

NET Establishes Ron Hull Endowment Fund as Part of Inspire Nebraska Campaign

LINCOLN, Neb. (Nov. 16, 2009) -- NET announced the establishment of the Ron Hull Fund for the Telling of Nebraska's Stories this week, as part of the NET \$25 million Inspire Nebraska Campaign. Hull is serving as co-chair of the Campaign with Lincoln philanthropist Jim Seacrest.

The lead gift to establish the fund was made by Clay Smith, co-owner of Speedway Motors, and his wife, Beth.

"Ron Hull has inspired Nebraskans for more than 50 years through his vision, creativity and passion for public television," said Smith. "My wife and I have known the Hull family for years and have boundless respect for Ron and the work that he has done at NET."

Hull was one of the first people hired at KUON-TV -- Nebraska public television's flagship station -- back when television was still live and color hadn't yet made its debut. Nearly 55 years later, Hull still serves as a senior advisor at NET Television.

He was hired as a producer in 1955 by NET founding general manager Jack McBride. During his tenure he developed such programs as the "Anyone for Tennyson?" poetry series and the five-part drama series on Mark Twain, both of which aired nationally on PBS. Later he served as station manager for KUON-TV and associate general manager for NET.

Hull also served as the Director of the Program Fund for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and as a special advisor for programming at PBS. He also worked for the United States Information Agency as a television advisor to the Government of South Vietnam, and taught courses in international television in Taiwan as a Fulbright Scholar.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Dakota Wesleyan University in South Dakota, a Master of Science Degree from Syracuse University in New York and a Doctorate of Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"Ron has truly been telling Nebraska's stories since the very beginning of public television in Nebraska," said NET General Manager Rod Bates. "This fund in his name will ensure that his gift for storytelling and sharing will continue to impact Nebraskans for generations to come. This fund is Ron's legacy to Nebraska."

Hull met Seacrest in the late 1950s, when Jim worked at KUON-TV as a camera operator during his student days at the University of Nebraska. The two have been friends ever since.

When Seacrest was asked if he would serve as campaign co-chair of the five-year Inspire Nebraska Campaign, he answered yes without hesitation -- with only one caveat: "I will if Ron Hull is my co-chair," said Seacrest.

The \$25 million Inspire Nebraska Campaign is comprised of two distinct giving opportunities: \$10 million in planned gifts and outright gifts to the endowment and \$15 million in annual and special gift support. Contributions made to the Ron Hull Fund will fall under the endowment portion of the Inspire Nebraska Campaign.

Gifts to the Ron Hull Endowment Fund for Telling Nebraska's Stories will ensure that NET's local programming, including documentaries like "Homemade Astronaut: The Clay Anderson Story" and "The Recipe Box" and series like "Nebraska Stories," will flourish for future generations.

The NET Foundation for Radio and the NET Foundation for Television are the statewide nonprofit 501(c)(3) citizen support organizations chartered to assist the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission to establish and operate NET Radio and NET Television.

NET Television, NET Radio, NET Learning Services and NET Technology Services are all services of NET. For more information about NET, visit the Web site at netNebraska.org.

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