



Sept. 7, 2004

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Alumni couple gives back to Wesleyan community
through \$1 million gift to fund endowment**

FORT WORTH, Sept. 7 – Wesleyan alumni couple Jack '43 Morton and Jo Willa '42 Stuteville Morton, gave \$1 million to Texas Wesleyan University, the largest gift in university history from an alumnus. The gift will be used to fund The Jack L. and Jo Willa Morton Scholarship Endowment for Christian Ministries, which will provide scholarships for students who plan to enter the field of Christian ministry.

The renovation of the Polytechnic United Methodist Church is funded in part by \$35,000 of the Morton's gift. Ownership of the church building itself was transferred to Texas Wesleyan University, a sister United Methodist institution, in 2003. The renovation of the church will provide a center for Christian ministries and house the English, humanities and religion faculty. Plans for this expansion are well under way, with completion projected for the 2005-06 academic year.

"Jack and Jo Willa Morton have stepped up to make a significant impact on the lives of Texas Wesleyan students," said Wesleyan's President Harold G. Jeffcoat. "The income from this

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endowment will provide much needed scholarships for years to come. We owe a great deal of gratitude to the Mortons for their generosity.”

The Mortons said they have been extremely fortunate in life and that they wanted to give this gift to Texas Wesleyan to provide opportunities for others to succeed.

“We talked about a lot of things we might do,” said Jack. “We asked ourselves, what is the best thing to stop poverty and end crime and that [thing] is education.”

They added that Texas Wesleyan is dear to them, as their alma mater and the place where they met; it is a defining part of their lives. The Mortons met over 60 years ago at Texas Wesleyan, when Jack took Jo Willa to a DeKa sorority formal. A mutual friend suggested that Jo Willa invite Jack to the dance, but Jack said he had his eye on her long before then, having seen her across the room in a speech class.

“She was a year ahead of me and I had seen her in a speech class that we had, which was in the auditorium, and I inquired about her, and she was going steady with some fellow,” said Jack. “He was the number one trumpet player in the band, and so I said, ‘well then I won’t start anything.’ About three months later I received a note [from Jo Willa] and it said, ‘would I please pick up Jo Willa Stuteville in Ann Waggoner Hall at 7 o’clock to go to the DeKa dance.’”

He added, “I’ve been very fortunate in life. The smartest thing I ever did was to marry Jo Willa.”

While attending Wesleyan, Jo Willa was active in student life and academics, had an affinity for math, was named “Sophomore Favorite” by her peers and worked in the school cafeteria.

Jack also was actively involved in student life on campus and maintained his academic

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focus while taking the Civil Pilot's Training courses, one of the first college training detachments in the area. His pilot training at Wesleyan helped him achieve a successful career in aviation, which began with his performance in the Army Air Corps in 1943 where he learned to fly several types of airplanes such as the P-63, P-51, P-47, B-25, B-24 and more. While in the Army, Jack was selected among the elite to attend the British Flying School in Oklahoma. After serving his country, he was recruited by Braniff Airlines as a pilot, flying commercial airplanes for 35 years.

Throughout the years, from the time Jack and Jo Willa met at Wesleyan, they have enjoyed their involvement within the community. Jack has volunteered as a deacon at their Royal Lane Baptist Church in Dallas. In his spare time, he likes to stay busy, golfing, working out in the gym and reading for the blind. Jo Willa has been involved with everything from tennis to working with the Meals on Wheels Association of America. She is a talented artist and is involved with the Shepherd's Center in Dallas. The Mortons reside in Dallas and have three children: William, Kevin and Jean.

"I wouldn't change one thing," said Jo Willa. "The good, the bad, all of it. You learn from all of it."

She added that she wants to do whatever she can to make the world a better, more peaceful place. Jack and Jo Willa said they believe education is the "single, most important" step toward that goal, and ultimately, this is why they decided to give to Texas Wesleyan University.

"What I really hope is that [the gift] will be a catalyst," said Jack. "I hope that the city will see that [Texas Wesleyan] is a jewel and that they'll get behind it and support it."

For more information regarding donations or university advancement, please contact Gary Cumbie, vice president for advancement, at (817) 531-4404 or gcumbie@txwes.edu.

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