

2-14-2005

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Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "02/14/2005 - Tarble Generosity Continues 2 Million Gift To Support TAC Activities.pdf" (2005). 2005. 33.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2005/33

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Tarble Generosity Continues; \$2 Million Gift to Support TAC Activities

Feb-14-2005

A new \$2 million gift from the Tarble Foundation will continue to support Eastern Illinois University 's Tarble Arts Center and its programs and collections.

In announcing the news Monday, EIU President Lou Hencken offered his utmost gratitude to the Foundation. "The generosity of the Newton E. Tarble family has touched so many lives over the years. We are thrilled to accept this gift, which will allow the Tarble Arts Center and Eastern Illinois University to further serve our students, faculty and staff, and the citizens of east-central Illinois through access to the arts."

The funds will be used to enhance the Tarble Arts Center Endowment, established when the Tarble Arts Center was opened in 1982. Construction of the center was made possible by a \$1 million gift from the late Newton E. Tarble, for whom the center is named.

Following her husband's death, Louise Tarble continued to support the arts center, including annual donations totaling \$400,000 and another \$2 million in 2000 to assist with the building's expansion project. The center's new east wing was recently dedicated in Mrs. Tarble's memory, with a formal program held in October 2004.

The couple's daughter, Jan Tarble, established the Excellence in Fine Arts fund in 1986. That fund, since its inception, has provided full scholarships for dozens of students majoring in art, music and theatre arts at EIU. Currently, as many as 28 students benefit annually from the scholarship funds.

Now coordinated by Eastern's College of Arts and Humanities, the fund has also provided support to the Departments of Art, Music and Theatre Arts and to the Tarble Arts Center in bringing visiting artists to the university.

James K. Johnson, dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, said the most recent Tarble Foundation gift initiates a major fund-raising drive to benefit the college and soon-to-be-renovated and expanded Doudna Fine Arts Center.

"The college is deeply appreciative of this gift," Johnson said. "The Tarble family's continuing generosity over the years has established Eastern as a leader in the state of Illinois in the support and development of the fine arts. This money will enable the Tarble Arts Center to achieve its primary goal of demonstrating the many contributions that the arts make to society. All of our lives have been, and will continue to be, greatly enriched by the Tarbles."

Newton , Louise and Jan Tarble rank as the foremost donors to Eastern Illinois University. In total, the family has donated \$7 million to benefit the arts at the university.

"It's impossible to know the number of lives that have been touched through the generosity of the Tarble family," said Michael Watts, director of the Tarble Arts Center . "As a result of their very magnanimous support, the Tarble Arts Center ranks as a premiere facility among peer institutions nationwide."

In 1995, Newton , Pat and Jan Tarble were named to Eastern Illinois University 's Centennial 100 listing of the most significant individuals who had contributed to the success of the university over its first 100 years. The Tarble family was also named "Outstanding Philanthropist" by the EIU Foundation both in 1993 and 2002. In 1975, Mr. Tarble was presented an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Eastern and, two years earlier, was named a distinguished alumnus.

Jan Tarble recalled that her father, a co-founder of the "Snap-On" tool company, credited Livingston C. Lord, Eastern's first president, for making it possible for Tarble to continue with his education. "My father felt it was his obligation to pay back for his opportunity," she said. "I'm delighted it's worked out so well."

Newton Tarble's mission for the arts center was three-fold: to showcase arts created within the university by students and faculty; to bring arts in from outside the university; and to take the arts out to the greater community to be exhibited and performed in schools, libraries and other spaces open to the public through east central Illinois. Having grown up in rural Clark County , Mr. Tarble was aware of this geographical area being underserved by the arts and artists readily accessible to residents of more urban areas, such as Chicago, Detroit and the Los Angeles areas where he spent his adult life.

The Tarble Arts Center , a division of Eastern's College of Arts and Humanities, is a major cultural arts resource for east-central Illinois and EIU. It remains the only facility on the university campus built entirely through donated funds. Mr. Tarble's gift was matched by an additional half-million dollars contributed by fellow alumni, students, businesses and corporations, as well as community members.

The Tarble serves approximately 40,000 annually through on- and off-site arts programs. The center is one of only approximately 750 museums nationwide to be accredited by the American Association of Museums.

