

# Foundation news

## Tool of the trade

NMU premedical graduates get more than a diploma when they cross the stage. Because entering medical school means facing a long road filled with challenges, it has been a tradition at Northern to give these graduates a head start by equipping them with a medical tool so basic that it is easily overlooked: a stethoscope.

Each year, eight to twelve NMU students entering medical school receive the gift of a stethoscope. In the past, the stethoscopes have been paid for out of the annual premedical program operating budget. Now, thanks to the generosity of two NMU premed alums, this tradition of recognition and support will continue for years to come while freeing up money that can be used elsewhere in the premed program.

In 2006, with a gift of \$13,000, alumna **Dr. Jeanne Groos '79 BS** established a fund to pay for the stethoscopes. At the same time, she also established the Physician Alumni Scholarship that helps offset tuition costs for juniors or seniors who are participating in the NMU premedical program. Groos is board certified in pediatrics and currently has a practice with the Ministry Medical Group in Stevens Point, Wis.



Now, the stethoscope has been fully endowed through a gift from Groos' premed classmate, **Dr. Janet Balbierz '80 BS**. Balbierz has donated \$12,000 to the fund to bring it to its endowment level of \$25,000. She practices physical medicine and rehabilitation in Utah.

The Stethoscope Endowment Fund is a unique and important way to support premed graduates, to recognize their efforts and to encourage them in their upcoming endeavors in a way that will reach far beyond our campus into the world of health care and medical research. It is a gift that will be remembered day after day, patient after patient, heartbeat after heartbeat.

## Leading the Parents Fund

**Diane and Greg Besse** of Gladstone have agreed to serve as co-chairs of the NMU Parents Fund. Diane and Greg have two children attending Northern, Gabrielle, a senior, and Cain, a sophomore.

"We were very excited to take an active role in the parents fund" says Diane. "This is a great way for us to contribute to our children's educational success."

For many years, the family has been a part of the NMU community, and they weren't surprised when their kids made the decision to attend NMU. "We have been NMU hockey season ticket holders for many years,"

adds Greg, president and owner of Besse Forest Products Group. "From a young age, our kids were familiar with NMU and the Marquette community. We visited several different colleges in the Midwest, but both Gabrielle and Cain knew Northern was the best fit."



As co-chairs of the fund, the Besses are strong advocates of providing an education that creates

the widest variety of opportunities for NMU students to travel, extend their learning beyond the classroom, explore new experiences and other cultures, develop as citizens and leaders and have the best campus experience possible.

Diane and Greg hope their active role in the parents fund will serve as an example for other NMU parents. "As parents, we can all get involved in a way that is productive for our kids and beneficial to the university. The parents fund is one of the most direct ways to do this."

To date, the parents fund has raised over \$200,000 in pledged gifts and continues to be one of the most successful annual fund-raising programs at NMU.

# Honoring unsung heroes

*While picking up shells on the beach today,  
I found a fragment of what must have been a magnificent conch...  
an exquisite shard...a remnant of a masterpiece.*

*Holding it gently, I tried to imagine the part as the whole.*

*What it was like at its best, before it was broken by time and the churning sea.*

*It must have been an elegant creature, a prime example of its species.*

*I thought of my mother, who was, before she was broken by time and degenerative  
disease, a prime example of our species.*

*Those of us who remember the bright, gracious, lovely lady that she was at her best,  
are grateful when you, who know only the remaining fragment of herself,  
handle her gently and with respect, as a once magnificent shell.*

**John Argeropoulos '60 BA** quotes from this poem by Phyllis Yingling in explaining what helped inspire a scholarship he and his wife, **Mary '68 MA**, created to support caregivers at the nursing home where his mother resided. "The fact that the Mather staff was able to nurture my mother for 10 long years of deteriorating health (she was almost 100 when she died), speaks volumes about their dedication, compassion and quality care, especially when she had reverted back to her native language (Greek)," John says. "But they never gave up on her."

The couple established the James and Barbara Argeropoulos Scholarship, in honor of John's parents, to support health professionals at Mather Nursing Home in Ishpeming. The awards are given to employees or their dependents

who are studying in a care-related field at NMU.

"We are very grateful to the important service that these unsung heroes are providing to the frail elderly in our communities," he says. "They come in and do such difficult work day after day, year after year. Many make minimum wage, with few benefits. Yet they serve others because they see it as a privilege to do so."

The Argeropouloses also help fund in-service support and

self-renewal training for the staffs of all nursing homes, hospice programs and home care workers in Marquette County.

"What would really be wonderful," John says, "is the possibility that other alumni might be inspired to contribute to the Foundation fund and by pooling our resources designate scholarships for caregivers at other Marquette County nursing homes or facilities where they may have a parent, grandparent or spouse—and allow them to benefit from a Northern education just as we have—while thanking them for the care they provide."



*The Emericks celebrating their 50th anniversary in the Swiss Alps.*

## Book smart

**Most people**, at some point in their lives, have found themselves in need due to circumstances beyond their control. This is particularly true for students who often pursue their education on a shoestring budget.

With this in mind, Lon and Lynn Emerick are re-establishing the Emerick Book Fund that they originally founded in 2002. The fund was started to assist students who, through unusual circumstances, find themselves without money to buy their textbooks.

In a note to award recipients, the Emericks state, "When we were students and later in first jobs, there were people who saw we were working hard, but struggling, and gave us an encouraging word, a bag of groceries, an invitation to a meal. That feeling of support, and the knowledge that someone believed we were worth helping out, has lasted with us over many years. All we were asked, and all we ask of you, is that you 'pay it forward.' Someday—when you are able—find a way to help out someone else."

There is no cap on the number of awards, which do not count against financial aid. Money awarded is put on account at the NMU Bookstore.

Lon is an NMU professor emeritus and the couple run a publishing company.



*Mary, Barbara and John Argeropoulos, celebrating Barbara's 99th birthday at the nursing home where she received gentle care for over 10 years.*