



# Significance

CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH CHARITABLE GIFT PLANNING

## Jay Morgensen: Empowering women

As a volunteer English teacher in China, Jay Morgensen '68 saw firsthand how education could change a life.

The newly retired Oregonian was sharing his English skills with middle and high schoolers in a rural town west of Beijing. He made annual, monthlong trips from 2000 to 2006 to help — the first American many of the students had ever met.

He quickly observed that most of the girls sat in front, asked thoughtful questions, studied, and paid attention more than the boys. But they were treated unequally.

One student, Wei, always asked “Mr. Jay” about English and about life in the United States. One day, she invited him to her home to meet her family and share a meal.

“The village was very poor,” Jay said. “She said the last person to graduate from high school was from her father’s class. I asked her about college, but she was an average student (like me!) so she could not afford college.”

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Jay with Wei, a Chinese student he supported through college.



## ENDING THE FUTURE OF SPU



When I consider the SPU endowment, I am exceedingly grateful for members of the Seattle Pacific community who had the foresight, wisdom, and courage to establish the Seattle Pacific Foundation decades ago and

begin building endowment funds through generous gifts, wise investments, and careful stewardship.

SPU's endowment continues to grow and provide invaluable resources for today's students. In fact, under the careful guidance of Foundation Chief Investment Officer and Treasurer Brian Ficken and the Foundation's board of directors, the endowment saw record returns in 2021 — first among peer institutions nationally. It now sits at a market value of over \$181 million!

While it is amazing to see the endowment's growth and we are grateful for God's goodness and blessing, we have a long way to go to ensure that future generations of students can be guaranteed a Christ-centered, nationally ranked, holistic SPU education regardless of their ability to pay, and that our faculty have the resources they need to provide the best learning environment possible.

The Foundation manages the endowment funds to facilitate investment growth *and* to provide an annual revenue stream. Growing the SPU endowment is critical for SPU's future, so I am very grateful for the many donors who continue to support endowment funds through their annual gifts or leave generous legacy gifts to endowments through their estate plans. Thank you to all who support the SPU endowment!

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Jay learned the cost of tuition. "I talked to her teachers to see what they thought if I paid for her college," he said, and they affirmed the idea. "I thought, 'I can't change everything, but I can for one person.'"

He stayed in touch with Wei, who finished college in 2007. "She said that [getting an education] changed her whole life," he said. "Now her parents listen to her when she has something to say." Today, Wei teaches at the school where she and Jay met.

Years later, Jay's classroom observations were echoed in Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's book, *Half The Sky*, about the oppression of women and girls in the developing world and how just a little help can transform lives. "What I thought I saw in China was true," said Jay after hearing Kristof speak.

He decided to fund a scholarship endowment at his alma mater to provide tuition assistance for female undergraduates currently or recently from China or Southeast Asia. Jay's first scholarship was awarded in 2014; 13 students have been awarded his eponymous scholarship so far.

Jay takes special pride in getting to know "his" students a bit and giving each a copy of *Half The Sky*. "Meeting and visiting with the scholarship recipients has been very rewarding. I like to meet with them because I'm invested in them," he said.

"If you buy stock in a company, you want to know how the company is doing.

"Even though my scholarship is not a huge amount, I know every little bit helps. I want to see that it's going to people who deserve it — and I've been very impressed by every student. Every one of them has been exceptional in academics and SPU activities," he said.

Jay scrutinizes the nonprofits he supports. "I give to organizations that I feel provide a service and don't spend a lot

on administration or fundraising," he said. "I've always supported SPU. Establishing the endowment offered me a permanent way to support the University and its students." In addition, Jay has included a gift to his endowment in his estate plans.

Growing up in Coos Bay, Oregon, Jay had never heard of Seattle Pacific College until a chance encounter. In his senior year of high school, he worked for the Oregon Legislature in Salem and ate many meals at a nearby lunch counter. "I noticed one of the waitresses was nice to everyone," he said. "She mentioned that she went to Seattle Pacific College, and I thought if everyone there is pleasant like her, it's a place I would like to attend. A few years later, I was there."

Jay worked at a Seattle bank in his college years to support himself. Money was tight back home, so he understands the financial pressures today's students face. Working and



Jay enjoyed meeting two of his current scholarship recipients, Shari Mishra (left) from India and Thy Tran (right) from Vietnam.

studying left him with little time, but he became good friends with several classmates that he still sees. Three of these fellow Falcons and lifelong friends followed Jay's example and established their own scholarship endowments.

Together, Jay and his friends are changing lives, one student at a time. "It is great to see that my scholarship is going to the right students," he said. "I remember all of the students who have received the scholarship. They all stand out."

## PHILANTHROPY SPOTLIGHT

### Rex and Elsie Cooper: Supporting theological education



Rex Cooper and Elsie Arnold Cooper '39 were married for 47 years and lived much of their lives in the San Francisco Bay Area before retiring to Poulsbo, Washington. Elsie served faithfully as an elementary school teacher and Rex was an auditor for Lockheed Martin. They were active in their California church, Menlo Park Presbyterian.

Though Rex and Elsie had no children of their own, they loved their niece and

# Thy Tran: Knowing her worth



## As a child growing up in Danang City in central Vietnam, Thy Tran dreamed of studying abroad.

“I have always known there are a lot of things in the world that I can learn, and studying abroad can help me achieve my learning possibilities,” she said.

Thy followed her dreams to Seattle, where she earned an associate’s degree at Seattle Central College and then transferred to SPU. She will graduate after Autumn Quarter 2022 with a degree in information systems.

