

Private support fuels campaign's public phase

As Boise State's comprehensive campaign begins the first full year of its public phase, Boise State Foundation officials announced that the university is already approaching the halfway mark of its goal.

As of Dec. 31, 2007, the university has raised \$83,197,748, or 47.54 percent of its \$175 million objective.

In August 2007, Boise State formally kicked off the public phase of "Destination Distinction: The Campaign for Boise State University" during an outdoor gala that celebrated the university's 75th anniversary. At the time, President Bob Kustra said it was "without a doubt the most important announcement of my presidency."

The campaign's aim, Kustra said, is to strengthen Boise State's current reputation as an excellent undergraduate teaching university while also helping it transform itself into a metropolitan research university of distinction, with a campus that includes state-of-the-art buildings and facilities, professors engaged in relevant research and creative scholarship, enhanced undergraduate opportunities, and new graduate and Ph.D. programs ("Join Our Journey to Distinction," FOCUS Fall 2007).

"Boise State has long been regarded as a driving force for education in southwest Idaho," said Kustra, "but we cannot afford to rest on our excellent reputation. The needs of our students and the community we serve are changing, and Boise State must change with it in order to not only meet the increased needs of Idaho residents, but those of the Northwest region and beyond."

Kustra said the campaign will provide "critical resources for student scholarships and continue the long-established tradition of teaching excellence at Boise State." More information on the campaign is available at www.boisestate.edu/foundation/campaign/index.html.

A gift of \$500,000 from the late Hilda Elliott in the fall provided a key boost to the total. Elliott and her husband, who died this past summer, owned Elliott Lumber in Boise and Payette for many years. Four days after she made her gift, Elliott died from a fall and subsequent heart attack. She was 87.

Elliott donated \$200,000 to support biology professor Julia Oxford's biomedical research, \$150,000 for a business management scholarship, and \$150,000 for a business accounting scholarship. (For more fundraising news, see the Philanthropy section that begins on page 26.)



Silver Medallion recipient Roger Michener addresses Boise State's newest graduates and their families and friends during the 2007 Winter Commencement ceremony in Taco Bell Arena.

Michener honored at Commencement

About 600 Boise State students attended the Dec. 21 Winter Commencement ceremony in Taco Bell Arena before an audience packed with family and friends. In all, 1,295 students were eligible for 1,363 degrees and certificates. The event included the hooding of Carlyle Miller, who earned a doctorate in geophysics.

President Bob Kustra presented a Silver Medallion to Roger Michener, an alum who served on the BSU Foundation Board from 1990-2005, acting as president from 1999-2001. The Silver Medallion, Boise State's highest recognition of service to the university, was previously awarded to former Idaho Gov. Phil Batt, former Boise State President Eugene Chaffee and Idaho Court of Appeals Judge Sergio Gutierrez, among others.

Michener said the honor should be shared with his wife, Barbara, whom he met as a BJC student many years ago. It was their common goal to someday be able to "pay back" the scholarships given to them. In 1991, the couple established a scholarship to benefit students in the College of Business and Economics and the College of Education.

"We all have a chance to do just a little bit of good for someone every now and then," he said.

The student speaker was Brian Honan, a former U.S. Marine who graduated with a bachelor's degree in computer science after returning to school at the age of 31. Honan used his story to encourage others to work toward a college degree or pursue other dreams. "You can succeed at everything, but you have to try," he said.

Honan told fellow graduates to allow their life experience to shape who they are. "Cherish your past, be proud of who you've become, take lots of pictures and be truly happy," he said.



JOHN KELLY