

# Dorothy and Stanley M. Truhlsen, MD

**D**orothy and Stanley M. Truhlsen, MD, both grew up in small towns where people constantly and readily contributed for the betterment of their communities.

Raised during the Depression — Dr. Truhlsen in Herman, Neb., and Dorothy in Fairfield, Iowa — they each witnessed how people gave of their time and resources despite the hardships many families faced.

These experiences shaped their belief in the importance of giving back to their community and particularly to the University of Nebraska.

“In recent years Dorothy and I have supported the Durham Research Center and the Sorrell Center for Health Science Education at the University of Nebraska Medical Center,” said Dr. Truhlsen. “As a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the College of Medicine, it has been satisfying for me to give back to the institution in this way. I owe a great deal to the University of Nebraska.”

Dr. Truhlsen, emeritus professor and former chairman of UNMC’s department of ophthalmology, is nationally recognized in the field of ophthalmology. He graduated from UNMC in 1944 and received UNMC’s Distinguished Service to Medicine Award in 2003. Dr. Truhlsen completed residencies at Albany Hospital in New York and Barnes Hospital in St. Louis.

A private practice physician, he joined UNMC’s ophthalmology department in 1951. He served on the UNMC faculty until 1990 and was



interim chairman of the department of ophthalmology in 1989-90. Since 1993, he has held the position of emeritus clinical professor of ophthalmology.

Dr. Truhlsen is a past president of the College of Medicine’s Alumni Association and served as president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology in 1983 and the American Ophthalmological Society (AOS) in 1996.

During Dr. Truhlsen’s tenure as president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, he participated in the Academy’s launch of the National Eye Care Program. This effort brought together 7,000 volunteer ophthalmologists nationwide who provided, at no cost, care for the elderly in need.

In 2001, Dr. Truhlsen received the Lucien Howe Medal from the AOS, the oldest ophthalmic organization in the United States. The Howe

Medal is considered one of the most prestigious awards in ophthalmology and is the only award given by the AOS. It is awarded in recognition of “conspicuous services as a researcher or a teacher during long years of devotion” and for contributions to ophthalmology.

Founded in 1864, AOS has approximately 225 members. To become a member, an ophthalmologist must be nominated and seconded by society members and then have a thesis accepted.

The Truhlsens’s generous support of their community has benefited many projects across Omaha and UNMC. Their gifts have provided funding for the Durham Western Heritage Museum lecture hall, renovations and an addition to Countryside Community Church, the Holland Performing Arts Center, the Salvation Army Kroc Center and the Joslyn Art Museum sculpture garden.

Their gifts also have established the Truhlsen Eye Research Laboratories in the Durham Research Center and the Dr. Stanley M. and Dorothy Truhlsen Campus Events Center in the Sorrell Center, both located on the UNMC campus.

With charitable giving, Dr. Truhlsen said, “we typically contribute, and then we watch. We are pleased by the accomplishments realized. But occasionally we are astounded. We are amazed by the medical center’s transformation in recent years and impressed that research has become tremendously important at UNMC.”

# The Truhlsen Family

The children of Dr. Stanley M. Truhlsen and the late Ruth Truhlsen have joined together to honor their mother's memory and their father's commitment to Omaha and the greater world of ophthalmology. Their generous gift establishes the Ruth H. Truhlsen Educational Center, Given by William C. Truhlsen, Nancy Truhlsen Brager, Stanley M. Truhlsen Jr., and Barbara Truhlsen Mitchell.

William Truhlsen, the eldest of the four children, earned a bachelor's and a master's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in zoology and physiology with an emphasis in cell biology. He went on to work as a perfusionist with the heart lung machine and heart surgeries at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinic. In 1977 Bill returned to Omaha where he continued his career at St. Joseph

Hospital and then Nebraska Methodist Hospital. He and his wife, Joan, have one son, Matt.

Nancy (Truhlsen) Brager and her husband, John, live in Lincoln, Neb., where they raised their four children: Yancy, Alison, Erin and Jonathan. From 1969 to 1973 Nancy worked in nursing at the former Clarkson Hospital in the coronary care unit. There Nancy helped develop the Phase II Unit to assist patients with improving their coronary health. Her hobbies include cooking, entertaining, fishing and traveling besides staying busy with her six grandchildren.

Stanley Truhlsen Jr.'s 21-year career as a professional golfer began in 1973 when he enrolled in the apprentice program of the PGA of America as an assistant golf professional at the Sioux City Country Club in Iowa. He went on to work at Riverside Golf Club in

Grand Island, Neb., and Lakeshore Country Club in Council Bluffs, Iowa, before becoming a "Class A" member of the PGA of America in 1977.

Stan completed his golfing career at Tenison Park Golf Course in Dallas and returned to Omaha where he has worked at Matrix Telemarketing Services for the past 17 years.

