One Couple’s Consuming Passions:

POLITICS AND PARENTING IN OREGON CITY

“Rick and I decided to put SPU in our will so the University can continue making a difference in students’ lives.”

Rebecca “Becky” Zimmerman Thomas ’95 and her husband, Rick, know the inner workings of elections and the legislative process. The couple has energetic dinner-time conversations on politics — that is, when they’re not keeping up with their two young sons.

It wasn’t long ago that Becky went to a White House party while working for Gordon Smith, former United States senator for the state of Oregon. But these days her home and local volunteerism fill her time as she and her husband work to raise Carter, 6, and Blake, 3, in Oregon City, Oregon. “Staying home with my kids is the favorite position that I’ve held,” says Becky.

Despite a demanding and consuming schedule running a growing Northwest consulting firm called Quinn Thomas Public Affairs, Rick identifies his family as priority No. 1. “Even if I have to work late, I’m home for dinner and spend time with the boys before hitting my computer again. I want to build a strong relationship with my kids.”
“Scholarships are very important to SPU students,” says Janie Wurth.

When asked to describe her family of mom, dad, stepdad, and five siblings, Seattle Pacific University sophomore Janie Wurth can do so in three words: “Big, Loving, Supportive.” A favorite memory is of the Wurths gathered around the TV giggling over episodes of “America’s Funniest Home Videos.”

Her family has invested a lot of hours in cheering Janie up the ranks of soccer excellence, including her four years on the high school team and seven winning seasons as a Falcon and is optimistic about the next two. But peer deep into her heart and you’ll find vivid scenes of Africa. With aspirations to one day be a nurse practitioner, two years ago she launched a nonprofit organization with her brother, Michael, called United Students for Africa. They recruit and accompany university students — including some from SPU — on trips to the world’s second most populous continent to distribute donated food, medicine, and medical care.

The thought of one young boy named William sticks with her. He suffered from malaria-caused kidney damage, and she was able to pray with him and comfort him through the hurt. “God cared enough about him to answer our prayers. Simply beautiful,” she says.

The Esther M. Helsel Women’s Soccer Scholarship, along with grants and paid work at Falcon athletics events, is vital to Janie’s reaching her education goals. So is her participation in a campus prayer ministry called Pray4Life, and having the support of a community of believers to hold her accountable.

“Esther was a 1939 Seattle Pacific graduate who taught physical science,” Janie says. “The Helsel scholarship has blessed me.”
Mustering Up Your Will Power

There is a reason that the main estate-planning document used to distribute one’s assets is called a “will.” This single word characterizes the wishes of the deceased. It expresses the intentions, values, and goals of the one making the declaration.

In this important document, you can name as many specific loved ones and charities as you want to receive a final gift, either through a bequest of specific items or dollar amounts, or through percentage shares.

But if you die without a will, you have lost this privilege and abdicated your “will power.” The state you live in will step in to make these determinations for you, and the final distributions may vary vastly from what you might have wished.

After you have made provisions for loved ones in your will, you may consider the joy of giving back through one or more charitable bequests. Charitable bequests make a world of difference for Seattle Pacific University. Each year, the expenses of running the University and providing financial aid to students increases due to competition and inflation. Bequest donors help fill the gap, year after year, between increasing expenses and the revenue received from tuition.

Please consider using your will power to leave a legacy of love and support for the students of SPU. For help with any of your charitable estate plans, please contact us at 206-281-2993.

Next Issue

Next Issue of Significance

In the next issue of Significance we will explore one of the most versatile charitable gift-planning tools in your attorney’s arsenal: the charitable remainder trust. In the past decade, this trust has been steadily gaining in popularity. This vehicle allows individuals to receive a steady income, reduce estate taxes, eliminate capital gains, claim an income tax deduction, and benefit charities instead of the IRS. Does this sound too good to be true? Read more in our June issue!

The SPU Wellspring Society — Cherished Friends

In each issue of Significance you will meet some of Seattle Pacific’s dearest friends: our Wellspring Society members. An individual becomes a Wellspring Society member by planning a future gift to support SPU through a will, trust, annuity, life insurance policy, or retirement plan contribution.

The caring individuals in the Wellspring Society, like Becky and Rick Thomas mentioned in the cover story of this issue of Significance, have been blessed by their affiliation with Seattle Pacific and choose to give back. They want to express their values and make a difference in the lives of future students. And we at SPU are honored to call these thoughtful and generous people friends.

We hope you will consider including SPU in your estate plans — and tell us about it — so we can thank and recognize you as a Wellspring Society member. For more information, please call 206-281-2993.

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