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The Moffett Scholars

State University of New York at Cortland

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THE MOFFETT SCHOLARS

FOUNDED IN 1963
TO HONOR

PRESIDENT DONOVAN C. MOFFETT



Donovan C. Moffett graduated from De Pauw University where he was an outstanding athlete and student leader. He received his M.S. from Columbia University and his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. In 1946 he came to Cortland as Director of Athletics. In 1947 he became Chairman of the Men's Physical Education Department. In 1952 he was appointed Director of the HPER Division. Two years later he became Dean of the College. In 1958 he was promoted to Acting President and in 1960 became President of State University College at Cortland.

THE MOFFETT SCHOLARS

Each year the Cortland College Development Foundation designates certain outstanding junior and senior students as Moffett Scholars, one of the highest honors a student can earn at Cortland. Established in 1963 these scholars honor Donovan C. Moffett, Cortland's fifth President.

The letter written by Acting President Ben A. Sultz to the family of Dr. Moffett, April 26, 1963, stated:

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Student Welfare Association on April twenty-fifth, the Board asked me to convey to you its feeling of most respectful concern with the loss of Dr. Moffett both as a person and as the President of the College. Perhaps this can best be done by repeating some of the statements made at the meeting. 'Dr. Moffett was one of the most loved and respected members not only of this Board but also of the community.' 'He was always greatly concerned with the image and reputation of the college in the community.' 'Dr. Moffett held a deep concern for the welfare of students and wanted the Association to serve their best interests. His vision extended far beyond the immediate needs.'

It will be of interest to you to know that the Board, under its charter, established The Donovan C. Moffett Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund and made an initial contribution of ten thousand dollars to the fund. Other contributions are being received.

We, the members of the Board of Directors, express to you our deepest sympathies for the loss of a loved one who was also a most esteemed and trusted friend and colleague.

A Committee was appointed to set up the criteria for selecting the Moffett Scholars. They worked with the Moffett family on this task. Scholarship, leadership, professional promise, participation in the college community, personality and responsibility are emphasized. Only those students with superior cumulative averages are invited to apply. Recommendations of teachers and counselors, lists of activities, offices and honors, and personal interviews are then used in selecting the Scholars.

While the designation of Moffett Scholar is primarily an honor, it does carry a stipend of one hundred dollars the first year and twenty-five dollars the second year (although this amount may vary at the discretion of the committee). The Moffett Scholars are listed on the Commencement Program

each year and honored with a luncheon and through the press. Moffett Scholar is recorded on the student's personnel record and in his placement folder.

The Interview Committee for the Moffett Scholars consists of the three members of the Cortland College Development Foundation Scholarship Committee, a representative appointed by the Executive Council of the faculty, and an administrator or faculty member invited by the Scholarship Committee to serve with them.

History of the Cortland College Development Foundation

The Student Welfare Association was organized in 1948 by Dr. Donnal V. Smith, then President of the college at Cortland. He called on eight members of the Cortland community and requested their aid in purchasing the Wickwire home at 55 Tompkins Street for student housing. At that time there were no dormitories and students had difficulty finding places to live. The Student Welfare Association was incorporated April 26, 1948, and its first meeting was held on April 30th of that year. Mr. Chester Stillson was the first president and remained in that capacity until his death in 1965.

Various committees were set up — a House Committee to inspect Wickwire Dormitory each year, a Personnel Committee, a Committee on Insurance and Grounds, a Welfare Committee, and a Scholarship Committee.

The Student Welfare Association became involved in many projects. In addition to advancing funds, these public spirited citizens of Cortland assumed responsibility for mortgages and loans that made possible the purchasing, renovation and furnishing of Wickwire Dormitory. It aided Sigma Delta Phi to buy its new home in 1957. In 1959 one thousand dollars was given to the college library so it could be staffed and kept open longer each day. The same year three hundred dollars was given to a student from New Guinea so that she could remain here in college. In March, 1961, one thousand dollars was designated for visiting teachers from Denmark. In 1961-62 one thousand dollars was allocated for campus beautification.

In 1962 ten work scholarships at two hundred dollars each were awarded to students. (These work scholarships were continued for a number of years.) The same year three hundred dollars was provided for tutors and seven hundred dollars to meet other needs of foreign students.

The question of setting up permanent scholarships was often discussed. Dr. Smith suggested that the Student Welfare Association act as a Holding Company and that friends of the college be encouraged to contribute to a scholarship fund. In line with this thinking, in 1962 Chairman Stillson suggested a Scholarship Trust Fund be formed and that "Townspeople and others" be encouraged to contribute to it.

In 1962, President Moffett reported that the late Nellie E. Davidson, who had attended Cortland Normal School, had willed ten thousand dollars to be used for loans to needy students. When this money was received, the Scholarship Committee was asked to set up guide lines for these loans.

In April, 1963, President Moffett died. At the April 25th meeting of the Student Welfare Association, Mr. Stillson suggested that Association place ten thousand dollars in a fund to be known as "The Donovan C. Moffett Fund." Friends of the Moffetts were invited to contribute to this fund. The minutes of that date read as follows:

Mr. Stillson appointed the following members of the Board to serve on the Trust Fund Committee: Mr. Miner, Mr. Margison and Mrs. Brown. Mr. Miner to serve as chairman.

Mr. Stillson asked Mrs. Brown to investigate and present at the next meeting of the Board a suggested criteria to follow in making scholarship awards.

Dr. Ben Sultz, Miss Helen Wickwire and the members of the Moffett family worked with Dr. Marian Brown in the establishment of the criteria for making awards. It was decided that the emphasis should be on scholarship; that the recipients should be selected from the truly outstanding scholars of the junior and senior classes and be designated as Moffett Scholars.

During the December 1962 meeting President Moffett had suggested that the name of the Corporation be changed and also that the purposes of the organization as now defined be enlarged. A discussion followed and it was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Moffett be empowered to investigate the legality of making such changes as he proposed and also prepare new or revised constitution and by-laws for the Board's further consideration. It was suggested that copies be sent to the members prior to the March meeting.

Mr. Sultz made a motion that Mr. Moffett and Mr. Stillson be empowered to make any expenditures necessary that would be to the

best interest of the corporation in revising or rewriting the by-laws and seeking legal advice. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Winchell and voted unanimously.

Due to the death of President Moffett and Mr. Stillson, these changes were not made until 1966. At that time Chairman William Halstead asked that "legal advice concerning the revision of the By-Laws and updating of the Student Welfare Association be sought."

Despite changes in personnel and name, however, the work of the organization continued much as before. In May 1967, there was \$14,695.77 in the Moffett Fund and \$12,266.61 in the Davidson Fund. The scholarship program continued. In 1968-69, the Development Foundation became legally responsible for funds to be used for Presidential Scholarships.