

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

## University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

---

Campus News Archive

Campus News, Newsletters, and Events

---

10-27-2011

### Petersons' scholarship reflects "place" in shaping destiny

University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel\\_news](https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news)

---

#### Recommended Citation

University Relations, "Petersons' scholarship reflects "place" in shaping destiny" (2011). *Campus News Archive*. 519.

[https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel\\_news/519](https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news/519)

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus News, Newsletters, and Events at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus News Archive by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact [skulann@morris.umn.edu](mailto:skulann@morris.umn.edu).

Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications  
Phone: 320-589-6414, [weberm@morris.umn.edu](mailto:weberm@morris.umn.edu)

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer  
Phone: 320-589-6068, [jrray@morris.umn.edu](mailto:jrray@morris.umn.edu)

**Petersons' scholarship reflects "place" in shaping destiny**

*Summary: The scholarship assists students who are majoring in science, technology, pre-engineering, or mathematics.*

(October 27, 2011)-Scholarships may be endowed for very personal reasons, often as memorials or to affirm a rich academic experience. The Robert and Diane Peterson Promise of Tomorrow Scholarship reflects the meaning of place in shaping one's destiny.

Unique in that both Petersons attended but weren't graduated from Morris, the scholarship they established assists students who are majoring or interested in majoring in science, technology, pre-engineering, or mathematics (STEM). Preference is given to students from Minnesota. The scholarship may be renewed for three years pending satisfactory progress toward an undergraduate degree.

The Petersons' time at Morris was long enough to lay a solid foundation for a lifetime of family, career fulfillment, and faith in the liberal arts mission. It holds the unlikely setting for the beginning of a nearly 50-year relationship. Bob Peterson and Diane Femrite found love while dissecting fetal pigs together in a biology course. Diane attended Morris for more than a year in the early 1960s before completing a physical therapy degree at the Twin Cities campus.

Having gone to high school in Morris, Bob's transition to University life was tempered by the familiar atmosphere. His journey, however, was anything but smooth. The first in his family to attend college, a small academic scholarship helped give him the opportunity to succeed. Endowing their scholarship is partially motivated by the chance to give future generations of students the same opportunity. Bob believes that UMM provides a great transition from high school for outstate students while preparing them for life anywhere.

After two years at the Morris campus, Bob transferred to the Twin Cities campus to attend dental school. Although accepted to medical school, he reasoned that dentists have more time for golf. Dentistry proved not to be "him," however, and he found himself gravitating toward business. He sold his dental equipment and "invested" in an engagement ring for Diane.

Upon receiving his doctorate in business administration from the University of Minnesota in 1970, Diane and Bob moved to Austin, Texas, and found their family home. "It's a great place to raise children," Diane says. After working for 12 years as a physical therapist and raising three children in Austin, she became "Mrs. Volunteer," specifically in healthcare venues involving children. For several years, she ran the volunteer program at the area's largest hospital, with responsibility for 350 volunteers. "It was like herding cats," Diane recalls.

Bob currently holds the John T. Stuart III Centennial Chair in Business Administration at the University of Texas at Austin and is associate vice president for research. Managing several international research programs and technology transfer projects keeps him busy traveling the world. He has also found time to co-found companies, consult with governments and companies around the globe, and publish nearly 200 scholarly books and articles.

But UMM was his springboard, Bob says. The potency of its liberal arts mission is embodied for him in the late Truman Driggs, his history professor decades before the O. Truman Driggs Distinguished Lecture in history honored his name. Driggs was in his early years of teaching then, but Bob remembers him as a “truly great professor.” In endowing this scholarship, the Petersons join other friends and colleagues whose decision to do the same made sense personally and professionally.

Bob explains, "...at this point in time, we believe it is imperative to focus on providing academic opportunities for future generations.”

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at [morris.umn.edu](http://morris.umn.edu) or call 888-866-3382.