STORIES OF THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE GIFTS

LEAVING A LEGACY

THE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA
INTRODUCTION

When you make your Will you are making one of the most important statements of your life. Your Will is the ultimate expression of your values. Your Will also provides you with an opportunity to make your mark on the wider community.

The University of Newcastle believes that education is the key to a better world and therefore encourages you to consider a gift to the University when you are making your Will.

By making a gift in your Will to the University of Newcastle you can help fund life-changing research, student scholarships and many other University projects. Making a bequest to the University of Newcastle and education is not just a gift - it’s an investment in the future.

The University of Newcastle and the wider community have benefited from many gifts from many generous donors since the University’s inception in 1965. The names of these donors will live forever and their generosity will be forever valued by the generations of those scholars who are the beneficiaries.

We have attempted to tell some of the stories of these gifts and the difference they have made, in this publication.
As the daughter of well respected Newcastle businessman and public figure, Morris Light, it’s not too surprising that Reta Light radiated such a strong-willed, talented and generous disposition. So great was her generosity, that upon her death in 1989, the 91-year-old left a $1.5 million capital trust to the University of Newcastle’s Library.

The Light Memorial Trust was formed with the funds and is used for the purpose of purchasing books, musical scores, periodicals and microfilms for the library.

One of the most significant purchases made with the Light bequest was a large collection of Australian poetry, mostly printed in the 19th century, and named the Reta Light Australian Poetry Collection in her honour.

The collection features many rare items including a first edition of the *Man from Snowy River* printed in 1895. It was one of 25 copies numbered and initialled by George Robertson and includes the original signed, and corrected manuscript of Rolf Boldrewood’s Preface.

There are also some rare imprints in the collection, including works printed in regional centres such as Geelong, Ballarat and Maitland. One of the works was printed at the Maitland Mercury office in 1854.

According to University Archivist Gionni Di Gravio it is through such outstanding generosity that we all benefit.

“This collection provides us with the original editions, some impossibly rare, that without her help the University would not have been able to afford.

“Reta's gift has enriched us all, placing such important Australian cultural treasures within our grasp. These are the words that have helped to fashion (if not create) the Australian identity.”

Reta’s life was nothing short of adventurous. She was an accomplished musician and often gave recitals on the grand piano at David Jones in Sydney. She loved to travel and lived most of her life between France and Australia. During a visit to Paris in World War II, Reta was imprisoned by the Nazis and sent to a concentration camp. Fortunately she escaped and was protected by nuns.

Reta's generous gift confirms her and her family’s commitment to the development of Newcastle, and will ensure there’s always a Light shining on our region.
LESSONS IN LIFE

Some of the University of Newcastle’s most sought after travelling scholarships were made possible by a $2 million gift from Kelver Hayward Hartley, the University’s Foundation Professor of French.

Kelver Hartley was appointed as the Foundation Professor of French in 1965 at the University of Newcastle and held this Chair until retiring in 1969. The first to be granted the title of Emeritus Professor by the, then, newly autonomous university, his commitment to learning and the life of the mind is a legacy which many students have benefited from.

Emeritus Professor Hartley is remembered by some as eccentric but it was his dedication and passion that inspired his students. By living in a humble way, Kelver Hartley was able to amass a $2 million estate, which was bequeathed to the University, to establish the Hartley Student Scholarships.

Awarded annually, the Hartley scholarships fund a six-month program of study in France. Students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the French language and culture, and to also follow in the footsteps of Emeritus Professor Hartley.

Professor Hartley believed that outstanding students of French could benefit enormously from travelling to France to experience the French language and culture first-hand.

“Kelver Hartley himself studied in France. He himself was able to conduct research and write his doctoral thesis in Paris with a scholarship from the French Government. He saw value in students being able to travel to France and continue their studies,” explains Emeritus Professor Ken Dutton OAM, who was Professor Hartley’s successor.

In addition to the scholarship endowment, Emeritus Professor Hartley’s gift included the donation of his valuable book collection to the Auchmuty Library, including rare volumes as well as first and limited number editions. The Hartley Bequest has enabled these to be restored and has also provided for six of Emeritus Professor Hartley’s works to be published as part of the Kelveriana series.

From one man’s imagination and generosity, many students have been able to enjoy the benefit of being immersed in the French language and culture, an element that is invaluable to their studies.
A LIFE-CHANGING LEGACY

She may have forged a successful career as an obstetrician and gynaecologist, but the late Dr Beryl Collier never took her education for granted. Her parents had worked hard to enable their daughter to pursue medicine, making sacrifices so she could attend university.

Later, through her work in rural NSW and her voluntary role with the Central Coast Reconciliation Group, Collier became acutely aware of the barriers Indigenous people had to overcome to access higher education.

