



James Winner Jr., a western Pennsylvania entrepreneur who with his wife Donna contributed \$1 million to the Slippery Rock University Foundation Inc. for student scholarships, died Sept. 14. He was 81 and leaves a legacy of higher education advocacy and benevolence.

“Mr. Winner’s generosity and philanthropic spirit has made a difference throughout this region and beyond,” said Barbara Ender, vice president of University Advancement. “The scholarship he and Donna established with a \$1 million gift at Slippery Rock University in 2008 will allow generations of students in Mercer County to pursue a college degree. His was a life lived with purpose and many lives will be better as a result.”

The Winner Foundation Scholarships are awarded with a preference to students who are dependent children of Winner International, his company. Recipients must have a 3.0 grade-point average and be recommended by a school administrator.

Winner believed so strongly in SRU’s mission of providing affordable education, he simply mailed a check to the University with little advance notice. “With education comes everything else: the economy, business, fulfillment, everything hinges on education,” he said at the time.

Winner grew up on his parents’ family farm in Transfer, Pa. He joined the Army at 18 and served in the Korean War. Donna Winner’s mother, Sadie Evelyn Lindey, graduated from Slippery Rock State Normal School in 1927.

James Winner was best known as the maker of The Club vehicle anti-theft device and other security products. The success of The Club enabled the company to expand into commercial, residential, recreational and personal security and safety markets worldwide. He also owned hotels, including The Tara – A Country Inn and The Radisson in Shenango.

The Winners believed and practiced tithing, giving away 10 percent of their income to charitable causes. They also dedicated 10 percent of Winner International’s profits to the Winner Foundation, which helps children continue their education.

“God has blessed me very well in my life, and I feel a strong moral obligation to give back,” Winner said in 2008.