

An Educator's Gift

The late Jim Cuddeford valued education. As director of the Bryan College of Health Sciences School of Nurse Anesthesia, that meant not only teaching students to become nurse anesthetists, but also educating the educators.

So when the Genoa, Neb., native put together his estate plan, he put his values into action. A generous planned gift to the college, specifically for nurse anesthesia educators, will ensure that teachers of future health care providers will have opportunities for growth and advanced education for years to come.

Gift has tremendous impact

Thanks to that gift, the entire nurse anesthesia faculty will attend the American Association of Nurse Anesthesia Assembly of School Faculty early next year. Networking with other nurse anesthesia educators, discussing such issues as the current teaching environment, teaching strategy – even handling student stress – will have a tremendous impact on the teachers and the nurse anesthesia program, says Sharon Hadenfeldt, dean of the School of Nurse Anesthesia.

“Jim always came back from the assembly energized and ready to share what he learned from colleagues around the country,” says Hadenfeldt, who was a student of Jim’s. “There are very few peer groups close at hand, so this was an opportunity to learn, and to share what others were doing in our field.”

Strong program fosters highly qualified health professionals

One thing that Jim wished, was that more of the faculty could attend, because he knew doing so provided immense value to the nurse anesthesia educators – and hence, to future health care providers. But as the program grew, the budget simply wasn’t there for faculty to attend.



Jim Cuddeford, on his retirement day in 2011. Jim was a nurse anesthetist, educator and administrator at The Bryan College of Health Sciences School of Nurse Anesthesia for more than 30 years.

“Among many things, these conferences allow us to have a better conversation about the direction of the program,” she says. “On a day-to-day basis it’s hard to find time where everyone on the faculty can be in the room at once. This is an opportunity to fine tune the program, take a step back and look at long-range plans and goals. These opportunities help us keep current and relevant and keep the program moving forward.”

No doubt Jim, who passed away in October 2016, would be proud that his gift has created this opportunity.

“Jim was a big believer in the benefits of the annual assembly and other development opportunities for educators,” Hadenfeldt says, “and he knew we didn’t have the budget for it. Graduating high-quality nurse anesthetists for the region is our only purpose. Jim absolutely valued producing nurse anesthetists for Nebraska, and supporting educators was one way he worked to achieve that.”