



Significance

CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH CHARITABLE GIFT PLANNING



Steve Danishek and Dee Tezelli Scaling new heights

The year 1975 was a significant one for Dee Tezelli and Steve Danishek. The couple married that year and opened a travel agency in Seattle, Washington. The two shared a passion for traveling and exploring the world. Over the years, the couple grew into a family, and their business grew into one of the largest travel agencies in Washington state.

“We’ve always been big advocates for getting people to other places, to other countries,” Steve said. “If I had my druthers, a high school diploma would be accompanied by a passport.”

After they sold their chain of travel agencies in 1988, Steve and Dee opened TMA Travel, which counted Seattle Pacific among its clients. For decades, Steve helped arrange travel for SPU’s student athletes, professors, and administrators, and for mission trips for SPRINT, the Seattle Pacific Reachout International program.

“I got to know the school and a lot of the professors and students while I was handling all the travel for SPU,” Steve said. “I would see freshman athletes come in and develop each year until they graduated. I got

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF SPU



Endowments have long been a foundational source of support for the students and academic programs of Seattle Pacific University. One of our earliest endowments was established in 1954 by Charles Causey for Biology major

scholarships. Since then, the number of our endowments has grown to more than 400 for a combined total value of over \$166,700,000.

The Seattle Pacific Foundation is tasked with the important job of managing and investing our endowment resources. Over the years, the Foundation has demonstrated profound excellence in fiscal stewardship, especially when compared to peer and larger institutions. According to the National Association of College and University Business Officers Study of Endowments, in fiscal year 2022, the Seattle Pacific endowment ranked in the 95th percentile out of over 675 participants based on its one-year net return. It has also consistently outperformed its investment benchmarks.

In this issue of *Significance*, you will read about those who have created endowments through lifetime gifts as well as through their estate plans. You will also read about one of our outstanding students who is currently receiving much-needed financial aid awarded from endowment distributions.

If you would like to discuss your interest in creating an SPU endowment now or in the future through your will, life insurance plan, or retirement plan, please feel free to contact me at 206-281-2631 or msandlin@spu.edu.

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CONTINUED FROM COVER

to watch the progression of many hundreds of SPU students as they progressed each year through the campus. I was very impressed with the culture and the values that SPU represented.”

Steve and Dee’s experiences with SPU led the couple to establish an endowed scholarship at the University to assist students who are interested in pursuing writing careers, a career dream Dee deferred for years.

With the right encouragement and opportunities, Dee might have become an author earlier in her life. Growing up in her native country of Turkey, Dee occasionally found stories forming in her head entertaining enough to carry over to paper. She gave the prose titles and plots, and her friends liked them. Her parents, however, encouraged Dee to find a more stable career.

“In those times, becoming an accomplished author or a classic painter were thought of as enjoyable fantasies,” Dee said.

She took up writing again after her adult son Murat passed away in 2013.

Ten years later, Dee is the author of nearly 35 multicultural murder mystery e-books and printed novels for young adults on Amazon. The books draw heavily from Steve and Dee’s travel adventures, climbing peaks around the world.

In the United States, they climbed Colorado’s Mount Elbert, the highest point in the Rocky Mountains at 14,433 feet. They have summited Mount Rainier and Mount Baker in Washington; Mount Wheeler in New Mexico; and Boundary Peak in Nevada among many other high points in the U.S.



Steve and Dee’s climbing adventures around the world have provided the backdrops and inspiration for Dee’s 35 young-adult novels.

Internationally, they’ve traveled to Dee’s native country of Turkey to climb Mount Olympus. And they reached the top of Mount Fuji in two days during a stopover in Tokyo, Japan.

“There are four main trails, and it was all trail hiking,” Steve reflected. “I think we overnighted at 9,000 feet, which left another 3,000 feet before sunrise the following day.” Their experiences traveling and climbing have provided the backdrops and inspiration for Dee’s novels.

