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news

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EIU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETS CHALLENGE

CHARLESTON, IL.--The Eastern Illinois University Alumni Association has surpassed its goal of matching the \$35,000 challenge grant made by the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation to purchase a house for its membership.

The \$35,000 goal was reached on Thursday, June 22, with a gift from Lottie L. Leeds, former lab school professor and 1940 alumnus living in Charleston. Mrs. Leeds' gift to the EIU Foundation put the campaign over the top. Another \$5,000 is being sought for renovations.

The EIU Alumni Association will exercise, in early July, its option to purchase a two-story house at 1544 Fourth Street, next door to the Brainard House, the home of the EIU Foundation. Mr. and Mrs. James E. Johnson own the home.

EIU Alumni Association President Tom Gaffigan of Decatur said the house will provide an identifiable place on the EIU campus where alumni may seek information or assistance, either through direct visits or by use of a toll-free telephone number.

Gaffigan said, "I thank all those who joined the Alumni Association in this challenge and helped make the Alumni House a home for Eastern's 43,000 alumni. We now have our next challenge to raise an additional \$5,000 for improvements."

Cecil Swedell of Charleston, president of the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation, said, "We are very pleased we were able to contribute to the alumni project and even more pleased that the Alumni Association has matched our gift and gone on to exceed it."

Dr. Daniel E. Thornburgh, executive officer of the EIU Foundation, said the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation was established through Linder family bequests. They were long associated with Eastern. It will be dedicated during Homecoming weekend, Oct. 13-14.

Lewis Linder was a 1911 graduate and his sister, Mary, completed her degree in 1915. Lewis served Eastern in various capacities on its Alumni and Foundation boards. Both Lewis and Mary were charter members of the EIU Foundation.

"This Alumni House is a fitting tribute to their interest in and support of Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, and education," said Thornburgh.

The house will serve as headquarters for the Alumni Association and as a facility to accommodate numerous alumni activities and services. It will house the offices of Eastern's director of alumni/community relations and coordinator of special events, who arranges such University events as Commencement and the Women's Expo and Health Fair. It will also be available for group meetings.

A 10-member Alumni Fund Drive Committee spearheaded the campaign and developed a plan for the acquisition of the house. It included Dr. James Giffin, professor emeritus and Ken Hesler, emeritus administrator, both of Charleston; members of the EIU Alumni Association Board of Directors Nancy Owen of Mattoon, Coles County state's attorney; Neil Henriksen of Roselle and Paul Hoffman of Decatur; Bob Kovack of Mattoon, economic development manager at Illinois Consolidated Telephone Company; Dr. John North of Charleston, chairman of Eastern's Department of Secondary Education and Foundations; Pattie Corey, Eastern's director of alumni/community relations; Thornburgh; and Gaffigan.