

January 6, 1998

## **DAHLS ESTABLISH FUND FOR ANTHROPOLOGY**

LAWRENCE - An award-winning University of Kansas professor and a retired KU physician, together with their family, have donated \$12,400 to establish a fund for undergraduate studies in anthropology, the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences announced today.

The gift is from Nancy A. Dahl, professor of physiology and cell biology and winner of the Chancellors Club Career Teaching Award in 1995; her husband, Dr. Dennis R. Dahl, a retired KU health center physician; their son, Julian Scott Dahl and his wife, Christina L. Dahl; and their daughter, Kathleen R. Nuckolls, and her husband, Scott K. Nuckolls. The fund is in memory of Nancy Dahl's mother, Berneice DeSelms Fort.

Their donation of stock endowed the Dennis R. and Nancy Ann Dahl Fund for Undergraduate Studies in Anthropology at the KU Endowment Association. The fund will be used in perpetuity at the discretion of the Department of Anthropology to support and encourage students. Possible uses include awards for books, library or field research, or financial aid for students who are the first in their family to attend college.

Although the Dahls have dedicated their careers to the biological and medical sciences, anthropology has been a lifelong interest for both. In fact, their enthusiasm was so great that it inspired their daughter, Kathleen, to pursue bachelor's and master's degrees in anthropology at KU.

Nancy Dahl recalled that her interest began in high school, when she became enthralled with a book, "Digging in the Southwest."

"I began to buy every 25-cent archaeology book offered by the student book club," she said. "I was hooked right away. Now, my professional interest is how the brain works, and I believe part of that is to find out what people are thinking, to understand conscious awareness. To do that, it's extremely important to understand other cultures."

Dennis Dahl also became interested in anthropology at an early age, when he discovered a stack of old National Geographic magazines in a grade school classroom.

Together, the couple has explored many lands and cultures through extensive traveling and reading, including trips to Mesa Verde National Park in the southwestern United States and to England, Germany and the Czech Republic.

"Learning new things has always enriched our lives," Nancy Dahl said. "It's our hope that this gift will help many students grow in their field and develop a similar passion for learning."

Sally Frost Mason, liberal arts and sciences dean, said: "Nancy and Dennis never cease to amaze me. They have so many interests and have been so supportive of KU and our many programs, and this is just one further example of their enthusiasm and generosity. This gift will be greatly appreciated by students of anthropology. That Nancy and Dennis would choose to find ways to support student activities also comes as no surprise, given the long-term career commitments that each of them has made to KU students for many years."

Biology and anthropology are not the only interests the Dahls share. They are natives of Colby and the descendants of early homesteaders. Those historic roots have fueled avid exploration of Kansas and prairie life.

Though residents of the same small town, the couple did not know each other until they met at an Hour Dance for scholarship hall students at KU. They married in 1952 amid final exams and continued their academic studies throughout the early years of their marriage.

Nancy Dahl graduated from KU with a bachelor's degree in microbiology in 1956 and a doctorate in physiology in 1962. After postdoctoral work in England, she began teaching at KU. In 1992, she became a full professor in the Department of Physiology and Cell Biology. Her work includes nearly 40 scientific papers and presentations about her research on the eye and energy flow in nerve tissue. She also has served as chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and of the University Senate Executive Committee.

Dennis Dahl received his bachelor's degree in German in 1956. He completed medical school at KU in 1961 and received a doctorate in comparative biochemistry and physiology in 1963. He also did post-doctoral work in England. After a research assistantship in the KU Department of Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology, he completed his medical internship and joined the medical staff at the Watkins Health Center at KU. He retired in 1995.

Longtime supporters of KU, the Dahls have given for many activities on campus, including the study of biological sciences and the performing arts. Nancy and Dennis Dahl are members of the KU Alumni Association; the Chancellors Club, KU's major-donor organization; and the Elizabeth Watkins Society, which recognizes donors of planned gifts.

Today Nancy Dahl continues to teach full time and is completing illustrations for a 13-chapter section about the nervous system for a medical physiology text. Dennis Dahl enjoys many retirement activities, including reading, needlepoint, restoring antique horse carriages and computer projects with the KU Retirees Club. The Dahls are members of the Lawrence Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, the Lawrence Civic Choir and the League of Women Voters.

The Dahls have two children. Julian lives in Lawrence and is married to Christina Kubler, who graduated from KU with a degree in French in 1988. Kathleen, who graduated from KU with a degree in anthropology in 1994 and a master's degree in systematics and ecology in 1997, is married to Scott Nuckolls, who graduated from KU with a bachelor's degree in anthropology in 1997. The couple lives in Chicago, where Kathleen is working on a degree in evolutionary biology at the University of Chicago. Nancy Dahl's mother also graduated from KU.

"Dahl's establish fund for Anthropology" 6 January 1998. 20 July 2012.  
< <http://www.news.ku.edu/1998/98N/JanNews/Jan06/dahl.html> >

The gift will be administered by the KU Endowment Association, an independent, nonprofit organization serving as the official fund-raising and fund-management foundation for the university. Founded in 1891, the Endowment Association is the oldest and one of the largest foundations of its type at a public university in the United States.