Fred Gibson Jr. ‘51, ’99 establishes professorships endowment

In gratitude to the wisdom and experience shared when he was a student in the Mackay School of Mines, Fred Gibson Jr. ’51 (metallurgical engineering), ’99 (honorary degree) has established an endowment to provide support for professorships within the College of Science and the Mackay School.

“I view my time at Nevada as one of the more productive phases of my life, where I made lasting friendships with fellow students, faculty and administrators, and, most importantly, received a superb education,” says Gibson, who was recognized by the Nevada Alumni Association as the 2010 Alumnus of the Year. “The quality of education was greatly enhanced because of the private enterprise work experience of most of the faculty, including Jay Carpenter (1906, mining engineering), director of the Mackay School. Faculty experiences provided, in many cases, examples of practical approaches to problems.”

The Fred D. Gibson, Jr. Professorships in Science Endowment is established within the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation with the long-term goal of providing support for faculty positions within the College of Science, including the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering.

Originally from Colorado and a resident of the Silver State for more than 80 years, Gibson graduated from the Mackay School of Mines in 1951. He began his professional career that same year as an engineer at Titanium Metals Corp. in Henderson, Nev. Gibson moved to Western Electrochemical Co. (now Kerr-McGee Chemical Co.) in 1953 as assistant to the director of research. Named plant manager of Pacific Engineering and Production Co. of Nevada (now American Pacific Corp.) in 1956, Gibson began a 50-year affiliation with one of Nevada’s most profitable chemical manufacturers. He rose through the ranks at American Pacific until he became chairman, president and chief executive officer in 1966. He retired from the company in 1998. He continued to serve on the board of directors until 2013 when he officially retired from American Pacific.

“Mr. Gibson has been a longtime champion of the Mackay School and the College of Science, as well as an invaluable resource to our students and faculty,” says College of Science Dean Jeff Thompson. “We are deeply grateful to him for his many years of support to the University and its students. He is truly a treasure among our many esteemed Mackay School graduates.”

A member of the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering Executive Advisory Board, Gibson has been a governor-appointed commissioner for the Nevada Commission on Mineral Resources since 1983 and has served continuously as its chairman for 31 years. For more than two decades, Gibson has supported numerous scholarships, the John Mackay student club and faculty endowments at Mackay. He is also a supporter of the University Libraries.

“I have enjoyed a great life of successful experience in business, community affairs and personal relationships, as a result, in many ways, to my time at Nevada as both a student, but also as a friend of the University,” Gibson says.

—Roseann Keegan