The Roots of Philanthropy

How far can the service, leadership and giving of one couple reach? In the case of Evelyn and Elwood “Buck” Waid, the answer is much like the roots of a strong tree—far, wide and across generations. Buck and Evelyn’s generosity toward New Mexico State University and the Las Cruces community was evident during their lives and, through their estate gift to the NMSU Foundation, continues now and into the future.

Their history with NMSU began when Buck, a colonel in the Air Force, joined the campus faculty as the Air Force ROTC commander, a position he held from 1968 to 1970.

This was just the beginning. In addition to earning his master’s degree in psychology in 1970 and teaching as a professor of military science and aerospace studies, Buck was a vital member of several administrative teams that shaped NMSU as we know it today. As part of the Administrative Council under President Gerald Thomas in the 1970s and 80s, he led efforts on long-term planning for agriculture and energy research.

Buck made an impression on many at the university—students and administrators alike. This included Tommy Crawford, a former ROTC cadet who became a major general in the Air Force. In 2008, Tommy and his wife, Judith, established the Colonel Elwood J. Buck Waid Scholarship in Buck’s honor to support Air Force ROTC students. With this gift, the roots of the Waids’ Aggie family tree extended and the support system for students at NMSU grew stronger.

While Buck focused on campus initiatives, Evelyn gave her time and talents to the Las Cruces community. She volunteered with the Red Cross, including a leadership role on a project to bring “talking books”—literature on vinyl records—to homebound patients across the city. She was also a member and officer of the University Park Women’s Golf Association, serving as president in 1970 and frequently appearing in the Las Cruces Sun News for first place rankings in local golf tournaments.

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Founded in 2014 with their first living trust gift distribution and extended through more estate gifts this year, the Buck and Evelyn Waid Endowed Academic Scholarship helps undergraduate students across colleges pursue their degree at NMSU. Any student with a declared major and a 3.0 GPA is eligible, and some of the recent recipients include students studying engineering, education and agriculture (see page 3 for one Waid Scholar’s story).

The legacy of philanthropy started by Buck and Evelyn continues to extend, like tree roots, through the NMSU community and beyond. The impact of their giving has taken wonderful twists and turns and is sure to continue to grow as the students they support graduate and give their own service, leadership and philanthropy back to the communities they love.

You, like Buck and Evelyn, can create a legacy at NMSU by becoming a member of The 1888 Society. Contact Robert Peterson at (800) 342-6678 or plannedgiving@nmsu.edu to learn more.

In their diverse roles, our featured donors were humble, served our country and lived our land grant mission through service. The income generated from the Waid Living Trust provided the family with financial security during their lifetimes, and now the balance of the Trust supports students at their beloved university. Indeed, life changing dreams are coming true for Waid scholars at all five of our NMSU campuses.

Buck and Evelyn remind us that NMSU is not just a place on a map. Rather, it is a place with a culture of leadership and caring. Indeed, Aggies keep this bold spirit in our hearts—and bring it along on our life’s adventures that shape a better future around the world.

The extraordinary individuals and families listed on our Society Honor Roll (back cover) support NMSU’s legacy and embody this Aggie spirit. It is a pleasure for our team to be a small part of the story behind meaningful gifts that empower our donors to experience the joy of giving back.

Warm regards,

Robert D. Peterson

Gift Planning Director
NMSU Foundation
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Ryan Salcido is pictured with his sister and parents, who he credits as the inspiration for pursuing his agronomy degree at NMSU. His hard work and dedication, along with the opportunity afforded by the Waid Academic Scholarship, enables him to move forward on his path toward graduation.

Roots Extended: An Ag Student’s Mission

Waid Scholar Ryan Salcido, a sophomore at NMSU, grew up in Brawley, California, a small agricultural town on the U.S.-Mexico border. His great-grandfather was a farmer and both of his parents have worked in ag-related fields. Born into a family and community with deep agricultural roots, his decision to pursue a degree in agronomy was a natural fit.

The motivation to pursue this academic path, however, became more personal for Ryan when his mother and sister were diagnosed with the autoimmune disease, multiple sclerosis. Now, Ryan sees agronomy as a way to improve their lives.

“One of the best ways for people with autoimmune diseases to manage their symptoms is to avoid processed foods and eat an abundance and wide variety of quality vegetables,” says Ryan. That’s why he plans to return to his hometown after graduation and use what he has learned at NMSU to find better ways of producing high-quality crops. “I want to be part of growing food in a sustainable, healthy way.”

He credits his family with inspiring him to pursue his degree, citing their support as a key motivator. However, Ryan must finance his own education. Despite working summers to save money, Ryan says that without scholarships, including the Buck and Evelyn Waid Endowed Academic Scholarship, he would not be able to attend NMSU.

“I have driven a tractor the last two summers to help pay for school, but it is not enough to cover everything. I am grateful for the Buck and Evelyn Waid Scholarship, which helps fill the gap.

“You can change the course of someone’s life with a donation to an NMSU scholarship,” Ryan emphasizes, thinking about his own journey.

The Waids’ transformational estate gift is helping make college possible for Ryan and other students. He and fellow scholarship recipients are taking great strides toward obtaining their degrees. Buck and Evelyn’s investment in students resonates through and beyond the NMSU community to places—like Ryan’s hometown—where Aggie graduates continue to extend the roots of leadership, service and philanthropy.

If, like the Waids, you are interested in turning your estate into a legacy at NMSU to benefit students like Ryan, contact us for a free estate planning kit. With the tools to engage in careful and effective estate planning, you can take care of your family and your alma mater. To download your free kit, visit our website at plannedgiving.nmsu.edu.
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Achieve a Lasting Legacy
There are simple ways to make an impact at NMSU by giving to the NMSU Foundation. Learn how in our guide 4 Simple Gifts That Deliver Big Results. If you’d like to give in honor or tribute to a loved one or even endow your gift, request the guide Create a Lasting Tribute for Someone You Love or Admire. Just fill out and return the enclosed reply card for your FREE copies today.

The 1888 Society recognizes individuals who have notified us that New Mexico State University is included in their estate plan as the beneficiary of a will, trust, life income gift, life insurance policy, retirement plan or other planned gifts.

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