

Stepping up: Alumni-based gifts support students, leadership, Heritage Hall renovation

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In the 1950s and 1960s, when Herb Riebe, Joanne Salm Bauer and Becky Gralow Cranston were attending UW-Stout, the university catchphrase Stout Proud hadn't been coined.

Their Stout pride was alive and well, however, when they graduated and launched successful careers. Sixty years later, their love for and lifelong bond with their alma mater is front and center with three new, major donations.

The gifts, totaling \$3.1 million, have been made to [Stout University Foundation](#) either in honor of them by their spouse or by them. Their goals are to help the university continue to produce graduates who are ready to impact the world through scholarships and support of the Fab Lab and Heritage Hall renovation.



Herbert "Herb" Riebe works on an apparatus at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. A \$2.53 million donation has been made by his wife to support the Fab Lab. / Contributed photo

Herbert and Viola Riebe Fab Lab Endowment and Scholarship

Viola Riebe, in honor of her late husband **Herbert "Herb" Riebe ('57)**, has committed \$2.53 million to endow the UW-Stout [Fab Lab](#), which will be renamed the Herbert and Viola Riebe Fab Lab.

The gift also will establish the Herbert and Viola Riebe Endowed Scholarship Fund for full-time students majoring in [engineering technology](#), [manufacturing engineering](#) or [mechanical engineering](#).

"Our young people are our future, and the future is going to be designed by educated people," Viola said.

The Fab Lab, a UW-Stout [Discovery Center](#) facility and first in the UW System, is a cutting-edge place for makers with digital tools like laser cutters and 3D printers. It's part of a network of fab labs around the U.S. and world.

Two years after earning his industrial education degree, Herb began working for Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in Berkeley, Calif., the start of a long career designing apparatuses and supporting the work of numerous physicists.

Viola hopes that an expansion of opportunities for students in the Fab Lab and the scholarship can help and inspire today's students the way UW-Stout inspired Herb. "He had the ability to design and contribute insight into the problem. Stout pushed him in that direction," Viola said.

Viola also has been a frequent donor to UW-Stout's [Fostering Success](#) program, which helps students who are former foster care youth, and the former STEPS for Girls program.



Joanne Bauer, 1960 UW-Stout graduate, has been remembered with a \$500,000 donation by her husband to establish the Joanne and Robert Bauer Scholarship. / Contributed photo

Joanne and Robert Bauer Scholarship

Going back to high school when she was president of the 1,000-student Home Economics Association, to years of involvement at UW-Stout including 1959 homecoming queen, **Joanne Bauer ('60)** never shied away from leadership opportunities, including during her 32-year career as a teacher.

To honor that legacy, her husband Robert has donated \$500,000 to establish the Joanne and Robert Bauer Scholarship, which will provide \$1,500 awards to 10 students annually in the Stout Ambassadors program or in Alpha Phi, Joanne's sorority.

Joanne, a home economics education major who died in 2021, was involved in four student organizations on campus and was a residence hall counselor. "Her leadership skills continued to be developed at UW-Stout," said Bob, a retired dean from UW-Green Bay.

"We wanted to do something that would advance the skills that Joanne believed in strongly," Bob said, noting that they settled on the donation before her passing. "We're hoping the endowment will help students step forth and become real leaders."

Joanne remained connected to UW-Stout over the years as part of reunion committees, and she and Bob supported the university previously with other donations.

UW-Stout no longer offers a home economics education major but has an undergraduate program in [family and consumer sciences education](#).



Becky Cranston, 1964 UW-Stout graduate, has donated \$100,000 toward programming needs at Heritage Hall. / Contributed photo

Becky Cranston Heritage Hall gift

Recently, when [dietetics](#) graduate **Becky Cranston ('64)** heard that funds were needed to help renovate Heritage Hall, home to the dietetics program, she stepped up to provide \$100,000 to support programming needs.

Heritage Hall, a near-50-year-old building, is scheduled for [major renovation](#) after receiving priority approval from the UW System Board of Regents. The project is ranked No. 1 in the Chippewa Valley and No. 3 for UW System academic buildings.

Her gift is in addition to other university support in recent years that exceeds \$250,000. She established the Rebecca Gralow Cranston Dietetics Professional Development Fund, an endowed fund to support dietetics faculty.

She also has made several significant gifts to the Chancellor's Fund for Teaching Excellence and Student Success and supported faculty work to help develop an online [Master of Science program in nutrition and dietetics](#).

"I wanted to honor the program and the teachers and the success I've had," said Cranston, a Menomonie native who taught for eight years at Appalachian State and 25 years at Kent State University.

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