Dear Friends,

I hope this communication finds you and your family safe, healthy, and in good spirits. The past few months have been a tumultuous time for our state, nation, and world. Here at home on the Illinois State campus, we have been meeting daily to develop plans and strategies to support learning and teaching under these uncertain circumstances.

Over the last several weeks, working from home has given me moments to reflect upon the time that has passed with warmth and gratitude. It has been seven years since we launched Redbirds Rising: The Campaign for Illinois State. Since the start of the campaign, more than 55,000 donors have come together to elevate scholarship, leadership, and innovation to reinforce the University’s critical priorities and empower our students.

Every gift made during the Redbirds Rising campaign has moved us higher. Every donor has played a part in providing our students the academic foundation they need to become world-changers. Redbirds Rising has truly been a collaborative effort.

Illinois State’s success is guided by our values that are learning and scholarship, diversity and inclusion, respect, collaboration, individualized attention, civic engagement, and integrity. These values set us on a course for excellence, one that is regularly bolstered through private support from donors like you.

Our work provides for the future of Illinois State, but we don’t need to wait to experience the impact of these contributions. There are myriad examples of how philanthropic support is already at work on campus:

- A $1 million gift from College of Business Professor Carson Varner and Professor Emerita Iris Varner, the largest faculty cash gift in Illinois State’s history, is enhancing Illinois State’s long-standing commitment to international business education. The newly opened Carson and Iris Varner International Business Institute welcomes visiting executives from around the world who mentor and encourage our students;
- A $12 million gift from Wonsook Kim ’75, M.A. ’76, M.F.A. ’78, honorary doctorate of arts ’19, and her husband Thomas Clement continues to transform fine arts education at Illinois State.

As proud as I am of Illinois State and the successful Redbirds Rising campaign, the credit is yours. Your generosity allows the momentum to continue. Your support is critical to Illinois State’s students and their futures. I am thoroughly convinced that with the work of extraordinary Redbirds like you, we will emerge from this current crisis even stronger than before.

Be well, stay healthy, and GO YOU REDBIRDS!

Larry H. Dietz
President
In times such as these where we are faced with daily uncertainty, community matters more than ever. As we navigate the challenging road ahead, we do so together. It is during such seasons of difficulty that the Redbird community shines—proving to be compassionate, resilient, and generous. Knowing we have dedicated alumni and friends like you, who embody the spirit of philanthropy, is humbling and inspiring. Thank you for your support of ISU when we have needed you the most. Together we will get through this, and the University will thrive as We Gladly Learn and Teach.

As the Redbirds Rising campaign concludes on June 30, the level of private gift support committed to strengthen and advance the ISU experience for our students, faculty, and staff leaves us tremendously optimistic about our future. I am proud to share that over the course of the campaign, you have stepped up to position Illinois State for success by committing more than $176 million to elevate scholarship, leadership, and innovation throughout campus.

Our second annual Birds Give Back event on February 27 was another record-breaking success. ISU’s very own giving day yielded $1,118,734 raised from 2,188 gifts. We could not be more grateful for those who participated.

During these last few months, we’ve challenged alumni and friends to contribute to the COVID-19 Redbirds Response Fund to help students experiencing job loss, homelessness, food insecurities, and financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.

While our current circumstances may not be what we or any of our students were expecting, the future is ours to determine. Together we will succeed. Your investment in Illinois State allows our students to stay strong and steadfast, and your commitment helps ensure the University remains a leader in higher education for years to come. When facing adversity, Redbirds keep rising!

With gratitude,

Pat Vickerman
Vice President of University Advancement

Follow Giving at Illinois State on Facebook at ISUGiving or visit RedbirdsRising.IllinoisState.edu to track campaign progress.
You’ve given me a life-changing experience. Thank you.”

The Matt Busey Endowed Scholarship made it possible for international business and marketing major Kamya Monga to study abroad in Panama.

“Donors like you are the reason I am succeeding at Illinois State.”

Criminal justice major Jessica Irwin is passionate about working with youth in the court system. The CEFCU Member Appreciation Scholarship recipient is helping this mom of two achieve her professional goals.

“Switching careers seemed impossible just a year ago, but now I’m pursuing my dream of becoming a teacher.”

Josiah Davidson is a firefighter turned education student. Thanks to the R. Douglas and Janice Luecke Irvine Scholarship in Education, Davidson can work less and study more.

“I hope to one day have an impact on my students just as my teachers and family have done for me.”

Faith Fosco ’19, a recipient of the Sarah Hazel Buck Scholarship, is turning childhood challenges into purpose by becoming a special education teacher.

“Because of you, I’m achieving my goals.”

A Friends of the Arts Scholarship enabled Max Jones to invest in software specific to his arts technology major. Now he stays busy bringing music to the Bloomington-Normal community.

“I am where I am today because of your generosity.”

Glory Igharo ’19 dreams of working for a non-governmental organization and starting a food pantry in her home country of Nigeria. The economics and technology master’s graduate is on her way thanks to the Dr. Judy Smithson Scholarship.

To hear more about the students featured above, read their stories at Giving.IllinoisState.edu/Impact.
James Ronald Beales Leaves a Legacy

Frank Chiodo ’51, M.S. ’59, shares his memories of James Ronald Beales ’54, M.S. ’59. Beales was inducted into the ISU Athletics Percy Family Hall of Fame in 1977. He lettered in football, wrestling, and track and field. A $1.4 million gift from the estate of Beales will support the programs, services, and initiatives of Illinois State University’s Alumni Engagement department. In February, Illinois State’s Board of Trustees announced that the Alumni Engagement offices in the Alumni Center will be renamed the Ron and Kathleen Beales Alumni Engagement Suite to recognize and express gratitude for Beales’ legacy gift.

