Dick Gilbert ’49 (economics) is part of a long Nevada legacy, spanning almost 200 years, with deep roots in rural Nevada that eventually spread to Reno and the University. To celebrate this past and his love for the University, Dick has established five endowments honoring his family, including the Dick and Hank Gilbert Memorial Scholarship, the Vivian L. Gilbert Memorial Scholarship in Nursing, the Kathleen M. Gilbert Accounting Scholarship, the Karen Jane Gilbert Memorial Scholarship, and the Jim Gilbert Memorial Scholarship.

Dick’s family came to Austin, Nev. in 1832. His uncle Henry “Hank” Gilbert was born in Belmont, Nev., in 1897 with his father, Albert John “Dick”, to follow in 1899. The two faced a great deal of adversity in their lives, including wars, the Great Depression and the rigors of living in the “Old West.”

Hank owned a small dry goods store in Silver Peak, Nev. that he literally moved to Hawthorne, Nev., in 1940, where he would later become mayor.

Albert John “Dick” married Vivian Kivi in 1925 shortly after Dick and his brother, Jim, were born in Tonopah. The couple then moved to Reno in 1937.

Dick attended the University and graduated in 1949 with a degree in economics, which would serve him well in his career as an accountant. Jim, a bright student at the University and talented skier, was tragically lost in an automobile accident in 1956. For the campus and the community his passing was a devastating loss. After college, Dick served in the Korean War, and upon his return he married Kathleen McCormack.

Dick graduated from Stanford with an MBA in 1955 and went on to establish his own accounting firm. The firm was later bought from him by Ernst & Young where he remained as the Managing Partner. Dick is now retired and currently serves on the board of the Bretzlaff Foundation.

What are your fondest memories from your days at Nevada?

The campus itself was a beautiful place. Classic buildings surrounded the green Quad, and the president lived on campus in an impressive house on the bluff in front of Morrill Hall. The site where the president lived is now a parking lot. The vine-covered library was across the street from Stuart Hall, now the Honor Court. The student union was in Stuart Hall, I spent many pleasant hours there playing bridge.

The campus was also famous: many Hollywood producers used the campus for some schmaltzy movies, including “Margie,” the “Mr. Belvedere” series and “Apartment for Peggy.”

The students on campus participated in customs from the ‘30s. Freshmen wore “dinks” (funny little hats) which didn’t last long, men had to grow beards six weeks before “Mackay Day,” and no one could walk on the Quad.

The professors were caring and proficient. Some were amusing in dress or in mannerisms. Two of my favorites were Dr. Beesley and Walter Palmer. All were kind to me and passed me along until I graduated in 1949 with a bachelor’s in economics—there was no business school back then—and minors in math and military science—a minor I would use in a year and half as an infantry lieutenant in Korea.

What have you done that you are most proud of?

I am most proud of my family and all they have accomplished. My wife and I had five children, all of whom are University graduates.