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Alumni Start Accounting Endowment



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USF St. Petersburg alumni Teresa and Paul Mueller recently made a gift of \$100,000 to create a scholarship endowment for USF St. Petersburg accounting students. Through its Trust Fund for Major Gifts, the State of Florida will match half of the donation to bring the size of the endowment to \$150,000.

The Muellers were inspired to make their donation when Paul was browsing the university Web site and discovered that the USF St. Petersburg campus had grown significantly and was celebrating its 40th anniversary.

P. Mueller said, "By starting the fund Teresa and I felt it was an opportunity for us to demonstrate leadership, and hope that it will encourage other alumni to give back and help the university keep developing."

"Alumni like the Muellers play such an important role in the life of the university," said Charles Harris, national chairman for the USF Alumni Association. "Their contribution is extremely generous, a tribute to USF and a wonderful gift to our current and future students."

Leadership is an important topic for the Muellers. In their professional experience they have had to face ethical dilemmas and they want to be sure students entering the work force are able to speak up when faced with such situations. Because of this, the Muellers requested the university make leadership potential a criterion for eligibility.

"Accountants are the financial watchdogs of institutions. Young professionals in the field must be able to demonstrate ethical responsibility in order to avoid situations like Enron," P. Mueller said.

Now the managing partner and CEO of the Washington, D. C. office of UHY Advisors, one of the nation's largest accounting firms with offices located throughout the U.S., Paul has seen the pool of quality accountants dwindle throughout the years. The Muellers said they hope their endowment will encourage students interested in accounting to pursue their career of choice.

Teresa Mueller said, "The requirements for CPA certification have increased, and we want students to be able to focus on their educational goals without having to worry about being able to finance their education."

"Gifts such as this one are the lifeblood of colleges and universities, making it possible for current and future students to attain their educational goals," Geralyn Franklin, Ph.D., dean of the College of Business, said.

Since their studies at USF St. Petersburg, the campus has changed tremendously. The addition of the new residence hall is attracting students from outside the immediate area, something the Muellers said they are excited to see.

"We were here when the campus was just the Merchant Marine barracks facility; now the entire campus is built around the waterfront" said T. Mueller. "It is truly a dream campus."

Eligibility criteria will be announced for students entering study Fall 2007. Students interested in the program of accountancy and scholarships offered at USF St. Petersburg should visit www.stpt.usf.edu/cob.

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