The pandemic and finances make it difficult for Thy to visit her faraway parents and two younger sisters, but the family’s weekly video chats buoy Thy’s strength and motivation.

“Both of my parents are college graduates, and they believe in the importance of education,” she said. “Although it’s really expensive to study abroad, my parents try their best to financially support me in college.

“Coming from a culture where gender inequality is a great problem and most people there believe women should not work in STEM careers, I am grateful for my parents’ support,” Thy said.

To minimize her college debt, Thy takes a high credit load and works two jobs at SPU as a peer career advisor at the Center for Career and Calling, and as an office assistant in Student Financial Services.

“The counselors and staff at the CCC have been incredibly supportive of my career and personal life,” said Thy, who received their assistance as she discovered her hoped-for career of data analytics, which marries her love of technology, math, and visual communication. She earned a Google data analytics certificate last summer.

Thy is a volunteer web designer for the Minority Veterans of America and an officer for SPU’s Asian American Student Association. In the latter role, she helped coordinate a well-attended Lunar New Year celebration on campus in February.

“It was the first time I saw so many Vietnamese and other Asian students at SPU,” Thy said. “It has always been hard for international students like me around Lunar New Year, as it’s the biggest celebration in Asia when we gather with our family.”

Thy said she could not attend SPU without the generous financial aid she’s received, including the Jay Morgensen scholarship. “Although my family is amazing and supportive, I’ve known a lot of girls in Southeast Asia who are unable to go to school because their parents believe all they need is a good husband,” she said. “Jay’s generosity gives me courage and boosts my self-confidence. I’m grateful he sees girls like me and believes in our worth.”

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nephew, Susan Arnold ’71 and Robert Arnold ’74, whom the Coopers hosted during their childhood summers.

Elsie had a formative experience at Seattle Pacific, majoring in elementary education. Together, Rex and Elsie were steadfast proponents of SPU and higher education, so much so that it was hardly a question where Susan and Robert would attend.

Rex and Elsie were very philanthropic,

and they provided gifts to multiple charities through their estate, including one to Seattle Pacific.

They both came from families with deep legacies in church ministry. Elsie’s grandfather was the Rev. E.F.A Hantel, a Lutheran minister who served congregants in Nebraska, and Rex’s father was the Rev. Louis Cooper, a Methodist minister in the Midwest. It was a joy for Rex and

Elsie to establish a testamentary scholarship endowment (an endowment funded through an estate gift) for students studying theology.

Elsie passed away on May 17, 2008, and Rex died on November 3, 2020. Upon receiving their generous estate gift, SPU established the A. Rex and Elsie Cooper Financial Assistance Fund for Theology Students as an endowed fund that will provide scholarships in perpetuity.

**NATIONALLY RANKED** — For the sixth year in a row, Seattle Pacific has been recognized as a “Best National University” by *U.S. News & World Report*.



**On Wednesday, April 6, join in and give to these endowments for Seattle Pacific’s annual Giving Day** — a 24-hour fundraising event to raise support for the SPU causes you love! You can make a difference on campus and beyond with your generosity.

Help us surpass our goal this year by supporting the following featured endowments. By giving to established endowments, you’ll help support current students as well as future generations.

**Douglas M. Strong Seminary Advisory Scholarship Board Endowment** — for students in the master’s programs of Seattle Pacific Seminary

**Falcon Athletics Scholarship Endowment** — for deserving student athletes

**David L. McKenna Christian Leaders Scholarship Endowment** — for Christian students in the School of Business and Economics who have outstanding leadership potential

**Cynthia Fitch-Steenson Memorial Scholarship Endowment** — for students in the pre-professional health sciences field

**George A. and Claire E. Scranton Theatre Scholarship Endowment** — for students majoring in theatre

**Dr. C. Edward and Ellen Smyth Endowment for Christian Discipleship** — for seminarians and undergraduates facilitating Christian discipleship groups

**Ed Bauman Engineering Excellence Scholarship Endowment** — for electrical engineering students

**William L. and Susan L. Osborne Teacher Education Scholarship Endowment** — for students in the teacher education program

Visit [spu.edu/givingdayendowments](https://spu.edu/givingdayendowments) to give!



## Spotlight on new endowments

We are grateful to the generous donors who have chosen to invest in the lives of our students and help endow the future of Seattle Pacific for generations to come. The following are recently established scholarship endowments (having received the minimum required \$30,000):

**Julie A. Hagglund Nursing Scholarship Endowment** — for students studying nursing

**A. Rex and Elsie Cooper Financial Assistance Fund for Theological Students** — for students studying theology

**Douglas M. Strong Seminary Advisory Board Endowment\*** — for students in the master’s programs of Seattle Pacific Seminary

**Gary A. Baldwin Scholarship Endowment** — for students studying economics or business administration

**Robert C. Benedict Scholarship Endowment** — for students studying political science

*\*Founded in 2015 and renamed in 2021 for Douglas M. Strong in honor of his years of service and dedication as dean of the School of Theology and the Seattle Pacific Seminary.*

To learn more about creating an endowment or giving to any of these or other endowments, contact the Office of Endowments and Gift Planning at [giftplanning@spu.edu](mailto:giftplanning@spu.edu) or 206-281-2702 or, visit our website at [spu.edu/endowments](https://spu.edu/endowments).



## Did you know two out of three adults don’t have a will?

Our free resources have everything you need to help you plan your legacy. Request copies at [spu.edu/estateresources](https://spu.edu/estateresources).