“Hurricane” Herb Washington fast tracks support

Herb Washington (’73, Education), a significant figure in the history of MSU Men’s Track, stands as one of MSU Athletics’ greatest benchmarks for athletic success and success in business and community endeavors. After setting world records in track and playing major league baseball, “Hurricane Herb” went on to breakthroughs in business and banking.

Now, through a $250,000 gift, Herb and his wife Gisele have established a scholarship fund to benefit worthy and capable students enrolled at MSU who participate in Men’s Variety Track and Field. The Washingtons, who met at Michigan State, also designated part of their gift to support the men’s track program.

“Most of our athletes know of Herb’s ability to help carry a team while he was a Spartan athlete,” said Walt Drenth, MSU Men’s Track and Field coach. “What they will now know through Herb and Gisele’s gift is how he has assumed the responsibility of continuing to support the team.”

Herb came to Michigan State from Flint, Michigan. As a student-athlete, Herb competed in track and field as a world class sprinter and four time all-American, who won the 1970 NCAA Indoor Championship in the 60 yard dash, seven Big Ten titles and tied or broke several world records in the 50 and 60 yard events. He went on to gain further recognition as a player for Major League Baseball’s Oakland Athletics, despite his lack of previous baseball experience. In 1997, 25 years after his college career ended, he was honored with the NCAA Silver Anniversary Award. He was inducted into MSU’s Athletics Hall of Fame in 2000.

After his outstanding athletics career, he made a successful jump into the business world. He is the owner/operator of numerous McDonald’s restaurant franchises, appropriately titled H.L.W. Fast Track, Inc. He was also named and subsequently elected to the Federal Reserve Board.

Beyond his recognition as a successful business person, Herb is well known for his community leadership. Herb serves as MSU’s liaison to the Big Ten Advisory Committee, the group charged with diversity and quality of life initiatives for student-athletes and staff. Herb and Gisele have two children, Tyrell and Arielle. Tyrell attended MSU and Arielle is currently enrolled at Michigan State. Herb and Gisele reside in Youngstown, Ohio.

For more information on giving to Spartan Athletics Programs contact Senior Associate Athletics Director for Development Chuck Sleeper at (517) 432-4611; sleeper@ath.msu.edu.

Consumers Energy powers up engineering program

With a $150,000 gift made through the Consumers Energy Foundation, Consumers Energy became the first corporate partner in a new initiative designed to immerse College of Engineering students in real-world issues facing the energy industry.

In the new partnership, Consumers Energy will present an energy-related engineering problem each year to students in the Residential Experience and Cornerstone Engineering program. Student involvement could include developing ideas to solve energy industry issues, leading environmental initiatives, working on energy-related projects that emphasize an interest in technology with a low carbon footprint, job shadowing and field trips to Consumers Energy facilities.

“I am convinced that this partnership will be a great way to educate our students about the power industry and encourage them to consider pursuing careers in this field,” said Satish Udpa, dean of the College of Engineering.

Students in the Residential Experience program live, take classes, meet with advisors and receive training—all in Wilson Hall and with students from many other disciplines. They learn from each other and through hands-on and co-curricular activities, gain skills for functioning in a collaborative, team-based, diverse and increasingly global setting.

With the addition of this partnership gift, Consumers Energy and the Consumers Energy Foundation have provided more than $3 million in support for Michigan State. Their recent gift includes support for the program’s student design projects, supplies, graduate teaching assistants, undergraduate mentors, a co-curricular adviser and computer lab equipment.

“Consumers Energy believes in higher education, in the development of our young people,” said David Joos, recently retired president and CEO of CMS Energy and its principal subsidiary, Consumers Energy, and now chairman of the CMS Energy board. “We think this new model – this residential program – is an excellent way to accomplish that in a very effective manner. It develops the young people, and it develops our relationships with them. It’s good for us, it’s good for the students and it’s good for the state.”

The support from Consumers Energy will help students explore careers in a vital field.

“We know that the number of jobs in America’s emerging clean energy economy is growing more than twice as fast as employment in general,” said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon. “Thanks to corporate partners such as Consumers Energy, we will have additional resources to prepare students for the highest-value energy jobs and simultaneously add to the state of Michigan’s portfolio of assets for a 21st-century work force.”

For more information on giving to the College of Engineering, contact Director of Development Stephen Bates at (517) 353-8439; batesst@egr.msu.edu.

MSU Federal Credit Union gift

More MSU students can serve at public schools and community centers outside East Lansing thanks to a donation from the Michigan State University Federal Credit Union.

