Donors Celebrating 55th UMaine Class Reunion to Name Engineering Building

Skowhegan natives E. James “Jim” Ferland and Eileen P. Ferland are the formerly anonymous donors whose $10 million investment will help construct the Engineering Education and Design Center at the University of Maine.

The new facility will be named in honor of the couple.

The announcement was made by University of Maine Foundation president and CEO Jeffery Mills at the UMaine Alumni Association 2019 Reunion dinner Sept. 12 on campus, where Jim Ferland was celebrating his 55th class reunion.

The E. James and Eileen P. Ferland Engineering Education and Design Center (EEDC) will house the Biomedical Engineering Program and Department of Mechanical Engineering, as well as teaching laboratories for mechanical engineering technology, and provide space for all UMaine engineering majors to complete their senior capstone projects.

The Ferlands’ gift in March 2018 helped the UMaine Foundation set a record for giving totals — $17.4 million in private support from more than 350 individuals, corporations and foundations. More than $66 million of the $75 to $77 million project total has now been raised.

According to Mills, the Ferlands’ investment gave the EEDC fundraising campaign momentum, inspiring others to believe that “together, this project will be accomplished.”

“We are pleased to make a contribution toward improving the infrastructure at UMaine, and hope others will be encouraged to join in bringing this important project to the finish line,” said Jim Ferland.
Jacob Cyr ’22
Economics major
Class of 1958 Scholarship
“I decided to major in economics because I’ve always been interested in math, and I’ve been interested in the psychology of why we buy things, and how people interact in the economy. Thank you to the Class of 1958 for this scholarship. It’s always been a dream of mine to go to UMaine and follow in my uncle’s and grandma’s footsteps. The money will help a lot — I’ve been trying to get out of college debt-free, and have been saving up all summer to help put that toward my education. This money means so much — it will be so helpful in paying for my education, so thank you.”

Jacob’s dream of attending the University of Maine is attainable through his effort, and the extra support he gets from scholarships.

Amelia Sullivan ’21
Food Science & Human Nutrition major
UMACSM, Inc. Robert H. Patten Scholarship
“When I came to UMaine, I knew right away I wanted to study nutrition, but I didn’t know what I wanted to do specifically. Over the past few years [at UMaine] I’ve decided I would really like to become a registered dietitian. I would love to start out in a hospital, but I think long-term, I want to have my own private practice, but that’s very long-term ahead. It really means a lot to me to get these scholarships and be able to come here. To not have to focus on the money aspect of it, just to come and focus on my education, and not have to have that burden. Thank you so much.”

Amelia credits the scholarship support she receives with her ability to attend the University of Maine.

Scholarships Have a Big Impact

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Black Bear Road Trip
Annual Red Sox Event and Game
Date to be announced soon
Fort Myers, Florida

Charles F. Allen Legacy Society Luncheon
May 20, 2020
McIntire Room, Buchanan Alumni House
By invitation, for members of the society

Maine Day of Giving
An annual online giving day. Support what you love about UMaine.
umainefoundation.org/mainedayofgiving
April 29, 2020

Reunion 2020
A Lifetime of Investing Leads to a Significant Legacy

Marguerite Picard lived a very simple life and was a very astute investor. When she passed in 2016 at the age of 100, her estate plans included significant gifts to several organizations which were meaningful to her. As a University of Maine graduate from the class of 1938 and a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority, UMaine held a special place in her heart. Along with support for her sorority, Miss Picard established, through her estate, a $1.8 million endowed scholarship, The Marguerite M. Picard Scholarship Fund, to benefit deserving students at her alma mater. Her education in romance languages had been important to her along with a lifelong interest in language and liberal arts and sciences.

Miss Picard was employed by the State of Maine for 34 years. When she retired she was a research analyst at the Maine Department of Manpower Affairs.

Miss Picard’s scholarship fund has become her perpetual legacy. Each year she will be fondly remembered by UMaine students who receive much-needed financial support to study, like Miss Picard, at the University of Maine. Those students will earn their degrees, many may be motivated to support future UMaine students, and the circle of education and philanthropy will continue to grow. We can only imagine how many future generations will be changed by Miss Picard’s generosity.

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University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy thanked the Ferlands and other UMaine alumni class leaders for their contributions, and also recognized the Maine Legislature’s critical $50 million investment in this important facility that will benefit Maine and its future workforce.

“The Engineering Education and Design Center will transform engineering education at UMaine and for the state, fostering an even more collaborative community of learners, teachers and partners,” said Ferrini-Mundy. “This new facility will help fulfill a critical need by educating engineers for Maine and beyond, and it aligns with the University of Maine System plan for research and development.”

