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Calhoun couple create WKU scholarship for area students

By Bobbie Hayse Messenger-Inquirer 9 hrs ago

Photo submitted Dr. Hugh H. and Debby Wilhite of Calhoun.

Hugh Wilhite has always wanted to do something for Western Kentucky University because of how much the school gave to him, so the retired Calhoun doctor and his wife, Debby, have established a scholarship for students earning health care-related degrees.

The Wilhites have gifted WKU \$225,000 for the scholarship that will give first preference to students from McLean, Ohio, Muhlenberg and Webster counties, all counties that Wilhite served during his 52-year career as a family physician.

"So many of the people I met, especially on the basketball team, became lifelong friends," Wilhite said. "It was a wonderful time. I had an experience that I wouldn't take a million dollars for. Being associated with Mr. Diddle was an education in itself."

Wilhite came to the Hill in the fall of 1958. He played on the men's basketball team for Coach E.A. Diddle, which he said provided some of his fondest memories.

He graduated from WKU with a bachelor of science degree in biology and chemistry in 1962 and graduated with a medical degree from the University of Louisville in 1966. Debby Wilhite went to WKU from 1970-73 and graduated with a degree in nursing.

The Wilhites said having the opportunity to create this scholarship fund that will give back to students pursuing degrees at WKU is "a great feeling."

"I just feel so fortunate that we're able to do this," Hugh Wilhite said.

According to John Paul Blair, WKU interim vice president for philanthropy and alumni engagement, the scholarship will be recurring each year the student is at the school. A student who earns the scholarship as a freshman can maintain the scholarship each year of his or her collegiate career, as long as they keep a certain grade point average and continue to study in the health care field.

He said three to five students could receive this scholarship as the endowment builds.

Blair said the Wilhites have created "a legacy of Hilltoppers," with many family members becoming WKU graduates.



"(They) have now made one in perpetuity through their endowment to provide scholarships for countless generations to come to the Hill and begin their health care pursuits," Blair said.

WKU President Timothy C. Caboni said it is "critical donors" like the Wilhites that enable the school to "remain an institution of opportunity and success."

"Their generous gift will continue to elevate our students in the health care arena, which we know is an area of need in our region," Caboni said.

The Dr. Hugh H. and Debby G. Wilhite Scholarship is part of the WKU Opportunity Fund, which Blair said is a comprehensive effort, through philanthropy, to recruit and retain students. It provides needs-based financial assistance through donor-driven fundraising.

Bobbie Hayse, bhayse@messenger-inquirer.com, 270-691-7315

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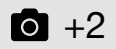


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KSP jail incident

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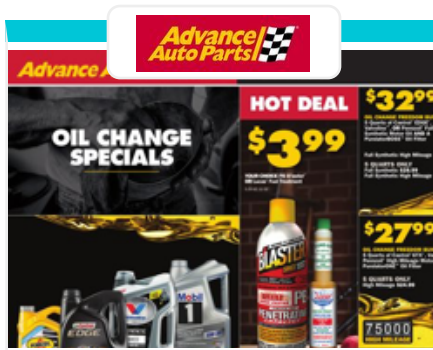
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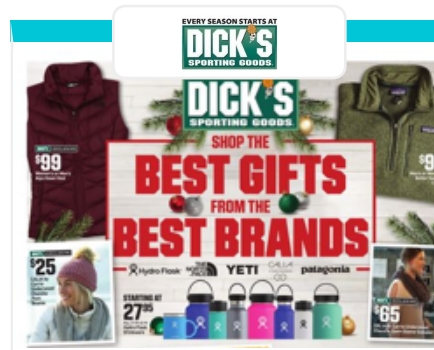
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