

Preston McMurry Makes \$500,000 Commitment to College of Social Work

Preston McMurry Jr. of Phoenix, Ariz., has made a \$500,000 commitment to the College of Social Work, the largest contribution in its history. The gift, at the dean's prerogative, supports technology, student needs, emerging programs and scholarships for students demonstrating academic excellence while pursuing studies and social work careers.

In addition, McMurry is interested in honoring scholar-athlete citizens. The McMurry Scholar-Athlete Citizen Award will be presented each June to a student-athlete with a minimum 3.0 GPA and demonstrated outstanding interest in volunteerism. Coaches representing the 36 varsity sports will nominate candidates. A committee of graduate-level social work students will select the award recipient. "Citizenship after all," said McMurry, "is a great university's highest calling. Nothing can be more important than graduating young people who can make a difference and make a better world by positively affecting the lives they touch."

In 2002, the Ohio State Alumni Association honored McMurry with its citizenship award for his commitment to causes related to family violence and child abuse to which his foundation, Theresa's Fund, has donated millions and helped raise nearly \$40 million more. He returns to campus several times a year and lectures occasionally at the College of Social Work, Fisher College of Business and the School of Journalism. He is also serving as chair of Social Work's first fundraising council.

"Pres's commitment to the College of Social Work is unprecedented, and we are grateful to him for the largest gift ever made to the college to date," said Dean **William Meezan**. "Having truly dedicated alumni like Pres, who support our vision and the direction for the college in such a tangible way, is critical to our drive to move forward and achieve the excellence for which we continually strive."

McMurry, who graduated from Ohio State in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in social work, was a running back for **Woody Hayes** and a member of the 1957 Rose Bowl and National Championship Team.

Following graduation and careers in social work, professional fundraising, advertising and hospital marketing, he started **McMurry Inc.**, which is now the 13th largest privately held marketing firm in the nation. "Best of all," he said, "the Society for Human Resource Management selected us two years in a row as one of the Ten Best Places to Work in America."

McMurry credits Woody as a key inspiration for his success: "My

office wall is covered with photographs; all of family, except one. It's a picture of Woody in shirt sleeves during the snow to fall."

Woody's wife, **Anne**, a social worker, encouraged McMurry to pursue the profession. Woody, in turn, promised McMurry's mother that her son would graduate. McMurry recalls "a nose to nose" lecture he received freshman year when his grades started to slip. "Everyone in the athletic department could hear Woody 'encourage me,'" he said. "Woody told me that I was going to keep his promise to my mother and graduate from this great university...or else."

Besides blocking and tackling, Woody taught lessons about work ethic, life and values. McMurry Inc. has replaced the rule book with an eight point value system, to which McMurry attributes his firm's success along with 167 staff members. He shares his philosophy generously, lecturing at various universities and addressing the boards of nearly 100 non-profit agencies.

McMurry's sons work for the company. **Chris** is now CEO and **Preston III** is a computer programmer for the firm's online interactive division. **Kathryn**, his daughter, is a successful San Francisco real-estate agent. McMurry, chairman and corporate values shepherd, is finishing his first book, *Hill of Beans*. He enjoys working out and hanging out with his four grandsons. Still, Ohio State remains a priority and an important aspect of his life.

McMurry hopes the true value of his contribution to Social Work is two fold. "I hope that it helped raise the giving bar at the college. And I hope my gift will help to motivate someone to do far more than I am able," he said.



Preston McMurry Jr.