From the Desk of the Chancellor

Naming the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

Apr. 23, 2013
by Charles R. Bantz

On April 9, we celebrated the inauguration of the world’s first school of philanthropy. We also were able to celebrate naming the school for the Lilly Family.

Anyone living in Indiana has seen the Lilly name associated with philanthropy. That tradition of giving dates back to the 19th century beginning with Col. Eli Lilly, who co-founded the chamber of commerce and what is today Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health.

Josiah K. Lilly, known as J.K. Lilly, expanded his father’s philanthropy -- most notably by establishing the Lilly Endowment in 1937 with his two sons, J.K. Jr. and Eli. In establishing a private foundation, separate from Eli Lilly and Co., the Lilly Family created one of the country’s most important philanthropies. Over the past 75 years, the Lilly Endowment has made over $7 billion in grants!

But the Lilly Family philanthropy is not only through the Lilly Endowment. Ruth Lilly supported libraries, as well as Herron School, and the School of Philanthropy. J.K. Lilly Jr. gave collections and resources to support the Lilly Library at IU Bloomington. Eli Lilly gave his home and his father’s home, Cedar Crest, to Indiana University. The list goes on and on.

And the family tradition continues. We were privileged to have Irene Lilly McCutchen, the great-granddaughter of J.K. Lilly, with us at the inauguration, and she passed on to us her family’s commitment, saying: “Thank you, dear family. We are inspired by your compassion and your concerns for the needs of others.”

Read more From the Desk of the Chancellor stories »