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Wilbur Gahm honors Florence Eystad Gahm's memory with gift to UMM

Summary:

(September 8, 2004)-To honor his wife's memory and to commemorate her life's work, Wilbur Gahm of Morris has established a scholarship for UMM students who aspire to teach English with the spirit and zeal embodied by Florence Eystad Gahm. The Florence Eystad Gahm Memorial Scholarship at UMM commemorates her long-time interest and involvement with the University and perpetuates her memory within the UMM community.

Florence moved to Morris eager to teach English at the Morris High School after graduating from St. Theresa's College in Winona. A passionate advocate for education, she joined the West Central Educational Development Association in the late 1950s and joined with fellow community members in successfully lobbying the Minnesota legislature to establish a U of M campus in Morris.

Soon after UMM opened its doors in 1960, Florence was asked to teach English at the new campus. Wilbur remembers that Florence was "friends with all the new UMM faculty." Colleagues remember her fondly. "Florence was a miracle worker," stated Jim Gremmels, professor emeritus of English. "With patience and humor, she taught a very difficult class—remedial noncredit English for students who didn't qualify for freshman composition. After students made it through her class, they had the skills to complete the for-credit English course work as well. She had a knack for helping students."

Florence set high goals for the college students she taught at UMM and the high school students she taught in Morris, Chokio, Alberta and Hancock. "Florence would work with them until they met her standards," remembered Wilbur. "She always maintained you had to have a good command of English to succeed in this world, and she impressed that upon her students."

The Florence Eystad Gahm scholarship is awarded each fall to upper division English majors, with a preference for those who are intending to teach secondary education. The scholarship may be renewed for the student's senior year assuming satisfactory academic standing and continuing pursuit of an English major.

"The Florence Eystad Gahm Memorial Scholarship will honor the life's work of Mrs. Gahm in perpetuity," stated Madeline Maxeiner, associate vice chancellor for external relations at UMM. "Her husband has created this lasting tribute in her loving memory, and because it is an endowed scholarship it provides permanent financial support for students. I can think of no better way to demonstrate her life's legacy. We appreciate Mr. Gahm's generosity and are honored to be the stewards of this scholarship."

For more information about scholarships at UMM, contact Maddy Maxeiner at maxeinme@mrs.umn.edu or 320-589-6386.

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