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Marion and Doug Payne, 1954 WCSA alumnus, establish Payne Rural Students Scholarship

Summary:

(September 8, 2004)-Doug and Marion Payne's rural roots and education prepared them well for a life's journey that would lead them around the world. The Paynes wish to celebrate the rural experience with today's and tomorrow's students. They've established the Douglas and Marion Payne Rural Students Scholarship Fund to provide financial assistance to UMM students with a preference for those from agricultural or rural backgrounds, or UMM students from throughout greater Minnesota and the upper Midwest who wish to live and work in rural communities.

Agriculture is a major theme in the Paynes' life histories. Their "growing up years" took place on west central Minnesota farms. After attending rural grade schools, Marion graduated from Benson High School and Doug from the West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA), a University of Minnesota boarding high school that made its home on the Morris campus until 1963. Doug's experience at the WCSA, with excellent instructors like Wesley Gray, provided a strong foundation in technical agriculture.

After serving abroad in the military, Doug attended the University of Minnesota on the G.I. Bill and completed a bachelor of science in agronomy in 1960. He was a founding member of the Delta Chapter of Delta Theta Sigma, a professional agriculture fraternity and was elected to Alpha Zeta, an honorary agriculture fraternity.

With a successful agricultural education completed and an interest in foreign affairs and business piqued by military service abroad, the stage was set for Doug to begin a 35-year career with International Multifoods Corporation. He held top leadership roles for the corporation in Mexico, Venezuela, Canada and the United States, specializing in the agricultural products division that includes livestock feed and poultry operations. He currently serves on Mexicana de Inversiones FEMAC SA de CV's board of directors.

The Paynes, who make their home in Edina, are very grateful for their rural backgrounds and for the role the University of Minnesota has played in their lives: "Our gift to UMM and our focus on rural students is based upon our belief that well-prepared people will be needed to lead their rural communities. It is also in response to the eight years of preparation received from the University system which made our life a reality." The Paynes announced their gift on the occasion of the 50th reunion of the Class of 1954 celebrated during the 2004 WCSA All-School Reunion held at UMM last July.

Maddy Maxeiner, associate vice chancellor for external relations stated, "We are pleased to announce the Paynes' gift to UMM. We are committed to serving students from the rural areas of the upper Midwest as rural students are an important part of UMM's mission and character. The Paynes' scholarship will help us to recruit these students."

"On another note," continues Maxeiner, "it is especially fitting that the Paynes' scholarship endowment is UMM's first to qualify for a new matching scholarship program recently inaugurated by U of M President Robert Bruininks. The U of M Scholarship Drive: Promise of Tomorrow allows the University to match the spendable income of new donor

scholarships endowments, thereby doubling the impact of endowed scholarship gifts like that of the Paynes. We are deeply grateful to Doug and Marion for their gift.”

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