Following her death in 2009 at the age of 81, a gift of $300,000 was left to the University of Newcastle Foundation for a scholarship in perpetuity for Indigenous students at the Central Coast campus.

A collection of 10 Indigenous artworks was also given to the University’s Central Coast campus.

Life-long friend and executor of Beryl’s Will, Betty Leach, said Beryl Collier had a great love and concern for the rights of others, especially the Aboriginal community.

“Beryl grew up at a time when education was highly respected. She believed that everyone had potential, but because of a lack of financial support, they couldn't realise that potential.

Betty, and another friend Jan Anderson, set up the scholarship in Beryl’s memory.

“If Beryl hadn’t had such poor health in the past couple of years, the scholarship is something she would have established herself. She would have been too modest to put her name to it, but it is important to us that her name will carry on.”

Describing her friend as passionate, strong-willed and “a lot of fun”, Betty said Beryl believed that education could make the world a better place.

“What set her apart was her commitment to making a difference. She wasn’t one to just talk about it.”

This Indigenous education scholarship marries together two of Beryl Collier’s life passions in a practical way - an exceptional legacy for the future of the Central Coast from an exceptional woman.
THE HEART OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

University of Newcastle folklore has it that when, Leslie Brawn, walked through the door of the Faculty of Medicine more than 30 years ago, his appearance came as a bolt from the blue.

Welcoming Mr Brawn into his office all those years ago, the then-Dean of Medicine, Professor John Hamilton, surely had no idea this modest-looking man was about to promise the faculty more than $5 million and, as a result, be funding the largest single bequest the University has yet received.

Mr Brawn named his bequest after his wife Gladys. Little is known of Gladys, only that she was probably in her early 30s at the time of her death. It is suspected she died of disease, prompting her husband’s desire to donate to medical research.

Leslie Brawn was to outlive his wife by at least 50 years, dying in 1995 after amassing his legacy through real estate and Gladys’ photography business.

Professor John Rostas, from the Faculty of Health, was charged with devising the structure of the original Gladys M Brawn Memorial Fellowship. He said faculty members came to consider Mr Brawn a friend over the years, with Professor Hamilton often visiting him and the faculty’s storeman regularly taking him shopping when he grew too old to drive.

“He was an idiosyncratic character who chose to donate his money to medical research as a way of creating a permanent memory of his wife,” Professor Rostas said.

The Gladys M Brawn Memorial Fellowship plays a pivotal role in attracting and keeping outstanding, internationally competitive medical researchers at the University.

The gift has supported five Senior Brawn Fellows and 17 Postdoctoral Fellows. The Senior Brawn Fellows bring with them substantial external research funding and a research group. The Postdoctoral Fellows are early career researchers who bring specific skills to a group already established in Newcastle and receive support and mentorship at a critical stage of their career development.

The first Brawn Fellow was Associate Professor Dirk Van Helden. His main interest is a potential first aid treatment against snakebites.

Another Brawn Senior Research Fellow is Clinical Psychologist Professor Amanda Baker. Professor Baker led the first large controlled trials on combined treatments for people suffering depression and alcohol and other drug problems.

Since the start of the scheme, Fellowship researchers have undertaken projects in a broad range of areas including cancer, clinical pharmacology, nutrition and dietetics, neuroscience, pregnancy and premature birth, asthma, immunity and viruses.

We will never know whether Leslie Brawn understood the impact his generous gift would have on medical research at the University of Newcastle but, thanks to his gift, medical researchers at the University continue to break new ground.
DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Dr Barbara Grahame
Dr Barbara Grahame’s gift of $5,000 contributed towards the Steele Douglas Prize in Pathology encouraging excellence in research in Health.

Frank Maxwell Ledbury
With his bequest of $20,000 Frank Maxwell Ledbury was able to leave behind a gift for future generations through his contribution to research in microsurgery techniques.

Mary Patricia Rankin
The $10,000 bequest of Mary Patricia Rankin was a gift to the Faculty of Health for it to use in an area it saw most fit.

Pauline Snow
Music lover Pauline Snow left a gift of $102,000 to the Conservatorium in her Will. Student scholarships were established in 2006 in Pauline Snow’s name for the continued musical development of young string players. The scholarships will be awarded to students who play the violin, viola or double bass.

Belle Wiese
Upon her death in 1997 Belle Wiese left $647,000 in her Will to the Law School.

Harold (Peter) Pickhover
Peter Pickhover made a $140,000 gift to the University of Newcastle with the amount being split equally between the University radio station 2NUR FM and the Conservatorium.

Isobel Hancock
In 2009 Isobel Hancock left $95,000 in her Will to the University of Newcastle’s Faculty of Health for research into diseases that affect children.

