

Wisconsin Idea endowment. 2001

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BALDWIN GIFT CREATES WISCONSIN IDEA ENDOWMENT

MADISON -- "We recognize that no one can now predict with certainty the future of any institution, with respect to its organization, purposes, needs, or even its existence. However, it seems to us that the needs of civilization for the education of youth, and the desire to explore the mysteries of nature, will endure as long as civilization itself endures; and that the University of Wisconsin-Madison ... will perform such duties."

Ira Baldwin, professor emeritus of bacteriology and former dean of the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, wrote these words in a letter to friends in 1991, eight years before his death at 103.

The letter also was signed by his wife, Ineva, former UW-Madison assistant dean of women for the College of Letters and Science, who died last year in Tucson, Ariz., at age 96. Ira and Ineva Baldwin were deeply committed to the university as a source of education, research and service for the benefit of the world community.

A \$21.7 million gift from the estate of Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin will create the Wisconsin Idea Endowment. A central theme in the university's mission for more than 100 years, the Wisconsin Idea calls for the resources of the university to serve the people of the state, the country, and beyond. The endowment will help fund new service-learning programs for students, research projects focusing on critical issues in society and alumni sabbaticals for community service.

Projects under consideration include partnerships with community service programs for undergraduates, grants for faculty and staff to undertake research on societal issues, alumni service programs involving employers, grants to develop learning opportunities for public audiences on community issues, blue ribbon conferences and research publications.

"Both Ira and Ineva believed in intellectual challenge in pursuit of the public good," says UW-Madison Chancellor John Wiley. "Their generous legacy gives us the opportunity to continue this idea."

Ira Baldwin came to Madison in 1925 as a graduate student after serving in World War I and earning his bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture from Purdue University. He helped discover bacteria that improved crop yields, especially alfalfa, which in turn encouraged the growth of dairy farming in the state. A popular teacher and respected administrator, Ira was chairman of the bacteriology department (1941-44), dean of the graduate school (1944-45) and dean of the College of Agriculture (1945-48). He was appointed vice president for academic affairs and served as special assistant to the president until his retirement in 1966.

Ineva Reilly Baldwin was born in Indianapolis, the daughter of Peter Reilly, founder of Reilly Industries Inc. She received her undergraduate education at UW-Madison, the University of Geneva in Switzerland, and the University of Colorado. Although she earned her MA in botany from the UW, she embarked on a career in teaching and university administration. Enlisting in the Coast Guard Reserves during World War II, she attained the rank of lieutenant commander, the highest rank achieved by a woman at the time. Upon her discharge in 1946, Ineva Baldwin served as assistant dean of women until her marriage to Ira in 1954.

In the 1960s and '70s, the Baldwins traveled extensively in South America and the Far East for the U.S. State Department, assisting developing countries to build educational and research facilities. Ira Baldwin was well into his eighties when he went to Indonesia to help establish an agricultural program.

"A love of science and its role in improving humankind permeated all aspects of their lives. Their vocations were their avocations," says Tom Reilly, chairman of the Board of Reilly Industries and nephew of Ineva.

During their many years of support for the university, the Baldwins provided funding for professorships, fellowships, graduate student recruitment and scholarships. Among the beneficiaries of their generosity were the Arboretum, Allen Gardens, Southeast Asia Center, University Club and the

Clinical Cancer Center.

Ineva Baldwin served on the advisory council of the Elvehjem Museum of Art to which she donated selected pieces from her collection of Lalique crystal. In 1981, the Baldwins were jointly honored with the Wisconsin Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award.

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