

## **Dr. Harry and Beth Weigel and Alice and Robert Williamson**

---

The Weigel Williamson Center for Visual Rehabilitation is named for Dr. Harry and Beth Weigel of Auburn, Calif., and Robert and Alice Williamson of Omaha. They made the lead gift to the building project.

Over the years the two families have generously supported the University of Nebraska. Among their gifts the families funded the Van Brunt Visitors Center, which created and serves as an inviting front door to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's campus. This facility was named to honor Beth and Alice's parents, Winslow and Irene Van Brunt. The Van Brunts were both graduates of the University of Nebraska and strong supporters of the University and its Alumni Association.

### **Dr. Harry and Beth Weigel**

Even though Dr. Harry and Beth Weigel moved from Omaha nearly 50 years ago, they continue to support the University of Nebraska and the community where they both grew up. Following Dr. Weigel's graduation from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in 1958, the Weigels moved to Denver, where Dr. Weigel completed an internship and residency in internal medicine. During that time Dr. Weigel became a charter member of the national Nuclear Medicine Society. Also while living in Denver the Weigels' youngest daughter was born with intermediate amblyopia, or lazy eye, a condition that can lead to blindness. Fortunately eye patching, exercises and ultimately surgery reversed the condition. Today their daughter's vision is normal.

Following medical training, the family moved to Danville, Calif., in the San Francisco Bay area. Here Dr. Weigel established a private medical practice and ran nuclear medicine laboratories. Mrs. Weigel was actively involved as a volunteer at Children's Hospital in Oakland, where she also served as president of the Hospital Auxiliary. Dr. Weigel retired, for the first time from medical practice, in 1971. He then returned to private practice — this time in the Lake Tahoe area — until 1986 and then served as a flight surgeon with the Federal Aviation Association until his final retirement in 1995.

Today Dr. and Mrs. Weigel live in Auburn, Calif., near their two daughters and four grandchildren. For both Dr. and Mrs. Weigel, the devastating effects of vision loss have continued to touch their lives. Dr. Weigel's father, at an early age, experienced vision problems due to Graves' disease. And Mrs. Weigel and Mrs. Williamson's mother, Irene Van Brunt, developed macular degeneration later in her life.

### **Alice and Robert Williamson**

Alice and Robert Williamson believe it is important to support their community and the institutions that contribute so greatly to the quality of life in the city and state. The Omahans are especially proud of the University of Nebraska and its medical center and are pleased to be able to help persons with vision loss through their gift to benefit the vision rehabilitation center at UNMC. Their gift commitment, Mrs. Williamson said, reflects her parents' philanthropic nature and belief in helping mankind.

Alice and Bob Williamson are personally aware of the frustration one can experience when faced with low vision. Mrs. Williamson underwent multiple surgeries for corrective vision. Thanks to the care she received at UNMC from Thomas Hejkal, M.D., Mrs. Williamson said she can see today. "I know the frustration one feels when faced with low vision," she remarked. "You don't truly understand until you experience it. It's wonderful how much this facility will help people."

Mrs. Williamson graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1950 with a degree in education. She taught in Omaha for five years and then went on to pursue a graduate degree at Columbia University. While in New York Mrs. Williamson worked at NBC Studios for nine years in the areas of literary rights, production and also as a liaison between the Writers Guild and NBC. She eventually moved to Houston, where she enjoyed a career in real estate.

Robert Williamson graduated from Omaha University in 1948 with a degree in psychology. He went on to become a district manager for Owens Corning. The Williamsons lived in Houston until 1993 when they returned to Omaha.