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DeWall family gifts courtyard to campus in memory of Robert DeWall

Summary: Robert DeWall was an original member of the West Central Educational Development Association, which played a major role in the establishment of the University of Minnesota, Morris.

(September 14, 2010)-The University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) is honored to announce that it has received a gift from the family of the late Robert B. DeWall to create a courtyard in his memory on campus. The Robert B. DeWall Memorial Courtyard will be dedicated on Founders Day, Sunday, September 26, 2010, during the formal dedication of the Welcome Center at 1 p.m.

Robert B. “Bob” DeWall, a lifelong Morris resident, played a founding role in the establishment of the University of Minnesota, Morris. He was an original member of the West Central Educational Development Association, which was successful in leading a citizens’ effort to persuade the University of Minnesota Board of Regents to establish the University of Minnesota, Morris campus in 1959. DeWall was a 1935 graduate of Carleton College in Northfield. He was active in the Morris business community throughout his lifetime and served many civic organizations, including the Morris Public School Board, Morris Lions Club, and Morris Cemetery Association. DeWall was an avid UMM supporter from the day it opened in 1960 until his death in 2008.

Jim DeWall, one of Robert DeWall’s five children, remembers his father and other west central Minnesota business people working as WCEDA members, making their case for a college in Morris by gathering data and contacting legislators, regents, and area high school principals. He also fondly recalls his dad’s after-dinner practice of strolling through campus, located just across the street from the DeWall home.

“It is an honor for the DeWall family to commemorate my dad in this way,” says Jim, “with a courtyard on the Morris campus.”

The DeWall Courtyard has been created on the former site of a West Central School of Agriculture reflecting pool and garden. A cobblestone path leads to the new pool and garden located on the west side of the new Welcome Center. A plaque with Robert DeWall’s image will be hung in the Welcome Center conference room, and a lighted glass etching will be installed in the garden.

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 or call 888-866-3382.