



The Wilton and Shirley Webster Family Endowment

With this endowment, Wilton and Shirley Webster and their family seek to create a lasting legacy that reflects their strong belief in the value of education. It is an investment in the future of students who share their North Dakota roots.

The Webster family has been in the Devils Lake community since 1883. Both Wilton and Shirley were born and raised on farms in the Devils Lake area. Wilton Blake Webster was born in 1930 and raised on a farm east of Churchs Ferry, North Dakota, where he spent almost his entire life. Shirley Ann Tollefson was born in 1932 and raised on a farm southwest of Webster, North Dakota.

After one year of college at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and service in the U.S. Air Force, Wilton returned home to carry on the family farming operation in 1954. That year, he also met and married Shirley Tollefson who had recently graduated as a Registered Nurse from the Deaconess School of Nursing in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Together, they made the farm east of Churchs Ferry their home; and there they raised one daughter, Kay, and four sons, Daniel, Robert, Craig, and Paul. A fifth son, David, died in infancy.

All five children attended post-secondary education. After college, the oldest son, Daniel, returned to join in the farming operation while the others pursued other successful lives and careers.

In addition to being a successful farmer, Wilton was very active in local and community affairs, serving on the board of directors of the Devils Lake Junior College Development Board, Ramsey County ASCS, Lake Region Credit Union, Devils Lake Farmers Union Oil Company, Coulee Township Board of Supervisors, Churchs Ferry Men's Club, and the Masonic Lodge. He was a life member of the VFW. Shirley was also active in the community, belonging to numerous clubs over the years. She taught piano to neighbor children and became a certified dental assistant employed in Devils Lake. Wilton and Shirley and their family were all active members of Zion Lutheran Church in Churchs Ferry.

Wilton was a prolific reader, and both he and Shirley instilled the importance of education in their children. The family believes that hard-working North Dakota students are deserving of scholarships to help make their dreams come true. With this endowment, they honor that commitment. ✦

This quote written by Wilton Webster late in his life is reflective of his views regarding respect for others, equal opportunity for all, and the significance of compromise: *"I shall respect my opposition in deference to the possibility that that opposition is correct. If my opposition should see fit to grant me the same respect in deference to that same possibility, then together we have sown the seeds of progress."*