Barbara Truhlsen Mitchell has lived in Dallas since 1980 when she began her career in advertising at Bozell & Jacobs. Barbara has held leadership positions in advertising agencies and entrepreneurial internet start-up organizations. Currently she serves as vice president of marketing for Westec Intelligent Surveillance. Barbara graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in journalism. She and her husband, Peter, have one daughter, Jenny.

# Judith and Charles Fritch, MD

Judith and Charles share a passion for helping others. Through their support of high quality vision care, education, medical research and wellness, they have benefited people and programs around the world, from eye mission projects in India to latchkey school programs in central California.

Charles Fritch, MD, FACS, a renowned ophthalmologist, is founder and owner of Fritch Eye Care Center, one of the largest cataract and refractive practices in California. A pioneer in his field, Dr. Fritch helped develop modern surgical techniques in cataract and retina/vitreous surgery and holds patents related to surgical advances in lens implantation and endoscopic laser surgery.

A native of Iowa, he received a bachelor of arts in science education from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1964 and a medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 1968. Following



his internship in family medicine, he served two years as a flight surgeon for the United States Army. In 1974, Fritch completed his residency in

ophthalmology through the University of California Los Angeles program at Kern Medical Center.

Dr. Fritch served as co-director for the Cataract and Corneal Fellowship Program at the University of California, Irvine for six years. He has conducted numerous educational seminars and surgeries in numerous countries, including China, India and Korea.

Judith, an exercise advocate and former owner of Lifetime Fitness, is a member of the University of Nebraska Foundation's Women Investing in Nebraska. She also is a life member of the California State University, Bakersfield Foundation Board of Directors.

The Fritches are actively involved with the University of Nebraska, specifically the UNMC College of Medicine and the UNO College of Arts & Sciences; the Nebraska Alumni Association and the University of Nebraska Foundation.

# Alice and Robert Williamson

When Alice Williamson spoke about her and her husband, Robert's, support of important causes, she did so in an understated, modest manner. "You just give where your heart is," she explained. "You share."

The Williamsons' support of ophthalmic care at UNMC, Alice shared in 2007, reflected her parent's philanthropic nature and belief in helping mankind.

"Our hearts go out to people who have had problems with their vision," said Williamson, who underwent multiple surgeries for corrective vision. Her mother had macular degeneration, too.

"It was so frustrating to her," Alice remembered of her mother. "We know her last days would have been so much happier if she had been able to see well enough to read."

Alice later recalled a phone call from a woman regarding a friend who



had gone through rehab at the UNMC Weigel Williamson Center for Visual Rehabilitation. "Alice, this woman is a

different person now. She says, 'I now have hope,'" the caller told her. The Williamsons along with Alice's sister and husband, Beth and Harry Weigel, MD, were principal donors to the facility that carries their names. It was dedicated in 2008.

A phone call like that meant a lot to Alice who died in 2012. It would have meant a lot to her parents, too. It was proof that extraordinary things happen because of a family whose giving is anything but ordinary.

Both Alice and Robert earned degrees from the University of Nebraska: Alice from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1950; and Robert from Omaha University in 1948. Following graduation Alice taught in Omaha for five years and then pursued a graduate degree at Columbia University. Robert went on to become a district manager for Owens Corning. The Williamsons lived in Houston until 1993, when they returned to Omaha.

# Marshall and Mona Faith

Marshall and Mona Faith and their service to the Omaha community were inextricably intertwined. The Faiths were involved in and passionate about many community projects and volunteer boards over the years, until her death in June 2018. But it was a personal experience with macular degeneration endangering Mona's sight that ignited a passion to invest in a local institute for the treatment of ocular disease.

Marshall and Mona, both natives of Salina, Kan., met in elementary school. They married in 1949 and learned early in life about giving back and investing in people and causes. After serving in the U.S. Navy, Marshall earned a degree in milling administration from Kansas State University. He began his career in the grain industry in 1951 working for the Pillsbury Company and later for Bartlett Grain Company before purchasing the majority share of what was called Scoular-Bishop Grain Company in 1967. Today, thanks to



their vision, leadership and service, Scoular is one of the largest grain warehousing companies in the United States.

With Mona at his side, Marshall led The Scoular Company for nearly 50

years, until becoming vice chairman of the board. He now serves chairman emeritus, a lifetime appointment. Marshall actively served the community in leadership roles for groups such as the Aksarben Board of Governors, Boy Scouts of America, United Way, Salvation Army, SAC Consultation Committee, Joslyn Art Museum and Clarkson Hospital.

Mona also had many commitments to charitable activity. In addition to raising four children, she served for 10 years on the Friends Board of Children's Hospital. Her favorite job during the time was being "the Toy Lady." She was part of the founding board that developed Quality Living Inc. (QLI Tri-Dimensional Rehabilitation) in Omaha and was also an active leader and board member of Girl Scouts. In addition she was among the founding members of Rockbrook United Methodist Church and was an active supporter of Omaha Youth for Christ and Young Life Programs.