A $20,000 grant from the MSUFCU to MSU’s Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement provided something essential for students to serve and learn — transportation. The funds cover the costs of leasing and running three vans.

Some students can utilize existing transportation, such as city buses, but the vans make it possible for more students to get to volunteer sites throughout the area and within right class schedules. During Spring semester, 95 additional students were able to get to schools and other sites that otherwise would not have benefited from the MSU service-learning opportunities, according to Karen McKnight Casey, center director.

One beneficiary of the vans was Wexford Montessori Magnes School in South Lansing. In previous years, only one or two MSU students were able to volunteer in the afterschool program each week, but the vans brought three or four MSU student volunteers
Assessment expert bolsters MSU leadership in teacher training

Renowned educational assessment expert Rick Stiggins says he built his career on the basis of doctoral study in Michigan State University’s College of Education. Now he hopes to help his alma mater become the nation’s leader on improving teacher training in assessment.

Stiggins, who received his Ph.D. in educational psychology in 1972, created the successful Assessment Training Institute. He believes the MSU College of Education has the commitment and potential needed to generate widespread changes, starting with its own top-ranked teacher education program.

He established the Richard Stiggins Endowment in Classroom Assessment at MSU to research program improvements to produce educators who can use day-to-day assessment strategies that go far beyond mere grading to stimulate their students’ learning and improve schools.

“MSU is, by reputation and reality, an international center for innovative thinking about teacher preparation,” he said. “It’s a high powered place – and a place I love.”

The new endowment pays for faculty research, field testing and conferences, including a two-day seminar in Erickson Hall last January that was attended by representatives from seven education institutions across the country.

Stiggins served as director of test development at ACT in Iowa City, Iowa, and later as director of research and development in performance and classroom assessment at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon. He turned his attention to classroom assessment exclusively and, in 1990, he and his wife Nancy Bridgford created the Assessment Training Institute (ATI) to support educators as they face the challenges of day-to-day grading, testing and other assessment activities.

At ATI, Stiggins and his colleagues created professional development experiences needed to fill chronic gaps in ‘assessment literacy’ among teachers and school administrators. And the profitable business, now owned by Pearson, eventually gave him the means to give back.

“This is a big thank you,” Stiggins said of his decision to invest in MSU, where his commitment to improving teacher practices will continue – and grow.

For more information on making a gift to the College of Education, contact Senior Director of Development Michelle Mertz at (517) 432-1983; mmertz@msu.edu.

New scholarship echoes lifetimes of sharing music

The East Lansing home where Henry and Phyllis Nelson lived for decades is full of musical reminders. There’s the tuba in the living room – at the ready for rehearsal – and the flute, piccolo and baritone saxophone in a back room. And there’s a stack of songbooks that Phyllis Nelson left.

A lifetime of interesting experiences were “all through music,” Henry said, and he’s found a way to give back and honor his late wife of 63 years. The Henry M. and Phyllis J. Nelson Endowed Scholarship in Music Education will be given to undergraduate students in the Music Education area of Michigan State’s College of Music.

The Nelsons both graduated from the music education program at then-Michigan State College in the 1940s and went on to distinguished teaching careers – she in vocal music, he in band. They were named Michigan Teachers of the Year in their fields in 1978. Two of their three children received band scholarships to MSU and two grandchildren also played in the marching band.

The university and its music education program remain near and dear to Henry’s heart. He’s especially mindful of helping students pursue their love of teaching music.

“This endowment makes it possible for us to acknowledge and provide support for the strongest music education students as they are nearing the completion of their degrees, when the financial stresses of paying for a university degree are most acute,” said Cynthia Tuggart, chair of the music education program.

The 160 undergraduates endure a rigorous admission process – including auditions – and must meet very high expectations in a jam-packed five-year program.

Asked about the value of music in schools, Nelson tells the story of bumping into a former student, not uncommon for someone with such a long and storied career. He asked his past student, now a CPA, what she got out of playing with the band. They were named Michigan Teachers of the Year in their fields in 1978. Two of their three children received band scholarships to MSU and two grandchildren also played in the marching band.

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“Without thinking, she replied, ‘Discipline,’” said the proud teacher. “An appreciation of music will be with them the rest of their lives. That’s probably the most important thing.”

For more information on making a gift to the College of Music, contact Assistant Director of Development Linda Conradi at (517) 353-9872; conradi@msu.edu.

www.givingto.msu.edu