

NTID receives \$2.5 million gift

February 1, 2000

A Florida couple has committed \$2.5 million as the lead gift for a glass-enclosed arts center in their name, to be constructed within the principal building of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology.

The Joseph F. and Helen C. Dyer Arts Center will house and exhibit works created by artists who are deaf and hearing in a 7,000 sq. ft. area, complete with a partial glass roof to provide natural light. This center will become the focal point within NTID's chief administrative and academic building.

"NTID holds a significant collection of artwork contributed by deaf people from all corners of the world," said Dr. Robert Davila, NTID CEO and vice president for RIT. This space will accommodate display and archival needs for this collection, as well as a study area and new exhibits from hearing and deaf artists, he said.

"NTID at RIT is of great importance to the deaf community," said Joseph F. Dyer, a retired mechanical engineer. "Helen and I want to help support NTID, which has made significant contributions to deaf education, technology, and the arts."

"We believe the arts are a large component of a well-rounded college education," said Helen C. Dyer. "Expression through art for deaf people is especially meaningful and beneficial."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Dyer are deaf and received training at schools for the deaf prior to attending leading universities. Mr. Dyer was employed as an engineer with a major pharmaceutical company for many years. Mrs. Dyer, who inherited her special appreciation for art from her father, has developed her own artistic talents throughout her lifetime.

The Dyer Arts Center will host university events and will regularly receive visits from national and international dignitaries. More than 4,000 visitors from across America and around the world came to NTID last year, including Ireland President Mary McAleese, and key education leaders from Japan, China, and Hungary. NTID's program is increasingly recognized as the preferred model for postsecondary education for deaf students around the world.

"The center will serve as a showcase for our technological and artistic expression, and further dramatize NTID as presenting a complete program for student preparation in the 21st Century. We are truly blessed to receive the lead gift from Joe and Helen," said Davila. "By providing this important gift to the world's foremost college program for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, the Dyers are setting an outstanding example for all of us and leaving a lasting legacy for future generations."

For more information about becoming a part of the creation of The Joseph F. and Helen C. Dyer Arts Center, contact The NTID Foundation at (716) 475-6836 (v/tty).

The gift also is featured in the February 16, 2000, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle: