



By Tim Linscott

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Marvin Stumpf stands in the middle of a field just outside of Grant. With his hands in his overall pockets he surveys the area and with a deep breath says, 'This is beautiful land.'

He stops to turn one last time to look at the land as he heads off to finish his work for the day.

"This gift is not about me at all. This is about honoring my family and furthering the progress of the university. And to God be the Glory," Stumpf says of his donation to the University of Nebraska.

University officials announced on Monday that Stumpf has donated 640 acres of land with an appraised value of over \$2 million plus a \$1 million outright gift for the establishment of a wheat crop research center and the Pearl C. Pogue Peterson Stumpf Educational Center.

Ronnie Green, University of Nebraska vice president and Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Harlan Vice Chancellor, said Marvin Stumpf's rich and active legacy will live on through these gifts, providing researchers, faculty and students the opportunity to make new discoveries on his land.

"We are excited about the additional opportunities this donation creates for the wheat industry in Nebraska and even more excited about the future impact our partnership will have on our state, region and world, since as much as 50 percent of Nebraska's wheat is annually exported to international markets," Green said. "The wheat industry is big business in Nebraska, with between 65 and 75 million bushels grown each year."

Archie Clutter, dean of the Agricultural Research Division at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said, "UNL's robust wheat and cropping-systems research programs will grow even stronger with the help of this generous gift from the Stumpf family. This Perkins County location will add important representation of high-plains, semi-arid production to the UNL system of integrated research and allow accelerated progress in the development and application of new plant science biotechnologies."

Stumpf feels passionate about honoring his loved ones through this donation.

"You have to take your family's name off of a piece of land when they are not here anymore

and that is a hard thing for me, and I assume for others, to do,” Stumpf said. “I have the opportunity to put their name back on this piece of land and that means a lot to me.”

Stumpf noted that without the help of his grandfather, Henry J. Stumpf (and grandmother Margaret) and father, Henry J. Stumpf II (and mother Darlene), he would not have been given the chance to make farming his livelihood.

“They made the sacrifice and the hard work. They earned this, let’s put their name back on it,” Stumpf said. “I get to do something very few people get to do.”

The ground will be named the Henry J. Stumpf farm, after Stumpf’s grandfather and father.

The land is located just outside of Grant. Stumpf recalls his father would say that particular piece of land was ‘in the shadow of the elevator.’ The land donated includes one irrigated circle and three dryland quarters.

The family’s use of dryland cropping techniques, combined with organic farming experience, are the tangible results of their willingness to experiment with new ideas while using the land to its fullest potential, according to UNL officials.

Stumpf explained future plans for the education center is to house the Perkins County Extension office, which would relocate from the courthouse. The building will be named for his late wife, Pearl, and may include several unique features, such as an art gallery.

Pearl was a painter and around 50 pieces of her work could adorn the building in an art gallery area that will also feature some of his grandfather and father’s items as well.

“I have some say in some of the decisions and I intend to take advantage of that whenever I can,” Stumpf said, adding that his intentions and those of the university are very close. “I am really happy to preserve my wife’s paintings.”

Stumpf wants to honor not only his grandfather, father and wife, but her late husbands, Sam Peterson and John Pogue and Pearl’s two sons, Johnny Marvin and Johnny May Pogue.

Stumpf said future plans for the building include a genealogy area for families to do research. Ground will be broken once building designs are agreed upon by all parties.

Starting this process eight years ago, Stumpf has been mum about his decision until all details were finalized.

A clause Stumpf wanted added to the land donation deal with the university was that other families could come forward and donate money to have buildings put up to honor loved ones.

“There are other buildings that are needed out there and so much potential,” Stumpf said. “I hope people take advantage of this. I want this to be everyone’s place, where people can donate money and honor their families and benefit the university and everyone.”

His hope is to make this a drawing point to the county and improve not only education at the university, but give many opportunities to people in Perkins County.

“I really hope everyone takes advantage of it and everyone out there will own as much as of the section as I will,” Stumpf said. “It is going to produce whatever people want it to, individually. It will benefit everyone if they are willing to take advantage of it.”

The university has been a tremendous help in the process and Stumpf said, ‘I will never be able to re-pay them for honoring my family, no matter what I have done or will do.’

He hopes that this donation will honor his loved ones and is just the beginning of some amazing things for Perkins County.

“This is the beginning of a new beginning,” Stumpf said.