



Bill and Lois Cohodas.

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—Lynn Stahl

Talking about tolerance

Cohodas endowment brings speakers to campus

When Lois and Willard (Bill) Cohodas married on December 25, 1939, the young Upper Peninsula couple did so at a time when American Jews were forced to reflect on their heritage in light of the world events taking place.

Over the six decades since that day, the Marquette couple would devote themselves and significant personal resources toward helping the U.P. community study and understand multicultural, societal, and religious issues. Among their many efforts was the development of the area's Holocaust Awareness Program more than 50 years ago. The program brings speakers to Marquette to present on topics related to Jewish culture, religion, and historical events.

The couple, along with other members of the Cohodas family, also provided the materials for NMU's Lydia Olson Library to establish a Holocaust section.

In honor of Lois and Willard's 65th wedding anniversary in 2004, their daughters Lynn Stahl of San Antonio, Texas, and Nancy Oberman of Denver, Colorado, and their husbands, Rabbi Samuel Stahl and Paul Oberman, have created the Lois and Willard Cohodas Endowment Speakers Series Fund for Interpersonal Reconciliation.

The fund will help NMU engage one nationally recognized speaker annually to address the campus and general community on societal issues related to prejudice and bias reduction, tolerance education, cultural and religious understanding, hatred and racism elimination, or Holocaust awareness. Platform Personalities, the student group currently responsible for NMU's major speaker program, will be charged with selecting the speaker.

“My mother and father found out early in their lives what it meant to be a minority in the Upper Peninsula,” said Stahl. “They spent a good deal of their lives promoting the idea that interpersonal understanding is vital to a peaceful and productive world.”

“Understanding cultural and religious differences, erasing hatred and racism, and learning to be tolerant of those different than you are incredibly important values to my parents. This gift to Northern is a way for my sister and me, and our families, to honor their efforts and to ensure the continuance of their work in the Marquette area.”

While neither Lois nor Bill Cohodas is an NMU alumnus, Stahl said that Northern's presence in the community where her parents reside has had a profound impact on the couple.

“I know they feel they have been culturally, socially, and intellectually enriched by their involvement in NMU,” Stahl said.

“Northern Michigan University has been the greatest asset Marquette has ever had,” said Bill, who added that he and Lois are extremely pleased that their family has chosen this way to honor them.

Platform Personalities plans to announce the first Cohodas Speaker sometime during the winter 2005 semester.

—Cindy Paavola '84 BS

Development Fund changes name

The fundraising branch of the university has changed its name from the Northern Michigan University Development Fund to the Northern Michigan University Foundation. The organization's Board of Trustees approved the name change at its September 2004 meeting.

The change better reflects the organization's purpose and mission, according to Martha Van Der Kamp, executive director of alumni and development.

"Our former name, the Development Fund, described only a small part of what we do. We acquire, steward, and disburse private gifts for Northern, so NMU Foundation is a more accurate description of our operations. The new name also is in keeping with the industry standard," said Van Der Kamp.

In addition to the name change, the foundation and the university have entered into a legal agreement that recognizes the foundation as a separate entity. Within the agreement, the university's contribution to the foundation's operations serves as a management fee for fundraising efforts on NMU's behalf.

"While operationally little has changed, we have been advised that this type of formal agreement helps to ensure the highest level of privacy for our donors," Van Der Kamp said.

The new name will begin appearing on materials in January 2005.

Bertoline creates scholarship



Gary Bertoline '74 BS, who received an honorary doctor of technology degree from NMU in December 2003, and his family have established the Robert Bertoline Scholarship in honor of Gary's father. Robert Bertoline, who died in March 2003, was born in Vulcan, Michigan, and resided in the Detroit area following World War II. He and his family moved to Norway, Michigan, in 1961, where he worked in shipping and as an auto mechanic.

The \$2,500 annual award will be given to a student pursuing a baccalaureate degree in the School of Technology and Applied Sciences. Some of the preferences for the award are that the student be an Upper Peninsula high school graduate, a student showing financial need, and/or a freshman who is the first in his or her family to attend college.

While receiving his honorary degree, Bertoline also gave the mid-year commencement address. Bertoline is a professor of computer graphics technology and associate vice president for information technology at Purdue University. He also serves as director of the Envision Center for Data Perceptualization and is the author of eight books.

Northern professor pays tribute to former profession

Howard Nicholson, an associate history professor at Northern Michigan University, has set up a scholarship program to cover the cost of the one (resident) credit student teaching seminar required of NMU student teachers.

The idea for the Dr. Howard Nicholson Student Teaching Scholarship gift came to Nicholson as a way to honor his former profession.

"Today, I am in charge of the secondary education advising for the School of Education, but I spent 25 years in the secondary classroom myself. I wanted to do something to contribute to the next generation of secondary education history teachers," said Nicholson, who came to Northern in 2000.

The Nicholson scholarships will be awarded to two students each year who are pursuing teaching certificates in secondary education and majoring in economics, geography, history, political science, or social studies. The awards will be provided during the recipients' semester of student teaching.

"This is just my way of helping students and, at the same time, reminding colleagues, alumni, and friends of NMU that you don't always have to make a huge gift to have a significant impact on a student," Nicholson said. "I wanted to make this gift while I am still working with students and could see that impact firsthand."

True to its roots as a normal school, education remains Northern's most popular major with about 1,000 education majors enrolled each year, including about 600-700 who are in secondary education programs.