“Traveling is my way of immersing myself into a different culture. We don’t go there

for photo ops. It’s learning about diversity by talking with people,” Dee explained. “When we were in Japan, we came across all of the shrines, the Sea of Trees, and so many true and very touching stories of their culture.”

Upon her return from Japan, Dee wrote her most popular e-book, *The Man from Mount Fuji*.

“Creative writing is a special talent,” Dee said. “But it can be buried under life’s responsibilities.” Steve and Dee hope their endowment scholarship — to be bolstered in the future by a bequest in their will — can be the

encouragement a student needs to pursue and hone their writing abilities and talents.

Dee’s books can be found at the Dee Tezelli Bookshelf on Amazon, including her latest, *How I Left This World: Yet Am Not Far Away*, a compilation of five stories published in honor of their late son Murat to commemorate the 10th anniversary of his passing.

— Shelly Ngo, editor, *Response* magazine and *SPU Stories*

PHILANTHROPY SPOTLIGHT

Mary Masterson A passion for nursing education

Mary Masterson came to SPU’s campus for the first time in 2018 to meet with Dr. Lorie Wild, former dean of the School of Health Sciences. She was not an alumna of the University, nor did she have any personal connections with anyone associated with Seattle Pacific. But she had heard good things about our Nursing program and wanted to learn more. In fact, at

age 93, she was updating her estate plan and considering including a bequest to SPU for Nursing scholarships.

Mary had retired several decades earlier as the first female vice president of Seafirst Bank in Seattle. This was quite a remarkable achievement for her, as few women at the time served in such high-level professional positions.

Kyra Skipworth

A story of resilience and gratitude



This scholarship reminds me that there are people out there who are just as passionate about teaching and the path to get there as I am. ... Thank you so much.”

Kyra Skipworth’s journey at SPU has not gone according

to plan. In 2020, Kyra came to Seattle Pacific on a track scholarship. She had graduated from Capital High School in Olympia, where she was captain of the track team, placed at the Washington state track meet in four events, participated at the regional level in Junior Olympics, and received four varsity letters. To this day, she holds the school record in the 400-meter at 58.00 seconds.

For the next two years she was a powerhouse on the SPU track team, despite the shadow cast by COVID. But then everything changed, when she began losing her vision and hearing in moments of extreme exertion. After seeing a cardiologist and undergoing tests, she received a troubling diagnosis: left ventricular outflow tract obstruction (LVOTO), a congenital cardiac defect that interferes with the ejection of blood from the left ventricle. She was told she could no longer compete and would have to medically retire from running. It was a double blow for Kyra. Not only did she have to cope with the disappointment of leaving the team, but, with the resultant loss of her track scholarship, continuing at SPU at all was in jeopardy.

Enter the Delia Gaetz Teacher Education Scholarship Endowment. Since last year, Kyra has been receiving a generous scholarship from the endowment that has enabled her to remain at SPU. “That scholarship is the reason I’m still here,” she said, and she is now set to graduate in Spring 2024 with a degree in Early Childhood Education.

Kyra is even making plans to attend graduate school, “to pursue a deeper background in the science of reading,” a particular interest for her. She credits her “ultimate favorite” professor, Kris Gritter, professor of curriculum and instruction, with kindling in her a desire to continue her studies post-graduation. “Dr. Gritter has given me so much inspiration,” said Kyra. “The way she teaches makes me want to be like her.”

The admiration is mutual. “Great students make great teachers,” said Professor Gritter. “Kyra is more than prepared for class. She sees literacy happening with the children she works with and loves to talk the language. Someday she will be my boss, and I will love it!”

As difficult as it was for Kyra to leave the track team, a silver lining emerged. “Because of COVID, I was so close with my teammates that, honestly, our relationships didn’t change when I left the team. We still all hang out all the time. It’s a big support system for me.”

And Kyra had chosen SPU for more than the track team. “I really liked the small size of SPU. That was what drew me here, and they really stress the importance of building connections with professors.” Kyra said she felt at home from the moment she stepped foot on campus.

