

Alumni Stories...

St. Peter's College Alumnus Feels Need to Give Back

When planning his \$1 million gift to St. Peter's College (SPC), Class of 1950 alumnus Paul J. Hoenmans, retired director and president of Exxon Mobil, remembered what a difference a quality education and supportive community made to his life.

"I grew up in Pilger, where there was no high school. I wanted to get a Grade 12 diploma from a recognized school, and one of the best in the province, even then, was St. Peter's College. Even though there was no money to go to school, the Abbot at the time said, 'Come here anyway, and when you have the where-with-all, I know you'll pay us back.' And that's what I want to do."

"Looking back," added Mr. Hoenmans, "I really had my moral compass set at St. Peter's College, based on the experiences I absorbed, not in the classroom necessarily, but living in this community and seeing the examples that the Benedictine monks and their support staff provided for me and my fellow students."

Mr. Hoenmans believes his teachers didn't do it for fame and fortune; they did it out of love for their neighbours and for the people who surrounded them.

"Ultimately, the atmosphere at St. Peter's set a way of life that I would not have achieved had I not come here. For that, I'm eternally grateful."

Mr. Hoenmans went to SPC for two years, got his diploma, went on to university, became an engineer, and then entered the world of business and commerce. Some 58 years later, he came back to help launch the College's *Key to Success* Campaign by announcing his donation to help continue "the tremendous progress that the school has made."

Established in 1921, SPC was a boys' boarding school when Mr. Hoenmans was a student. Today, it is a recognized post-secondary institution affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan where its past and recent alumni are making a difference in communities throughout the world.

"Our challenge and opportunity, right now, is to stay on the forefront while maintaining our traditions of service and quality education and research for the people of Saskatchewan," said Lisa Laskowski, SPC director of development. "Mr. Hoenmans' inspirational gift will help us do that."

"We are incredibly grateful to Mr. Hoenmans for donating \$1 million to establish the Paul J. Hoenmans Bursary and to renew the college building where he once studied," added Laskowski. "His belief in our business plan and his generous contribution will make an outstanding difference to St. Peter's College students and the communities we serve."

In recognition of Mr. Hoenmans' donation, SPC is naming part of its main teaching building *The Paul J. Hoenmans Community Resource Centre*. The Centre will include the College's library, Conexus Community Art Gallery, computer labs, as well as resource and conference rooms.

Mr. Hoenmans' planned gift was the catalyst for many of the latest contributions to SPC. Coupled with the recently announced \$3 million provincial infrastructure investment and \$1 million commitment from SPC alumnus Hank B. Swartout, retired chairman of the Board and CEO, Precision Drilling Inc., Mr. Hoenmans' investment will help SPC move forward with its \$15 million plan. The focus of this plan is to renovate SPC's buildings and enhance its university programming to meet the needs of future students and the community.

"The College is starting a new phase in its existence, and I can't help but say the mantle of responsibility is now thrown to us," Mr. Hoenmans told the crowd of alumni, business, government and community leaders, faculty, staff and students at SPC's fundraising campaign launch.

“I hope that we will do as well in providing opportunities for the generations of today and tomorrow as our forefathers did when they established this College. They did a marvelous job; they sacrificed and it was successful.”

“Imagine what St. Peter’s will look like 10 years, 15 years from now if we all do our bit,” he added thoughtfully. “I’m resolved to do mine, I hope you will all help.”



Lisa Laskowski, Director of Development (Left) and Dr. Gerald Junk, Co-Chair SPC Board of Governors, (Right) present Paul Hoenmans with a painting of the College in recognition of his donation and support.

Photo by Reflections by Richard