

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

April 14, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Trustee Policy Committee

From: Lou Anna K. Simon, President 

Subject: Naming Proposal: Forest Akers Trust Practice Complex and Ed & Wanda Eichler Family Teaching Tower and Gallery

Recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED that the marching band artificial turf practice field located in the area immediately northwest of the intersection of Shaw Lane and Chestnut Lane be named the Forest Akers Trust Practice Complex and that the adjacent tower and seating areas be named the Ed & Wanda Eichler Family Teaching Tower and Gallery.



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Background

On September 8, 2013 the College of Music received a pledge of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from the Forest Akers Trust and on December 31, 2013 the College received a pledge of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) from Ed and Wanda Eichler. These commitments will fully fund the capital costs for this project, including interest expenses.

Both gifts falls within the parameters set forth by the University policy for the naming of facilities.

The proposal to name the artificial turf practice field the Forest Akers Trust Practice Complex and the proposal to name the adjacent tower and seating area the Ed & Wanda Eichler Family Teaching Tower and Gallery was reviewed by the University Advisory Committee on the Naming of Buildings and Facilities on April 15, 2014. The Committee has recommended to me and to the Board of Trustees that the proposal be adopted.

Background on Forest Akers and the Forest Akers Trust

Forest Akers was elected by the people of Michigan to three terms on the MSU Board of Trustees. He served from 1940 to 1958. In the early 1960's, Mr.

Akers established the Forest Akers Trust to support the faculty, staff and students of Michigan State University and Oakland University (a branch of MSU at the time).

Forest Akers Trust Trustees - Roger Wilkinson (former MSU Vice President of Finance and Operations), Stephen Terry (former Associate Vice President of Finance at MSU), Brian Breslin (also a current MSU Trustee) and Nancy E. Craig (former Director of Investments at MSU) continue the tradition of giving to MSU that Mr. Forest initiated more than 40 years ago. Over the years, the Trust has provided substantial support to projects with broad appeal to the MSU community including two golf courses; John A. Hannah Professorships; the Wharton Center for the Performing Arts; the Jack Breslin Student Events Center; the Evans Scholars program; Beaumont Tower renovations; the Clara Bell Smith Student-Athlete Academic Center. The Trust also contributed \$1.7 million for two capital projects – improvements to Forest Akers West Golf Course near the James B. Henry Center for Executive Development and the Alfred Berkowitz Basketball Complex expansion at the Breslin Center.

The Forest Akers Trust has also established several significant academic-focused endowments since 1948, including the Forest Akers Study Abroad Scholarship Fund and the Forest H. Akers Scholarship Fund. The Fund's most recent endowment created in 2011 with a \$1 million commitment, is the Forest Akers Trust Endowed Fund for Entrepreneurial Development. Income from the Fund enables MSU to offer opportunities for undergraduate students in non-STEM, yet highly entrepreneurial, disciplines such as business, gaming, and digital media.

Most recently, the Trust made a \$2 million campaign commitment which will make it possible for MSU to renovate the classroom area on Bessey Hall's 3rd floor and to construct the multi-purpose artificial turf field on a part of Munn Field that is the subject of this resolution.

Background on the Ed & Wanda Eichler Family

Ed Eichler is President and Chief Executive Officer of Agri-Valley Communications, Inc., a position he has held since taking over for his father John Eichler in 1986. Agri-Valley Communications is a private company that offers telephone and internet services to the northern Lower Peninsula and eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. A subsidiary, Agri-Valley Broadband, was the first rural service provider in America to use LTE (Long Term Evolution) technology. Ed serves as president for Agri-Valley and its associated companies: Thumb Cellular, LLC, Pigeon Telephone Company, Agri-Valley Broadband Inc., and Agri-Valley Services Corp. He is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Bay Port State Bank.

Wanda Eichler owns Pigeon River Mercantile & Wool Company, a knitting and quilting supply shop doing business as Graywood Designs. Ed and Wanda farm asparagus and sugar beets on their 100+ acre farm where they live. The Eichlers are members of the Abbot Society.

Ed and Wanda have three children. William Edwyn Eichler, B.A., 1996, James Madison College, Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy, is a photographer. Liesl M. Clark, B.A., 1998, James Madison College, Political Economy, International Relations; M.A., 2008, Social Science, Public Administration, is a Founding Partner and Principal of 5 Lakes Energy LLC in Lansing, Michigan. She is married to John Ryan Clark and lives in Howell, Michigan with their two boys. Peter C. Eichler, B.A., 2006, College of Arts and Letters, Music (with a specialization in dance) is the Executive Director of Marketing for Douglas J Aveda Institutes & Salons. He also serves as Director for State of Art Winter Guard at Michigan State University. His domestic partner Clay Weiler is the athletic trainer for Winter Guard as well as the athletic trainer for Cirque du Soleil's Ovo touring show. Peter and Clay live in Haslett, Michigan.