In a letter thanking providers of the Delia Gaetz Scholarship, she wrote, “This scholarship reminds me that there are people out there who are just as passionate about teaching and the path to get there as I am. ... Thank you so much.”

During her banking years and later in retirement, Mary was concerned over the shortage of nurses and understood the growing need for qualified nurses as the population ages.

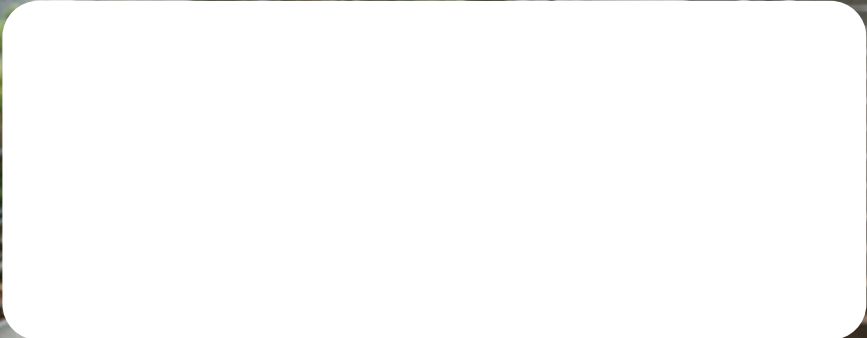
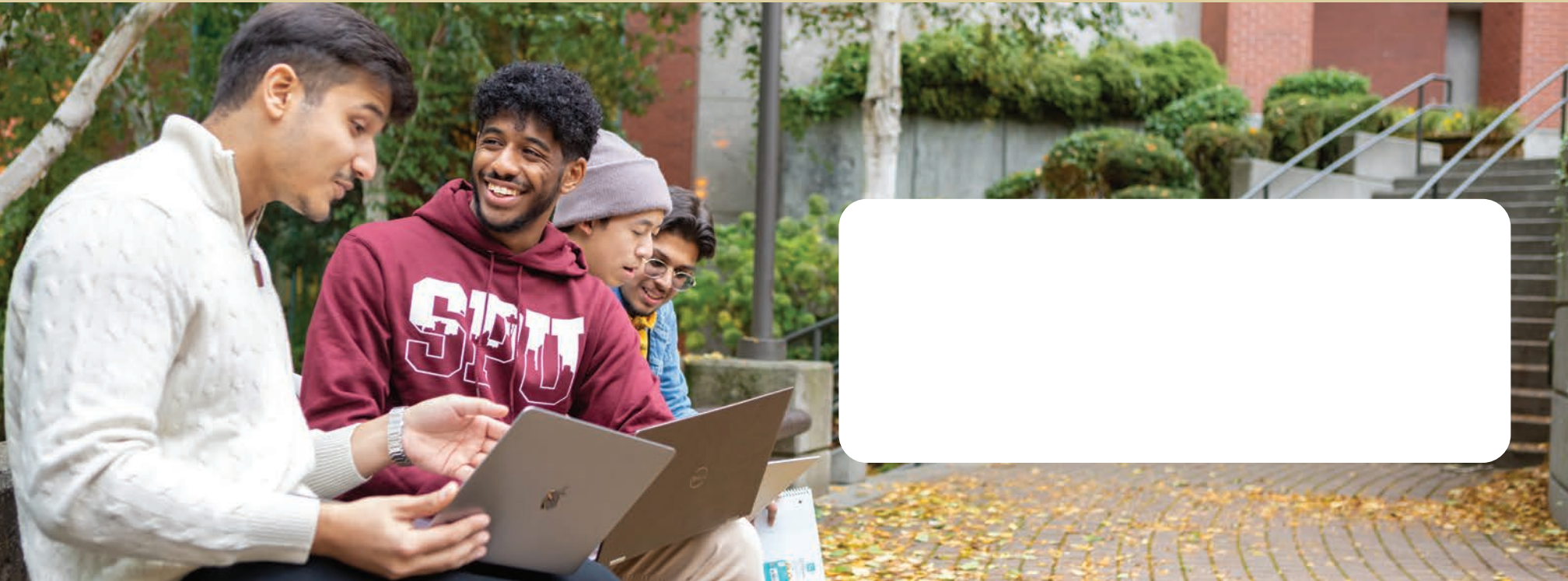
What Dr. Wild shared with Mary about our Nursing program must have struck a chord. Soon afterwards, Mary worked with

her attorney to include a future bequest gift to Seattle Pacific that would create a scholarship endowment for nursing students.