Jim Ferland received a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering at UMaine in 1964. Jim and Eileen split their time between homes in Florida and Maine and enjoy boating and traveling with their daughter and four grandchildren.

“UMaine needs to produce more engineers to solve our world’s most challenging problems,” said UMaine College of Engineering Dean Dana Humphrey. “The Ferland Engineering Education and Design Center will give UMaine the capacity to educate up to 3,000 engineering students, to meet the demand for our graduates from companies in Maine and beyond.”

Currently, UMaine engineering graduates have a 99% placement rate in careers or graduate school.

Groundbreaking for the Ferland Engineering Education and Design Center is planned for spring 2020, with anticipated completion in 2022.

Fundraising for the Ferland EEDC project continues, including opportunities to name spaces in the facility. More information is available on the University of Maine Foundation website, umainefoundation.org/eedc.

The EEDC project is part of UMaine’s $200 million Vision for Tomorrow comprehensive campaign, which has raised over $182 million, led by the University of Maine Foundation.

The General Endowment investment portfolio of the Foundation generated modest gains during our fiscal year ended June 30, 2019, returning a net +2.7% versus policy benchmark of 3.7%. Returns were led by the portfolio’s U.S. Equity (+9.3%), Private Investments (+13.6%), and Fixed Income (+5.5%) allocations. Equity market performance during the fiscal year was uneven across geographies, with strong returns in the U.S., but mixed results internationally with our Non-U.S. Developed Equity returning +8.1% and Emerging Markets -1.1% compared to their respective benchmarks of 1.1% and 1.2%.

For the calendar year through August 31, 2019, the portfolio has generated a solid +9.0% gain, reflecting a strong market recovery after a volatile end to calendar year 2018. Returns have been positive across all categories. The portfolio’s U.S. Equity investments have led the year-to-date advance (+17.2%), while gains in Developed ex-U.S. Equity (+9.1%) and Emerging Markets Equity (+2.5%) have been modest by comparison. The Hedge Funds (+5.0%) and Fixed Income (+5.8%) allocations have steadily contributed returns. The portfolio’s +9.0% return, however, lagged the +10.8% return for the policy benchmark.

A decade into a U.S. bull market, bouts of volatility have started to emerge with more frequency, underscoring the importance of maintaining portfolio diversification at this stage of the cycle. The Foundation believes the portfolio is positioned to take advantage of opportunities in areas that may continue to face some near-term headwinds, but offer superior long-term return prospects based on cheaper valuations (e.g., Emerging Markets and Developed ex-U.S. Equities). The Foundation’s growing Private Investments portfolio also provides exposure to a differentiated investment opportunity set.

The General Endowment Portfolio was $227.1 million at June 30, up from $220.7 million a year ago and distributed $9.9 million in support of the University of Maine. Total endowment supporting the University of Maine, including the endowments managed by UMaine System, UMaine Pulp & Paper Foundation, and the Maine 4-H Foundation, was $338.2 million at June 30.
Blaine set a challenge for his classmates to increase the Class of 1959 Scholarship as much as possible by the time their 60th reunion came around. At the time, in June 2016, the principal of the scholarship was $31,777.30. Blaine generously offered to match all gifts to the Class of 1959 Scholarship dollar for dollar up to a maximum of $50,000. Not to be outshined, Class of 1959 alumni rose to the challenge: many classmates have donated to the fund since July 1, 2016. Class of 1959 President Don Cookson has been instrumental in the fundraising effort, giving generously himself as well as supporting and encouraging his fellow class members. Thanks to the gifts from classmates and the matching gift from Blaine, the scholarship principal now exceeds $130,000.

The Class of 1959 Scholarship gives first preference to descendants of the Class of 1959 until 2030. After 2030, or if no descendants of the Class of 1959 apply, a second preference shall be given to nontraditional students who demonstrate financial need.

The Foundation offers sincere gratitude to Blaine, Don, and everyone from the class of 1959 for meeting the challenge and for their commitment to making a University of Maine education achievable for generations to come.

Here is the sample language for making a bequest to the University of Maine Foundation:

“I give and bequeath to the UNIVERSITY OF MAINE FOUNDATION for the benefit of the University of Maine:

the sum of $ _________________;
or
______ percent of my estate;
or
the property described herein
to establish/add to the __________________ Fund.

The principal is to be endowed and the distributions, as established by the University of Maine Foundation Board of Directors, shall be used for __________________.”