone is tremendously exciting," said Lori Rebhan, executive director of NMU's Development Fund. "The initial feasibility study in 1996 of Northern's potential for a first-time comprehensive campaign recommended a goal of \$16 million. Taking a leap of faith that NMU alumni and friends would

support gifts for critical needs nearly double that, the goal was set at \$30 million. Now we're in the home-stretch."

The campaign surpassed the \$16 million mark in January 1999, and the \$25 million mark in April 2000 when the campaign was made public.

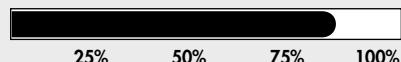
This Decisive Season is your opportunity to make NMU your top philanthropic priority. No gift is too large or too small to support education. Every investment in this campaign is an investment in the future development of NMU students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

This Decisive Season: The Campaign for Northern Michigan University

Student success and access

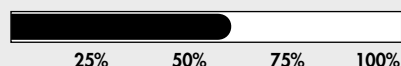
Goal: \$12 million
Endowed scholarships, the Annual Fund, programs for innovative teaching and learning, and technology advancements.



Received \$10.3 million toward goal...
\$1.7 million to go.

Improving campus facilities

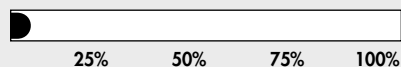
Goal: \$8 million
Glenn T. Seaborg Science Complex, Berry Events Center, Izzo-Mariucci Academic Center, Reynolds Concert Hall, and other on-campus facilities projects.



Received \$4.6 million toward goal...
\$3.4 million to go.

Investing in the people of NMU

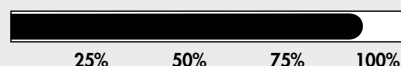
Goal: \$6 million
Endowed professorships and faculty chairs, funds for faculty and staff leadership and development opportunities.



Received \$242,129 toward goal...
\$5.6 million to go.

Outreach and partnerships

Goal: \$4 million
Public radio and television, economic development, and educational outreach programs.



Received \$3.8 million toward goal...
\$200,000 to go.

Other gifts received

(no goal set)
Unrestricted funds, pending designation, planned gifts, and gifts-in-kind.
Received \$8.5 million.