Griffin/Santini endowment honors Nevada legends

For the past 15 years, the Robert S. Griffin/W. Clark Santini Memorial Endowment has honored those who embody the character of two men who left indelible marks on the campus and the community.

Robert Griffin, considered to be the father of forensics at Nevada, was recruited to campus by University President Walter Clark and helped found the Intercollegiate Debate Program in 1928. He taught at Nevada for four decades and gave oratorical training to some of Nevada’s top lawyers and political figures.

One of Griffin’s protégés was Clark Santini ’65 (prelegal), the grandson of President Clark and a community activist who helped establish Rancho San Rafael, among other efforts. Santini had a 25-year career in law enforcement, including work as a Gaming Control Board investigator. When he passed away in 1996, friends and supporters created the endowment to honor Santini and his mentor.

The endowment provides financial support for the debate team and funding for three annual awards: the Robert S. Griffin Medal for a member of the debate team, the W. Clark Santini Cup for performing good works in the community, and the Dr. Robert S. Griffin Scholarship for student debaters. This year, the Griffin Medal was awarded to sophomore Jonathan McGuire, and the Santini Cup was presented to Ginnie Kersey, faculty emerita, and Larry Struve, former state government official and legislative advocate.

The endowment committee, including Kersey, Bill Isaeff ’66 (economics), Bob Gabrielli ’78 (journalism) and emeriti faculty Gordon Zimmerman is working to boost the endowment through a planned gift drive.

“All students can benefit from debate and communications studies, says Isaeff, retired special assistant to the city manager for the City of Sparks. “All of us have to communicate regardless of our profession.”

To learn more about making a planned gift to the Griffin/Santini Memorial Endowment, please contact Lisa M. Riley, Esq., director of the Office of Planned Giving, (775) 682-6017 or lriley@unr.edu. To learn more about supporting the College of Liberal Arts, please contact Stuart Golder ’91, ’97M.A., director of development, (775) 784-1222 or sgolder@unr.edu.

—Roseann Keegan

Nevada camp traditions endure

For elementary and secondary school students in Nevada, learning doesn’t end as summer begins. The Northern Nevada Girls Math and Technology Camp and the Nevada Boys and Girls State programs help youth return to the classroom with fresh perspectives on civics and the sciences.

Since 1947, civics lessons have come to life for students at the Boys State and Girls State programs. More than 250 delegates each year chosen from high school juniors from across Nevada participate in academic and leadership programs that simulate city, county and state government. Boys State was held on campus June 10-16, while Girls State was at the University Cooperative Extension 4-H Camp in South Lake Tahoe July 1-7.

Philanthropic support from individuals, businesses and organizations, including the Union Pacific Foundation, continues to build the Nevada Boys Endowment. Earnings from the endowment, along with the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, help support the program.

Members of Nevada’s debate team are pictured at the annual Griffin-Santini Awards Ceremony in May. The University’s team was ranked 14th in the nation at the National Parliamentary Debate Association’s Championship in March.

During the Girls Math and Technology camp, now in its 14th year, middle school students spend five days on campus expanding their skills. As a program of the College of Education, the camp aims to encourage girls of all abilities and backgrounds to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence in mathematics and learning technology. This year’s camp is July 15-20. The program receives support from the Frances C. and William P. Smallwood Foundation, Newmont Mining Corporation and Barrick Gold of North America, among others.

To learn more about supporting the College of Education, please contact Mitch Klaich ’02, director of development, (775) 784-6914 or mklaich@unr.edu. To learn more about supporting the Girls State and Boys State programs or the Nevada Boys State endowment, please contact Lynda Buhlig ’84, executive director of development, (775) 682-6013 or lbuhlig@unr.edu.

—Roseann Keegan
Redfield Foundation supports women’s athletics at Nevada

The Nell J. Redfield Foundation made recent gifts to benefit the women’s basketball, volleyball and soccer programs at the University of Nevada, Reno. The Foundation is also a major sponsor of the AAUN Blue Tie Ball, an annual fundraising event in support of the University’s student-athletes.

Women’s athletics have a strong tradition of success at Nevada, including 140 All-America certificates and nine individual national championships. Wolf Pack women’s teams won 11 Western Athletic Conference championships during Nevada’s time in the conference.

The University fields 11 women’s varsity sports teams overall, with more than 270 female student-athletes.

“The Redfield Foundation appreciates the importance of a strong athletic program to the University and we recognize the special needs to provide financial support to women’s athletics,” says Jerry Smith, Redfield Foundation trustee.

The Redfield Foundation has been a champion of the University for decades, including substantial support for the William N. Pennington Health Sciences Building, the Nell J. Redfield Foundation Auditorium in the Davidson Mathematics and Science Center, the Orvis School of Nursing Student Outreach Clinic, the Redfield Campus and the Nell J. Redfield Foundation Scholarship for University of Nevada, Reno National Merit Scholars.

Earlier this year, the foundation pledged $1.6 million to support research efforts at the School of Medicine, including $100,000 to the Student Outreach Clinic and the Sports Medicine Fellowship.

—Roseann Keegan

Sontag Award winners create mining tool

A team of four Nevada physics majors was selected as the inaugural winner of the Sontag Entrepreneurship Award Competition, earning the first $50,000 award from a $1 million endowment fund established by alumnus Rick Sontag ’66M.S. (physics) and his wife, Susan.

The winning team of Mining Environmental Technology and Services (METS), including sophomores David Karr and Bryan Rainwater, and seniors Ben Sumlin and Heather Zunino, developed optical instruments to detect airborne particulates in mining workplaces. The competition was established to develop the entrepreneurial capacities of University students and facilitate the creation of new businesses in Nevada by awarding $50,000 each spring to a student or student team that clearly demonstrates the innovative spirit for which Nevada is known.

Thirty-five student teams submitted proposals and six finalists were selected to submit business plans and present to the board of the Nevada Capital Investment Corporation, a state-funded organization established to promote job creation in Nevada, chaired by state Treasurer Kate Marshall. NCIC judges chose the winner, and the Sontags announced the results via Skype during a May 9 reception for the finalists.

“You all need to keep your dreams alive, even those who don’t win today. I have fallen on my face many times—don’t worry, just keep trying,” Rick Sontag said.

To learn more about supporting entrepreneurship programs at Nevada and the College of Business, please contact Kristen Kennedy ’98, director of development, (775) 682-6940 or kristenk@unr.edu.

—Roseann Keegan