Ron and I were close friends—brothers. I met him in January 1948. Ron’s dad was a pipefitter, so Ron did a pipefitting apprenticeship his first semester after high school. Ron decided he didn’t want to be a pipefitter the rest of his life, so he came to Illinois State instead. Ron lost his father at a young age, so ISU Athletics became his family. Coach Edwin Struck once told me that Ron could have played any position on the football team, including mine. And I was the quarterback. Ron was a great guy, and if he was on your side, you were in business.

Ron Beales (right), with Frank Chiodo

Visionary gift uplifts the democratic ideal

I’ve always felt strongly about giving people a helping hand. In my career, I saw first-hand how smart students just needed access to opportunities. It’s something I believe in wholeheartedly, providing opportunity to all. Illinois State is a wonderful institution that upholds this same democratic ideal. My hope is that the scholarship will create leaders who want to pay it forward by advocating for others.

Lynda Irvin comments on her decision to commit a $500,000 planned gift to the Irvin Family Scholarship Fund in the College of Education’s Department of Educational Administration and Foundation. The scholarship benefits doctoral candidates going into P-12 systems who are committed to social justice. Irvin held many jobs during her career, including teacher, principal, and superintendent, but it is the decade she spent working for Illinois State’s partnership with the Gates Foundation that she calls “the best 10 years of my life.” This affinity for Illinois State, coupled with a desire to promote equity within the field of education, made giving to Illinois State an easy decision.

Lynda Irvin
A $2.5 million gift from the estate of Dr. Fred Gletten ’71 will establish the Dr. Fred Gletten Endowed Chair in Biological Sciences. Gletten’s gift, made during the Redbirds Rising campaign, is the largest gift to the School of Biological Sciences in Illinois State history.

“We’re honored Dr. Gletten chose to continue his legacy at Illinois State by providing for an endowed chair in his estate,” President Larry Dietz said. “Dr. Gletten’s memory will live on through the students who learn, grow, and engage in transformational research in Illinois State’s biology school.”

Gletten came to Illinois State in 1968 on a football scholarship. He majored in biology, and initially aspired to become a high school biology teacher and football coach. After graduating with a degree in biological sciences, Gletten completed a master’s degree in microbiology at Howard University.

While pursuing the degree, Gletten met Dr. Floyd Malvo, who became dean of Howard’s Medical School. Malvo encouraged Gletten to pursue medicine as a career. He was accepted by several medical schools, and chose to attend Howard University School of Medicine. He later completed an internship, residency, and fellowship in gastroenterology at UCLA Wadsworth V.A. Hospital. After finishing comprehensive training, Gletten taught for more than 20 years as an assistant clinical professor of medicine at UCLA. He also established a successful medical practice in Los Angeles alongside two other gastroenterologists.

Gletten’s estate gift honors the foundation in science he received at Illinois State and will support the scholarly work of a distinguished biology faculty member. The gift will enhance the body of research produced by the School of Biological Sciences and ensures the program’s impact on future scientists who desire to contribute to the institution of medicine. Students will also benefit from the opportunity to study under the distinguished scholar who will hold the Dr. Fred Gletten Endowed Chair.

Gletten’s visionary estate gift to Illinois State contributes to a planned giving pipeline of more than $85 million. Planned gifts support Illinois State’s future vitality and create opportunities to continually enhance Illinois State’s students, programs, and facilities. To learn more about documenting a planned gift to Illinois State, visit Giveto.IllinoisState.edu.
Mark Pelletier ’81 credits his career success to experiences at Mennonite College of Nursing.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today were it not for my experiences at Mennonite,” said Mark Pelletier ’81. “It led me to what I’m doing now. It gave me direction.”

With this in mind, Pelletier has committed to a $1.2 million estate gift and $100,000 cash commitment to establish the Mark Pelletier Fund for Faculty, which supports faculty development within the nursing college. The funds will be used to enhance curriculum, lift up emerging faculty leaders, and advance teaching methods in order to graduate empowered healthcare professionals.

Before enrolling in Mennonite, Pelletier was a psychology student working part time at Americana Nursing Home. There he met then MCN Board Member Marietta Brandt, who encouraged Pelletier to pursue a career in nursing.

After graduating from Mennonite with a nursing certificate, Pelletier earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing from DePaul University in Chicago. He is now the chief operating officer and chief nursing officer for the Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of hospitals and health care organizations around the world.

A message from MCN President Emerita Dr. Kathleen Hogan has stayed with Pelletier for his entire career. “She said, ‘Always remember that your patients are entrusting you with their lives,’” he said. Pelletier has taken the message to heart, first as a patient-centered nurse and later on a much larger scale through his Joint Commission work. He oversees 600 surveyors who track how hospitals and other health care organizations measure up to accreditation standards set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Joint Commission.

“Over 140,000 people die annually from hospital errors and hospital-acquired illnesses,” said Pelletier. “The Joint Commission is working to lower that number by influencing quality and patient safety standards world-wide.”

Pelletier’s giving is motivated by his desire to prepare future nurses who prioritize patient safety. “I had the privilege of having Mennonite’s top professors teach me. Many of them are just now starting to retire,” said Pelletier, who wonders who will educate the next generation of nurses.

With Pelletier’s support for faculty development, he hopes the answer will continue to be Mennonite College of Nursing.