When Mary passed away earlier this year and SPU received her significant gift, we were pleased to fulfill Mary’s passion for training nursing students and to establish an endowment in her name.



NATIONALLY RANKED — Seattle Pacific continues to be recognized as a “Best National University” by *U.S. News & World Report*.



Support SPU students by creating an endowment

Gifts identified for endowment help current as well as future generations of SPU students. These funds are set aside for permanent investment in order to produce a dependable stream of annual financial aid. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about giving to the SPU endowment.

Q. How much is needed to fund an endowment?

A. A gift to the SPU Wellspring Endowment gives the University the greatest flexibility to award scholarships to any of our students and can be given in any amount. Also, any amount can be given to other existing endowments.

If you would like to create your own legacy with a new endowment that includes personal information and a specific purpose, the minimum amount is \$30,000. You can also establish a new endowment with an initial gift of \$5,000 and a pledge to fund the balance within five years.

Q. Can I use matching gifts to help fund my endowment?

A. Yes! If your employer matches gifts, you can use those matching gifts to help fund your endowment more quickly. This is also a great way for younger alums, or those who thought an endowment was unattainable, to support the University.

Q. Once my endowment is funded at the minimum level, how much is available for distribution and how quickly will it be distributed?

A. The University distributes 5% each year in scholarships or program support based on the endowment’s average value over a 10-year period. This helps to reduce fluctuations in year-to-year distributions due to changing financial market conditions. The first scholarship from your endowment will be distributed two years after it was created (as long as the minimum has been met).

Q. Who manages the endowment?

A. The Seattle Pacific Foundation is charged with managing endowment investments. For many years, the Foundation has done an exceptional job at growing these funds and protecting them from volatility in the financial marketplace.

Q. How can an endowment be funded?

A. Cash gifts or publicly traded securities can be used to fund an endowment. For those over age 70½, an IRA Charitable Rollover can fund an existing or new endowment, and you can also plan a future gift to an endowment through your will or living trust.

For more information on giving to an endowment, go to legacy.spu.edu/endowments or contact Marlon Sandlin, interim director of endowments and gift planning, at 206-281-2631 or msandlin@spu.edu.

Spotlight on new and revised endowments

Endowments provide vital, perpetual financial support for our students and programs at Seattle Pacific. We are grateful to the generous donors who, through lifetime gifts or through their estates, have chosen to invest in the lives of our students and help endow the future of the University for generations to come. The following is a list of recently established or revised endowments.

Carl and Lynn Anselmi Mechanical Engineering Scholarship Endowment — for Mechanical Engineering students

Donald H. and Rebecca B. Bilderback Housing Assistance Endowment — for housing assistance to eligible Seattle Pacific faculty and staff

Steve Danishek and Dee Tezelli Scholarship Endowment — for English students engaged in creative writing

William A. and Darlene D. Hartley Scholarship Endowment — for School of Education students

Mary Lee Masterson Scholarship Endowment — for Nursing students

David E. and Patricia A. Mattingley Engineering Scholarship Endowment — for Electrical, Mechanical, Computer, or General Engineering

Donald W. and Marilyn K. Mortenson Endowment — for the professional development of staff in the business and finance areas of the University

George A. and Claire E. Scranton Theatre Scholarship Endowment — for Theatre students

To learn more about creating an endowment or giving to any of these or other endowments, contact the Office of Endowments and Gift Planning at giftplanning@spu.edu or 206-281-2631, or visit our website at legacy.spu.edu.



Our free resources have everything you need to help you plan your legacy. Request copies at spu.edu/estateresources.