Nellie Knight
Mrs Knight bequeathed $72,000 to the University to conduct research into the causes of heart disease.
LEAVING HIS MARK

Not many people can claim to be one of the first physiotherapists in private practice in Newcastle. In fact, only two can, and Lewis Lewis was one of them.

His combined passion for physiotherapy and people inspired Lewis to leave $250,000 to the University of Newcastle to encourage students to study physiotherapy.

The Lewis Lewis Scholarship is the first dedicated scholarship offered to physiotherapy students at the University and helps to raise the profile of the program in the community.

A humble man, Lewis Ewart Lewis was more interested in encouraging others than speaking of himself, so much so that much of his life remains a mystery.

What is known however is that Lewis was born in Merewether in 1909 and became a qualified Podiatrist/Chiropodist in the mid 1930s. However after being hospitalised following a serious car accident, he had to learn to walk again.

It was during this recovery time his interest in physiotherapy was sparked. By 1945, Lewis became a qualified physiotherapist and started his own practice in Hunter Street.

His dedication and passion for the profession was reflected in his excellent reputation for service and treatment, with clients often travelling four to five hours one way to see him.

Despite retiring in 1967, Lewis remained a registered physiotherapist for the rest of his life.

Lewis passion for physiotherapy saw him and his wife travel extensively, scouting hospitals across the globe for new techniques.

Despite having no previous association with the University of Newcastle, Lewis’ niece and nephew, Janice and Barry Croese, believe it was his passion for people which inspired Lewis to leave the gift to assist other aspiring physiotherapists.

“Uncle was always dedicated to people studying and bettering themselves,” said Janice Croese.

He certainly practiced what he preached. At the age of 94 he was still going on his morning walks.

And through the scholarship, Lewis’ footprints continue to make their mark across the Hunter region.
Everyone who knew Jean Bogan knew she loved music - it was her greatest joy. Jean believed that the piano was an essential medium through which the creators of music talked with those who would listen and understand what was said.

Jean's husband Laurence Charles Bogan created a music prize in 1989 as a memorial to his wife and as a thank you for the tremendous pleasure he gained from hearing his wife play piano.

Upon his death in 2002 Laurie Bogan left a $100,000 gift to the University of Newcastle’s Conservatorium to continue and expand upon the original prize.

The Jean Bogan Memorial Prizes for Piano is now an Australia-wide competition that is open to composers with original works for solo piano.

Two prizes have been developed - the Jean Bogan Memorial Prize valued at $8,000 and the Jean Bogan Youth Prize valued at $1,500.

The prizes give Australia's young composers the opportunity to develop their skills and gain acclaim for their work. The winning composition is performed each year at a concert at the Conservatorium.

Senior Lecturer in composition in the School of Drama Fine Art and Music at the University of Newcastle, Colin Spiers, said the gift was significant to the Conservatorium, because it helps to raise its profile as a centre promoting the creation of new Australian piano works.

“The prize is also important in that it encourages its composition students to work in this medium and its piano students to engage with new repertoire.”

Prize winner, Andrew Ford, was chosen for his work The Waltz Book, a piece awarded the prize because of its originality and creative flair.

“The composition is an interesting collection of pieces that made a strong impression for its craftsmanship, especially in creating a unified whole out of many disparate pieces,” said Mr. Spiers.
THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

The legacy of one of Australia’s most prominent and respected wildlife illustrators, Margaret Senior is continuing into the future thanks to a gift to the University of Newcastle.

Margaret illustrated many children’s books in her career including The Australia Book, which won the Children’s Book of the Year award in 1952.

She spent much of her life as a wildlife illustrator for National Parks Wildlife Service, and became so interested in the Bachelor of Natural History Illustration program at the University of Newcastle that she wanted to foster the training and education of Natural History Illustration students.

In her Will, Margaret left a gift of $50,000 to the University of Newcastle to promote natural history illustration through a student scholarship.

She also left $10,000 to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The NPWS created the Margaret Senior Wildlife Illustration Award at the University in her honour.

The Natural History Illustration program is one of the nation’s most unique degrees. It gives students the opportunity of drawing on their artistic talent to capture Australia’s exquisite wildlife.

Anne Llewellyn, Head of School of Communication, Design and Information Technology, believes the benefits of Margaret’s gift will be felt not only within University, but also once students have graduated.

“For many students this is the first time they have been able to devote a sum of money to a major item that will assist them with their studies and ultimately professional practice.

“Students can use the funds to engage in fieldwork, buy art materials and equipment such as cameras or a microscope.”
If you are interested in leaving a gift to the University of Newcastle in your will or want to find out more, please contact the University of Newcastle (UON) Foundation.

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