



SIUE Announces New Scholarship Endowment Supporting Students In STEM

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE – Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has announced the creation of the Jim and Julie McPike Scholarship Endowment with an initial gift of \$432,000 to support students in STEM.

The scholarship will cover one year of tuition and fees for junior or senior students, with preference given to qualifying women, majoring in math, science or engineering within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) or the School of Engineering (SOE).

McPike, who earned a master's in economics at SIUE in 1974 and served as the Majority Leader in the Illinois House of Representatives from 1983-95, donated his remaining political account funds to support the endowment.

"The funds remaining in my political account could be used in three ways," McPike said. "I could accept them as personal income subject to state and federal taxes, transfer them to another political account, or donate them to a 501(c)(3) charity. I decided the best use for the funds would be to support scholarships at SIUE."

"I am thrilled that Mr. and Mrs. McPike have decided to support scholarships that will allow students to pursue degrees in biological sciences, chemistry, physics, math and engineering," said CAS Dean Kevin Leonard, PhD. "Their generosity will advance CAS' strategic goal of improving the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff and students to enhance an inclusive environment. CAS faculty and staff have been working hard to increase the number of women in STEM majors, and the McPikes' support will make it easier for individuals with financial need to pursue degrees in these fields."

"The School of Engineering truly appreciates the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. McPike," said SOE Dean Cem Karacal, PhD. "Despite recent advancements, women are still significantly underrepresented in engineering and computer science-related disciplines. The McPike scholarships will definitely help to attract more women to pursue rewarding careers in STEM professions. Their perspective and participation in solving the many challenging technical problems facing civilization add great value when advancing engineering and computer science solutions."

McPike resides in his hometown of Alton with his wife, Julie, who earned her bachelor's degree in science from Iowa State University in 1978 and an MBA from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1981. She has worked in the science and technology field for over 30 years.

After graduating from the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., with a bachelor's in naval science in 1965, McPike went on to earn a bachelor's in business from Jacksonville University in Jacksonville, Fla., in 1970. He served in the U.S. Navy as a jet pilot for five years before being elected to the Illinois House of Representatives in 1976, serving a total of 18 years. In 1985, SIUE honored McPike with the SIUE

Distinguished Alumni Award, which recognizes individuals based on personal success and professional achievements, involvement with the University, and how they positively reflect on their alma mater.

Central to SIUE's exceptional and comprehensive education, the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) offers degree programs in the natural sciences, humanities, arts, social sciences, and communications. The College touches the lives of all SIUE students helping them explore diverse ideas and experiences, while learning to think and live as fulfilled, productive members of the global community. Study abroad, service-learning, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities better prepare SIUE students not only to succeed in our region's workplaces, but also to become valuable leaders who make important contributions to our communities.

The [SIUE School of Engineering](#) is one of the largest engineering schools in the region. It offers comprehensive and affordable engineering programs with eight undergraduate degrees, five master's degrees and two cooperative doctoral programs. Students learn from expert faculty, perform cutting-edge research and participate in intercollegiate design competitions. Companies in the metropolitan St. Louis area provide students challenging internships and co-op opportunities, which often turn into permanent employment. Students gain hands-on experience in the School's state-of-the-art facilities, including the new Fowler Student Design Center.