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Office of University Communications

August 7, 2014

Frank R. Nanney Leaves Legacy of Support and Generosity

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University mourns the loss of former trustee and longtime donor Frank R. Nanney, who passed away Wednesday, Aug. 6 at Rutherford Regional Medical Center at the age of 93. Nanney was known for his generosity to the University in both service and notable gifts, including lead funding to his namesake building, Frank Nanney Hall.

Frank R. Nanney (1920
- 2014)

A Rutherford County native, Nanney served Gardner-Webb as a two-term trustee after nearly 50 years with Stonecutter Mills Corporation in Spindale, N.C. He served in the Army during World War II before teaching algebra, chemistry, biology and directing the band at Tri High School in Rutherfordton, N.C. He attended the Round Hill Baptist Church in Union Mills, N.C., where he served as deacon, music leader, Sunday school teacher and church trustee. Nanney also published a book tracing his lineage from 12th-century Wales to North Carolina.

Nanney's total lifetime giving to Gardner-Webb surpassed \$1 million, earning him a place in the President's Roundtable Society and solidifying his legacy as one of the most generous friends in Gardner-Webb history. His most notable gift, a lead donation to Frank Nanney Hall, became the home of the Noel Center for Disability Services and the Social Sciences department.

"Mr. Nanney said at the groundbreaking ceremony that he wanted his gift to make a difference," said Cheryl Potter, associate dean of the Noel Center for Disability Services. "He made a choice to invest not in a building, but in the education of students. His gift demonstrates his belief that all people, regardless of their differences or challenges, have a right to a quality education in a Christian environment."

During a 2007 speech, Nanney spoke of his conviction to give to the Noel Center for Disability Services that came shortly after an encounter with a blind woman on campus. "I immediately knew that was it. That was what I wanted to be remembered for at the University and in the community," he said. "To assist handicapped students get an education was certainly 'if you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

"He'd never say it, so I will," said GWU President Frank Bonner in a recent interview. "When Gardner-Webb's family tree is traced, Frank Nanney will find his name carved close to the root."

Nanney is survived by four brothers and two sisters. The family will receive friends from 1-2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 9, prior to a funeral service at Round Hill Baptist Church in Union Mills at 3 p.m. Friends of Nanney can send flowers, condolences, and share memories or tributes at mcmahansfuneralhome.com.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).