

# Dr. Beth K. Stocker

1908-2005

**D**r. Beth K. Stocker, wife of the late C. Paul Stocker and dedicated friend of Ohio University and the Fritz J. and Dolores H. Russ College of Engineering Technology, died August 23 at her home. She was 97.

“Ohio University has lost a steadfast friend, and our world has lost one of its kindest souls,” said Dennis Irwin, Russ College dean. “Beth Stocker’s profound belief in education and the promise of the human spirit has touched—and will continue to touch—thousands of individuals at Ohio University and beyond.”

Born in Minnesota on March 15, 1908, Stocker graduated from Ohio University with a bacteriology degree in 1928. As an Ohio University student, she was active in the Women’s League, the Women’s Athletic Association, the YWCA, and a local sorority that later became a chapter of Phi Mu.

She was a bacteriologist with the New York City Health Department until 1928, when she accompanied Paul to Ohio as he established Lorain Products in Lorain. During the Great Depression, she provided the sole source of income while Paul experimented in their rooming home’s basement, ultimately inventing the Sub-Cycle telephone ringer that would help found their company. Lorain Products maintained a worldwide reputation for quality products, service, and dependability in the telephone industry, growing from a one-room operation in the 1930s to a multi-plant manufacturing facility of telecommunications equipment in the 1970s.

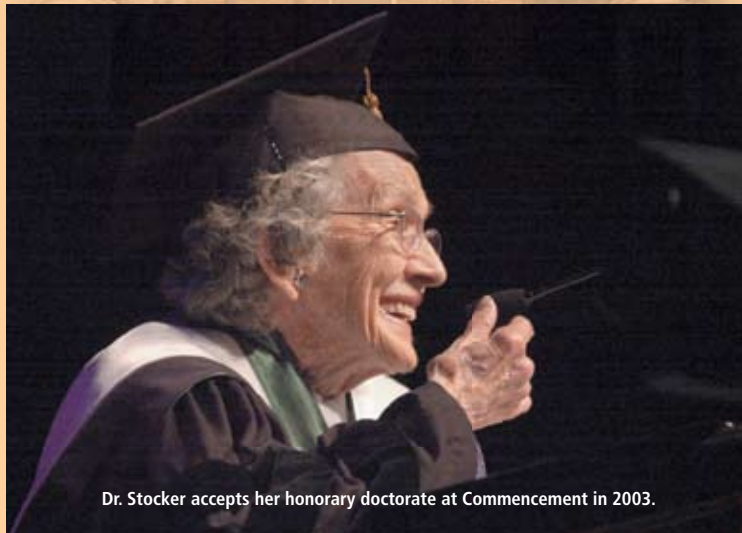
In 1979, she established The Stocker Foundation from the estate of her husband. The foundation improves lives through support of the arts, community organizations, and education, as well as health, social, and women’s services. Stocker was active in its management and served as president of the board until spring 2003.

The Stockers’ involvement with Ohio University dates back half a century. Stocker collaborated with her husband during his many volunteer and advisory roles to Ohio University; the late President Emeritus John C. Baker credited her with persuading Paul to join the University Board of Trustees in 1956.

She served on the Russ College Board of Visitors as an honorary member, the recent Ohio University Bicentennial Campaign as honorary chair, and the Ohio University Third Century Campaign as honorary co-chair and a steering committee member. She was actively engaged with Ohio University, continuing to provide counsel and guidance and visiting campus for meetings with the undergraduate Russ College Stocker Scholars, a program she established.

“Beth always put students first. She felt there were so many young people who, with a little help, could pursue their dreams to complete a higher education. She did this quietly, without any fanfare. Beth and Paul were consummate philanthropists,” said Leonard Raley, vice president for University Advancement.

During their life together, the Stockers incorporated their personal values with philanthropy in the arts and education, while also supporting youth programs and self-help initiatives for the disadvantaged and disabled. At Ohio University, they were pioneers in charitable giving. Their first financial commitment was a gift in 1954 that launched the Alumni Sesquicentennial Scholarship Fund drive. They were among the earliest members of the Trustees’ Academy—Ohio University’s most prestigious gift society—in the mid-1960s.




Dr. Stocker accepts her honorary doctorate at Commencement in 2003.

In the 1970s, the Stockers bestowed upon Ohio University its largest gift ever; the funds were rotated among faculty enrichment programs, library support, engineering departments, assistance for students with exceptional academic ability, and seven annual scholarships for students whose potential wasn’t reflected in their high school grade averages.

In 1975, they added a scholarship fund for arts and sciences, and engineering and technology. They then established the Russ College’s first visiting chair and professorships. An \$8 million

bequest from C. Paul Stocker to the Russ College in 1980 was the largest gift to any college of engineering at the time and enabled the Russ College to increase funded research more than twenty fold. The \$11.7 million C. Paul and Beth K. Stocker Engineering Center—the largest project at Ohio University at the time—was named in their honor. Stocker also established four Manasseh Cutler Scholarships. Most recently, she supported the funding of an Urban Scholar from Lorain County for fall 2005.

Ohio University awarded the Stockers the Founder’s Citation, Ohio University’s highest honor, in 2003. Stocker also received an honorary doctoral degree from Ohio University that year. She received the John C. Baker Founders Award in 1995 and was named alumna of the year in 1978. 

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