Murray State School of Agriculture receives $1,000,000 gift

Cindy Hutson donates 160-acre farm in memory of her late husband, Dan C. Hutson II

MURRAY, Ky. — One of the largest gifts in the school of agriculture’s history was announced today. Cindy Hutson, a 1990 graduate of Murray State University, generously donated a 160-acre farm to MSU for use as a research and laboratory facility for students and faculty. Hutson’s gift was made in memory of her late husband, Dan C. Hutson II.

“I am very pleased to assist Murray State and make this gift in memory of Dan,” she said. “Dan loved Murray State University and would be very pleased to help advance the school of agriculture in this way. My vision is to provide a farm that will be a beneficial addition to MSU in order to help educate and train the next generation of agribusiness leaders throughout this region.”

“The generosity of donors like Cindy continue to amaze me,” Dr. Randy J. Dunn, MSU president, said. “This gift will not only benefit our university for years to come, but will certainly magnify Dan Hutson’s love for Murray State and the school of agriculture.”

The Calloway County farm, appraised at a value of $1,000,000, is approximately bordered by Highway 80 on the north, Poor Farm Road on the south, and Hale and Airport roads on the east and west respectively, and is just three miles from campus, making the location ideal for student access.

The donation was announced this morning during the ACRES Leadership Team meeting, followed by a public unveiling of a sign at the farm this afternoon. The leadership team was formed last year to provide assistance and direction for the school of agriculture’s fundraising efforts. ACRES (Agriculture Campaign for Research and Education of Students) is a part of Murray State’s current comprehensive campaign, Hold Thy Banner High: The Campaign for the Students of Murray State University.

“This is another great day for MSU agriculture. In fact, it is the beginning of a new era,” said Dr. Tony Brannon, dean of the school of agriculture. “The acquisition of a new university farm laboratory has been our top priority since 2005. This donation of land, in support of our ACRES campaign, will allow our faculty and students to partner with the regional agricultural community in expanding our learning laboratory to train the next generation of agriculturalists.”

Dan proved himself one of the most successful graduates to ever come out of Murray State University. The 1977 alumnus expanded the business, the Hutson Company (bulk fertilizer/chemicals), that his grandfather, Nicholas Hutson, and then his father, Dan Sr., devoted their lives to building. As an entrepreneur he started Hutson Ag Services while still a student at MSU, and in 1987, he added to the family businesses by launching Hutson’s Grain.
The year 1990 saw Dan become president of Hutson Company and add Hutson Ag Equipment with a John Deere dealership to the portfolio. In 1997, he sold Hutson Company, Hutson Ag Service and Hutson Grain to Royster/Clark to concentrate solely on the John Deere business. At the time of his death in June 2008, he had built his company into the fourth largest John Deere franchise in the United States.

Bob Jackson, associate vice president for institutional advancement and director of MSU’s campaign, expressed his appreciation for the continued support given to Murray State, western Kentucky and the region by the Hutson family. “We are deeply grateful to Cindy for this generous and transformational gift to the school of agriculture in memory of Dan,” he said. “There is no family in this region that is more synonymous with agriculture than the Hutson family. For generations the Hutson family has worked to advance agriculture in this region, and this gift will create a permanent legacy that will assist in the education of students for many years to come.”