

U.S. Bank gift helps dyslexia grad program

by Tom Tozer

U.S. Bank recently helped fund a graduate scholarship program for the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia at MTSU with a check for \$2,000 to the MTSU Foundation.

Bryan Nale, branch manager of

the bank and a 2002 MTSU graduate, presented the check to Dr. Diane Sawyer, holder of the Katherine Davis Murfree Chair of Excellence in Dyslexic Studies.

"We strongly believe that education and outreach services are the keys to improving the quality of life for those who struggle with dyslex-

ia," Nale stated. "U.S. Bank is pleased to be a good neighbor and supporter of the center's efforts."

The MTSU Dyslexia Center was established in 1993 and provides assistance to students in grades K-12 who are diagnosed with dyslexia to help them become successful in school and life. It also offers support to the parents of the children.

"In addition to our work with students throughout Tennessee, we have helped teachers and administrators to better understand dyslexia—how to identify it and how effectively to educate these children," Sawyer explained. "We provide no-cost workshops and we offer graduate-level courses to meet this goal. The generous contribution by U.S. Bank will help us to start a scholarship fund for teachers who might not be able to take these courses without tuition assistance.

"This gift will have ripple effects throughout our community and throughout Tennessee. We at the Center and Middle Tennessee State University are grateful for this expression of support."

U.S. Bancorp is the parent company of U.S. Bank with assets of \$219 billion. The sixth largest commercial bank in the United States, it operates 2,472 banking offices throughout the nation.



READY TO LEARN—Friends and guests of the Dyslexia Center discuss U.S. Bank's recent scholarship gift to the center's graduate program. Listening to bank branch manager Bryan Nale explain the goals for the \$2,000 gift are, seated from left, parent Beth Holder, center student Andrew Holder and graduate student Trina Shelton, and standing, Drs. Diane Sawyer of the center and Stuart Bernstein, psychology.

photo by J. Intintoli

Partnerships fueling Ricketts' research

by Randy Weiler

Long before MTSU's recent trend to build community and business partnerships, Dr. Cliff Ricketts was building corporate bridges in his career-long quest to find alternative fuels.

Since 1991, Ricketts, professor in the agribusiness and agriscience department, has had a sponsorship-turned-partnership with Brentwood-based Tractor Supply Co. TSC has contributed more than \$118,000 to Ricketts' research efforts.

"We were trying to set the land speed record in '91, and I wrote to about six companies. The only one to respond was Tractor Supply," Ricketts said. "(The late) Tom Hennessey was the president and CEO. He was the National Future Farmers of America Foundation chairman. The timing was right. He said he'd sponsor us."

TSC gave Ricketts' endeavor \$4,750 for nine years, then upped it to \$9,500 for each of the past eight years. MTSU has matched every dollar, Ricketts said.

"They're proud of the research we've done," he said of TSC. "We wouldn't have done as much without their help and the university's matching support."

Additionally, at the National FFA Convention attended by more than 50,000 people annually, Ricketts said he

and his student participants have had their booth space, which can cost upwards of \$10,000, paid by TSC. He laughs when he says he now works for MTSU alumna Michelle Butler, one of his former students and former Student Government Association president. She is a TSC merchandising coordinator.

Ricketts recently attended the TSC Manager's Convention at the Nashville Convention Center. He carried his alternative fuel message to the U.S. Congress in 2006 and a 30-minute "futuristic" outlook to the Tennessee House Agriculture Committee March 6.

Other partnerships Ricketts has crafted through the years include Valspar Corp. (paint) of Minneapolis, the Tennessee Valley Authority (Green Power Switch) and Bridgestone/Firestone (tires). Valspar hauled, painted and added MTSU and sponsor decals to two Corvettes in the research program for about \$30,000, he said.

Ricketts participated March 14-16 in a meeting of Hypowerfuel Advisory Committee members at Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

In May, Ricketts hopes to conduct a run across the state in a Toyota Tercel converted to run on hydrogen. The hydrogen is taken from water through an electrolysis unit on the MTSU campus in the vocational ag shop. The unit is powered by the sun's energy, which is stored in the gridline of Murfreesboro Electric through the TVA Green Power Switch program.

Ricketts hopes to make the 600-mile run from Bristol to Memphis, with a stopover in Murfreesboro, in one day, with sun and water as the only two energy sources.



Ricketts

Women engineers await March 29 panel

Brenda Sanford, Susan Ferrell and Fiona King will participate in the first Women in Engineering Panel, event co-coordinator Dr. Judith Iriarte-Gross said.

It will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 29, in Davis Science Building Room 100.

Students and others interested in engineering careers are welcome. The event is part of National Women's History Month activities.

Each panelist will share for 10 to 15 minutes how they decided on engineering as a career and field questions, Iriarte-Gross said.

Sanford is conservation engineer for the Prince George's County Soil Conservation District in Maryland.

Farrell is nuclear assurance project manager at TVA's Watts Bar Nuclear Plant.

King is an infrastructure marketing specialist for Gresham, Smith and

Partners in Nashville.

Dr. Sid Sridhara, professor of engineering technology and industrial studies, also is working with Iriarte-Gross on the event.

For more information, contact Iriarte-Gross at jiriarte@mtsu.edu or 615-904-8253.

Martin golf tourney again teeing off for scholarships

by Randy Weiler

Organizers and Insurance Liaison Committee members continue to work to raise student scholarship funds through the 23rd annual Martin Chair of Insurance Invitational Golf Tournament.

The tournament will be held Tuesday, April 17, at Champions Run Golf Course in Rockvale. The event is sponsored by the MTSU Foundation.

"Having a good golf tournament involves having a full complement of players, a nice prize for each player and a large number of hole sponsors," Jim Cavendish, chairman of the 36-member committee, told more than 20 of his insurance colleagues during a Feb. 9 luncheon at Stones River Country Club.

"We cannot fail in either of these areas if we wish to do well," he added. "However, securing hole sponsorships is possibly the most important, because hole sponsorship money flows straight to the bottom line with very little expense, if any at all. Unlike players, there is no limit on the number of hole sponsors we can accept."

Cavendish said to "increase our intake from last year is going to take a concerted effort from every member of the committee. We were able to generate \$33,000 for the (Martin) Chair of Insurance last year. We left some on the table, so I hope that we can do better this go-round."

Dr. Ken Hollman, Martin Chair of Insurance chairholder, said between \$40,000 and \$45,000 in scholarship money will be awarded to 56 students for the 2006-07 academic year.

"For the first time in perhaps 15 years, we have increased the amount of money that scholarship winners get," Hollman said.

"This year, majors receive \$1,000, up from \$750, and minors receive \$750, up from \$500."

Hollman said the program has awarded more than 820 scholarships to 425 students since 1983-84. "We will have a big to-do when the 1,000th scholarship is presented," he added.

The tournament schedule features lunch and registration from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m.; a shotgun start, rain or shine, at noon; and a 4:30 p.m. meal and awards presentation.

Events of the day include best ball scramble play, a putting contest, par-3 contest, longest drive award and first hole-in-one on par-3 hole No. 17.

The latter wins a two-year lease privilege for the new car on display, courtesy of Alexander Ford Lincoln Mercury in Murfreesboro.