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Gifts & Grants

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Supporters Recognize Cotters' Commitment

Cotter internship fund and distinguished professorship announced

By Stephen Collins '74

As The Campaign for Colby and William R. Cotter's presidency both headed down the home stretch last year, Larry Pugh '56 and others decided that Linda and Bill Cotter's contributions to the College needed to be recognized with something enduring. So, backed by a lead gift from the Oak Foundation, Pugh circulated at a trustees' meeting with his yellow legal pad, buttonholing trustees and scribbling figures.

Such was the genesis of an extraordinary outpouring of good will for the Cotters. With financial commitments from trustees and contributions from almost 1,000 alumni and friends of the College, the initiative created the William R. Cotter Distinguished Teaching Professorship and the Linda K. Cotter Fund for Internships, both announced at the campaign's October celebration.

The effort to honor both Cotters produced \$2.3 million in contributions, considerably more than



Larry Pugh '56 (right) announces the Cotter Internship Fund and a teaching professorship, as Bill and Linda Cotter look on.

Pugh and Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Randy Helm had anticipated.

Three-quarters of a million dollars was used to endow the Linda Cotter internship fund. Each year in perpetuity, the investment income from the fund will permit up to 50 Colby students to receive stipends so that they can afford to perform unpaid internships at nonprofit organizations or government agencies.

The fund recognizes Mrs. Cotter's work building a network of businesses and organizations that offer internships and a system for placing students in them.

"That [having an endowed fund in her name] is hard to get used to—it's an enormous honor for me," she said. Mrs. Cotter called it gratifying that the endowment recognizes the importance of the area on which she worked so hard. An anonymous

gift in 1998 was the nucleus of the Linda Cotter fund. It provided enough money last year for a pilot program that funded stipends for 17 students. The pilot program proved so popular that discretionary funds had to be added to cover the initial demand.

Another \$1.25 million from the funds raised endowed the Cotter chair, Colby's 31st fully endowed faculty position. "It's just very moving," Bill Cotter said. "It's the highest honor because it's at the center of our mission—to have first-rate faculty who will attract first-rate students."

"Endowed chairs allow you to recruit and keep the very best faculty," Helm said. Investment income from the \$1.25-million endowment provides compensation for the chair holder as well as a research fund. A named professorship provides the highest prestige available to teaching faculty members who have already achieved the rank of full professor.

Gifts Establish New Faculty Chairs

Two new gifts to the College of \$1.25 million each to create Colby's 32nd and 33rd endowed faculty chairs were announced in December.

The Harriet S. and George C. Wiswell Jr. Chair was endowed with a gift from Mrs. ('48) and Mr. ('50) Wiswell, of Southport, Conn., and the Oak Chair in East Asian Language and Literature was funded by the Oak Foundation.

After the College identified East Asian studies as a program needing the stability of more tenure-track positions, President Bill Cotter endeavored to find the necessary funding. "The status of Colby's pioneering East Asian studies program is terribly important as Asia continues to grow in importance in the world economy," he said. Jette Parker P '94, who chairs the Oak Foundation and serves Colby as a trustee, agreed. The international philanthropic foundation, which commits its resources to issues of global concern, made the gift for the named chair, which will be held by Tamae Prindle (Japanese) beginning next year.

The Wiswells considered other needs at Colby before deciding

that "With a chair you can put your money into something you're interested in," said Mrs. Wiswell, a history major.

"Something you believe in," said Mr. Wiswell, who studied social sciences but went on to a distinguished career as a marine engineer. He retired with his name on 13 patents and world-wide renown as an underwater-problem solver.

Various family members, including grandson Timothy Wiswell '01, have attended Colby. The couple attributes Colby's rise in prestige to a spirit of striving and cooperation that they saw in the Colby community of the late 1940s, when Colby was reinventing itself on Mayflower Hill and the Blue Beetle shuttled students between old and new campuses. "The roads were just dirt then," Mr. Wiswell said. "If the bus stopped in the wrong place to let a student off and got stuck, everybody got out to push."

"Something has been done right here," said Mrs. Wiswell of the institution where the Wiswell Chair will serve students in perpetuity. "It's nice to be a part of it."