



# News Release

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## **Floyd Harding announces \$1 million contribution to Northern Maine Community College Foundation to establish Floyd and Jean Harding scholarship fund**

**Aroostook County** - At a dedication ceremony for a new gazebo erected on the Northern Maine Community College campus in memory of his late wife, B. Jean Harding, Presque Isle attorney Floyd Harding announced a \$1 million gift to NMCC – the largest individual private contribution received to date by a Community College in the state or any institution of higher education in northern Maine.

The charitable remainder trust, established through the NMCC Foundation as part of the *Campaign for the County's College*, will benefit student scholarships, specifically the Jean and Floyd Harding Scholarship Fund. College officials anticipate more than 150 deserving NMCC students will receive financial assistance annually as a result of the gift.

“One day, in fact for many days, these people who are benefiting from the Jean and Floyd Harding Scholarship Fund may well ask: ‘Who was that Jean and Floyd Harding anyway?’ On this day I would tell you that I hope they would know that we were two people that tried to give love and hope to both the old and the young,” said Harding immediately after announcing the donation.

The announcement was met with applause by the NMCC faculty, staff and students, state and local political leaders, dozens of family members and many friends of Floyd and (the late) Jean Harding who gathered for the dedication ceremony.

“Floyd and Jean were an outstanding couple. As I have gotten to know Floyd I have been amazed at the history he has lived and the contributions he has made. He has met presidents and leaders. He has given to his community in many ways,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “The donation to the college is very significant and it will help hundreds for years to come. It is his commitment to his fellow human beings that we should be most impressed with. It is an honor and a pleasure to know Floyd and to know that he believes in the work that has been done and is being done at NMCC. The people of the County will be forever in Floyd and Jean Harding’s debt. We are grateful and humbled by your generosity.”

The establishment of the scholarship fund is not the first significant contribution Floyd Harding has made to the Presque Isle college. In the early 1960's he was among the driving forces and member of an ad hoc committee established to bring, what was referred to at the time as, vocational education to Aroostook County.

As a result of the civic group's efforts and those of area legislators, including Representatives Harold Stewart and Senator E. Perrin Edmunds, a bill was passed in 1961 to establish the Northeastern Maine Vocational Institute, a forerunner of NMCC.

Harding, a respected attorney and former State Senator, who was elected to three terms in the Maine State Senate, beginning in 1964, served as both majority and minority leader in the chamber. He has long been known as a leader and activist in the Democratic Party, having served as chair of both the Presque Isle and Aroostook County Democratic Committees and as an active advisor and campaigner for numerous elected officials in the party.

A native of central Maine and one of twelve children, Harding grew up on a dairy farm before attending Colby College in Waterville in 1941, where he earned his first degree. In 1949, he graduated from Boston University Law School and subsequently passed the Maine and Massachusetts bar entry exams.

In his remarks leading up to the major gift announcement, Harding referenced his own experience with accessing higher education.

"For me, this is also payback because anonymous people made a contribution to Colby College that made it possible for me to attend that wonderful school. The generosity of those wonderful benefactors has made it possible for me to better serve my community, county, state and nation," said Harding.

Between his years at Colby and Boston University, Harding served in the United States Armed Forces during World War II in Europe. In the early days of the Battle of the Bulge, he was captured by the Germans and became a prisoner of war. During his internment, he was held in Dresden and was present during the fire bombings of the German city.

He first came to Aroostook County in 1950, after being hired by Clifford McIntire, assistant general manager of Maine Potato Growers, to work as the cooperative's credit manager and assistant general counsel.

After working for MPG for four years, he established a private law practice and began an active life of civic involvement and leadership.

In 1950, Harding became one of the charter members of the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club. He was elected president of the organization in 1957 and continues to be an active member today. He also served on the board of directors of the Presque Isle hospital for many years, including serving as its president from 1963 through 1964.

Another organization benefiting from his involvement is the Presque Isle Chamber of Commerce, of which Harding has been a member since starting his law practice, serving as president in 1958. He has also been involved in raising funds for his church, Grant Memorial Methodist.

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