

FROM ONE GRAD TO ANOTHER: THANKS

Recent College of Medicine graduate Curtis McKnight, M.D., summarized his classmates' sentiments in two powerful words — thank you. McKnight penned the words in a letter to Richard Hirschmann, M.D., '73, of Chicago, who co-created an award that allows the graduating class to select and honor outstanding faculty members who have significantly influenced their medical education.

Dr. Hirschmann and his father, Jerome Hirschmann, M.D., '41, established the Hirschmann Prize for Teaching Excellence in 2000 with a gift to the University of Nebraska Foundation. This year's recipients are Drs. J. Scott Neumeister and Paul Larsen.

"The Hirschmanns' gift is one example of how meaningful alumni philanthropic contributions are to UNMC," said Amy Volk, vice president, University of Nebraska Foundation. "The Hirschmanns' support is an investment in our faculty and enhances the Medical Center's efforts to recruit and retain outstanding educators."

Additionally, graduates' philanthropic gifts have helped physically transform the campus in the past decade. From the Michael F. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education to the Durham Research Center II, these new facilities provide state-of-the-art environments for learning, teaching and research.

Less visible, but equally significant, are the scholarship and support funds graduates have created to benefit students in every UNMC college. These gifts are especially important as the average debt upon graduation ranges from \$32,600 for nursing students to \$128,300 for medical students.

"During the previous academic year more than 83 percent of UNMC students received some form of financial aid," Volk said. "With the continuing increase in tuition and in competition for financial assistance, securing additional private support for students is a priority for every UNMC college. In some cases, it can be the difference between students having the resources to complete their degrees and pursue their dreams or not."

Privately-funded scholarships also enable UNMC to effectively compete for top students from across the state and country.

"UNMC graduates should be proud of their generous commitment to UNMC over the years," Volk said. "It has benefited UNMC students and faculty and, ultimately, the patients who receive their care."

"UNMC is committed to becoming a world-class academic health science center. With that, the opportunities for growth and progress are tremendous and alumni support is critical to this vision." 