



Foundations may be valued by their bottom lines, but never discount the people factor.

An nervous young man, not yet comfortable with his recently minted credentials as a fundraiser, was convinced that his first pitch to a prospective donor had failed; the lady's demeanor had been totally noncommittal. But as he rose to go, she handed him a \$5,000 check for geology scholarships. Moreover, at her death 20 years later, she left the University of Oklahoma Foundation Inc. an unrestricted \$1 million endowment, which has been used over and over, invested and reinvested, the income used as seed money or advanced to facilitate construction and then repaid, until today, after all the expenditures, the principal is four times larger than the original.

The year was 1948, the young man was R. Boyd Gunning, the Foundation's first paid executive; the lady's name was Junia Brown, of Tulsa; and this anecdote has been told a hundred times as a classic illustration, in human terms, of what the Foundation is all about. The story is by no means unique. Substitute the modern-day Doris Bratton for Junia Brown—or Freda Plummer or Ruby Grant or any one of hundreds more. Or recast the tale from individual philanthropist to private foundation and enter the name Sarkeys or Noble or Presbyterian or McCasland or Merrick or Schusterman, to name a few, each backed by the human element, people who recognize an opportunity to benefit the University and go for it with the resources at their disposal.

The article on Page 10—"A Foundation for the Future"—focuses on projects, organization and bottom lines, remarkable growth and accomplishment measured in assets and expenditures. But to the non-fiscal among us, the most interesting aspect of the Foundation's history is the thousands of little chapters written by its donors. Who are these folks who

give their money away? And why to the University by way of the Foundation?

One such person is Eva Trueblood Hewett, who after her husband Merritt's death established a charitable remainder unitrust to support the disciplines they studied at OU. The Hewetts' only son, Owen, was born with cerebral palsy, but through his parents' tireless efforts, he was able to overcome his disability, earn his OU degree in mathematics and today heads his own company. The invested



The Foundation Building at 100 Timberdell Road was built with trustee contributions and deeded to the University.

unitrust provides lifetime income to Eva and then to Owen before the principal passes to the Foundation.

Evelyna Honeyman, a gracious, soft-spoken Texas resident, drops by occasionally to see the results of her latest benefaction and meet the students and faculty recipients—and it is difficult to determine who enjoys the visits more. Income from her unrestricted endowment has sent a student musical group to Europe, inaugurated the Faculty Tribute Day, funded the Centennial video, helped renovate and expand Boyd House, installed campus architectural lighting, provided electronic equipment to the School of Music and created a new anteroom outside Bizzell Memorial Library's Peggy V. Helmerich Great Reading Room.

When the Neustadt sisters—Nancy

Barcelo, Susan Schwartz and Kathy Hankin—endowed a prize for contemporary children's literature, under the auspices of *World Literature Today*, they became third-generation OU philanthropists. Their grandfather and father, Walter Sr. and Walter Jr., were Foundation trustees; their grandparents' gift purchased land for Max Westheimer Field; grandmother Doris endowed *WLT*'s Neustadt International Prize for Literature; parents Walter Jr. and Dolores established a *WLT* professorship; and the family provided the major gift for the library's Doris W. Neustadt Wing.

Family participation is part of the history of the Foundation's board, where trustee contributions are not merely monetary. Unlike corporate boards and many charitable entities, the Foundation's trustees are unpaid—highly qualified volunteers who are themselves donors. They bring to the table extensive experience in law, banking, investments, civic and charitable organizations and other professions. The time they expend on

Foundation affairs are taken from their own pursuits, gifts beyond price.

Why do people give to the University? Perhaps because of the alma mater factor, pride and lasting affection reinforced by memories and ongoing involvement. Perhaps because they like what they see happening and want to be part of the action.

Why do they give through the Foundation? Perhaps because the Foundation, by structure, expertise and long experience, is best prepared to safeguard their contributions and carry out their intent. Perhaps because the staff and governing board of the Foundation care as much about the institution as donors do. Or perhaps because their gifts to the Foundation are not just checks to be deposited but also personal chapters in an ongoing story that has no end.

—CJB