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Schatz Trust Gives Estimated \$7.4 Million to HSU Research

ARCATA - Humboldt State University energy and forestry research is benefiting once again from the philanthropy of Louis W. Schatz, the late plastics industrialist. An estimated \$7.4 million has been gifted to the university, bringing the total amount of Schatz's charitable contributions to HSU to approximately \$15 million since he first became acquainted with the Arcata-based campus in 1987.

About two thirds of the Schatz trust funds will be used to support hydrogen research at the Schatz Energy Research Center (SERC) that Schatz helped to found in 1989.

The remainder will support the L.W. Schatz Demonstration Tree Farm in Maple Creek, a 385-acre field experiment station geared to forestry research and timberland-based demonstration projects and administered by HSU's Department of Forestry and Watershed Management.

Trust funds also will be used to finance an annual L.W. Schatz forestry lectureship, which will offer distinguished speakers opportunities to present public presentations on forestry issues, according to Dr. John Stuart, HSU professor of forestry.

To date, HSU has received about \$4.9 million of the latest gift in cash and municipal bonds, according to Dixie Johnson of the HSU Foundation. As much as \$2.5 million more may become available next spring, but the final total is subject to Internal Revenue Service review, and the amount of trust fund administrative expenses.

A Pennsylvania native born in Pittsburgh in 1912, Schatz was a pioneer in the World War II-era plastics industry who founded the General Plastics

Manufacturing Company in 1941. Beginning with plastic parts for the B-17 bomber, he cemented a nearly 60-year business relationship with Boeing. In the 1950s, he went on to manufacture polyurethane products, and developed specialized protective foams for use in aircraft passenger compartment walls, cockpit crash pads and nuclear waste shipping containers.

When the Schatz Energy Research Center began work in 1989, Schatz wrote a letter to the center's director, Dr. Peter A. Lehman, saying "I look forward to a successful research effort and hope that someday it will help solve the Earth's energy and pollution problems." Now famous internationally, SERC promotes the use of clean and renewable energy in society. HSU conferred an honorary doctorate on Schatz in 1996 for his visionary support of, and contributions to, the emerging "hydrogen economy" and forestry and tree farm research.

SERC achievements to date include development of the first solar powered hydrogen generation and refueling facility, patents and commercial licenses for fuel cell technology and the first fuel cell-powered car licensed for street use. The Schatz Hydrogen Generation Facility and the car are still in operation at SunLine Transit Agency in southern California.

The Schatz Demonstration Tree Farm encompasses experimentation and research in all aspects of tree growing, harvesting, and replacement. Hardwood research is a focus, as is productive forest management on small, privately owned timberland. Certified by the American Tree Farm System, the Maple Creek facility sponsors regular professional and community tours, seminars, conferences, meetings and informal sessions to disseminate information and develop future research needs. It offers a myriad of uses to professors, students, private tree farmers. HSU classes use the Demonstration Tree Farm for field trips and special projects.

In addition to tree cultivation, the Schatz Tree Farm promotes the economic development of non-industrial tree farming and proper utilization of the state's native hardwoods. It was one of the first recipients of a stewardship grant from the California Forest Incentive Program, a federal initiative to foster the environmental enhancement of non-industrial

forestlands. The Tree Farm is using the grant to demonstrate the integration of forestry with ecosystem management and aesthetics in the riparian areas of two of the many ponds on the property.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Schatz worked for about three years as a forest economist in Minnesota and a surveyor in the Great Lakes, according to his son Henry. Eager to apply his forestry knowledge to private lands, he went to work for a logging company in Washington State, and developed a new technique for logging that minimized disruption of the surrounding forest.

"If the selective logging method devised by Lou Schatz in 1938 had been followed ever after," Henry Schatz said in a 2001 eulogy to his father, "the Pacific Northwest would never have had the environmental criticisms that have created a storm of controversy and job losses in this area. Lou's work received so much national attention that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt sent his secretary of the Interior, Mr. [Harold] Ickes, out to inspect his results."

After earning a master's degree in forestry science in 1939, Schatz undertook doctoral studies in chemical engineering at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. This work spurred him to apply plastics techniques to forest products.

"Lou was tremendously inventive and creative in the development of many coatings and preservative treatments for wood products and fabrics," Henry Schatz said. Industrious and untiring, the elder Schatz funded genetic research at the Penn State University College of Forestry in Pennsylvania for the hybridization of genetically superior, fast-growing trees, and provided funds for HSU forestry students to collaborate with Penn State students.

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