

## \$250,000 gift from California Alumna creates Plant & Soil Science Professorship at OSU

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Hodges' gift honors parents and grain-producing farmers

(STILLWATER, Okla. July 9, 2008) – Oklahoma State University has received a \$250,000 gift from OSU alumnus Helen J. Hodges to establish a plant and soil science professorship in honor of her parents, Dillon and Lois Hodges. The position will concentrate on scholarship and research to increase grain production, and is committed to ensuring that the benefits of OSU's expertise are made available to farmers from around the world.

"It is my great pleasure to make this gift to honor my parents and ensure that OSU's world-class expertise will help farmers sustain themselves and hopefully thrive," said Hodges. "My parents knew from experience the challenges that farmers face, and they would be thrilled if their legacy leads to advances in agriculture that help struggling farmers around the world."

Once fully matched dollar-for-dollar by T. Boone Pickens' \$100 million chair match commitment, as well as the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the gift will provide \$1 million of impact in endowed funds. Hodges noted her appreciation for Pickens' generous gift that effectively quadruples her contribution.

"The response from our alumni and friends has exceeded our wildest expectations," said OSU President Burns Hargis. "Inspired by Boone Pickens' astounding generosity, donors answered the call to make a lasting difference and open a new and exciting chapter at OSU. We sincerely appreciate what Helen has done for the benefit of OSU academics and research and value this lasting way she has chosen to honor her parents."

The gift will create the Dillon and Lois Hodges Professorship in Plant and Soil Sciences located within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Hodges' parents both graduated from Oklahoma A&M. Her mother, Lois (née Mayfield), graduated in 1940 with a degree in Home Economics. After graduating, Lois taught home economics and worked as a Home Demonstration Agent in northwest Oklahoma. In 1947 after serving in the Army, Dillon Hodges graduated from OSU with a degree in Agriculture. Lois and Dillon married on July 9, 1948 - exactly 60 years ago today - and farmed in Major County for over 30 years, from 1952 until 1985, raising primarily cattle and wheat.

Helen J. Hodges received her Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from OSU in 1979. While attending Oklahoma State, she obtained her private pilot's license and in 1980 was a member of Oklahoma State's flying team, which won top honors at the National Intercollegiate Flying Association competition. Hodges became a certified public accountant in 1982 and received her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1983, where she was the Managing Editor of the Law Review.

Hodges currently lives in San Diego, California, and serves as a senior managing partner at the world's leading plaintiffs' law firm, Coughlin Stoia Geller Rudman & Robbins LLP. Most notable among her many significant precedent-setting cases, Hodges oversaw the firm's historic efforts to recover more than \$7 billion for victims of the collapse of Enron, the largest recovery ever obtained for victims of corporate fraud.

In order to take full advantage of the state's dollar-for-dollar match, and make the most significant impact on OSU academics, Hodges made the gift prior to the July 1 change in the state's endowed chair matching program. This gift is part of the \$66.8 million in endowed faculty gifts OSU announced recently.

Jean Van Delinder, chair of the OSU Faculty Council, said, "OSU is poised for growth and further prominence but to realize its full potential we must continue to attract and retain top scholars and researchers. These chairs highlight the important role that scholarship and teaching play at Oklahoma State University, and they are made possible through the generous support of donors who value excellence in scholarship and want to help OSU continue to nurture a strong faculty."

Endowed professorship and chairs are academic designations which provide support for faculty salary, graduate assistantships, equipment and research needs, as well as other support. These endowed faculty positions allow a university to attract and retain the best and the brightest academic minds in the world.