



Names: Fritz and Dolores Russ

Contribution:  
\$82.1 million in cash and \$12.7 million  
in property given to the Russ College of  
Engineering. They also gave \$8.9 million  
to Ohio University towards endowments  
for the College.

Amount given totals at least \$103.7 million.

THE RADIO CLUB  
OF OHIO UNIVERSITY  
MCMXXXV

This is to certify that Fritz Russ, Jr.  
was duly recommended for membership by the entrance  
board and that he was admitted by a unanimous vote of  
the organization on the 9 day of November 1938

[Signature] President  
[Signature] Secretary  
Lawrence C. Green Advisor

# As It Begins

The Russes had a vision way back when

**T**wo lifetimes dedicated to engineering and engineering education culminated earlier in 2008 with the largest gift any public engineering college—or any public university in the state of Ohio—ever received. And while the Russ College was named the official beneficiary of the \$95 million estate gift from the late Fritz, B.S.E.E. '42, and Dolores Russ, the true beneficiaries are the thousands of students, faculty, and staff who have and will experience activities, programs, research, and access to education they never before thought possible.

Dedication, possibility, opportunity, growth, vision—just a few Russ legacies. Giving back was another.

Their estate gift—\$82.1 million in cash and securities in addition to \$12.7 million in property—brings the Russes' total giving to \$103.7 million. Prior to this gift, they had contributed almost \$9 million to Ohio University, the majority of which is held in endowments that support the Russ College.

The Russes' generosity has made them the largest donors in the University's history. Another engineering family—C. Paul and Beth K. Stocker—are next on the list with contributions totaling \$31.9 million.

The Russes believed in putting support where it would have significant influence. In addition to supporting students and facilities, they created named awards for excellence in teaching and research. In the 1980s, they established an endowment that currently supports

a named professorship. That same endowment also provided seed funds for a program in biomedical engineering, which Fritz Russ saw even at that time as an emerging field.


Biomedical engineering is the current field for recipients of the Russ Prize, which the Russes created to recognize how engineering improves the human condition. One of the top three engineering prizes in the world, the Russ Prize is awarded biennially in conjunction with the National Academy of Engineering. It will be awarded in February for the fifth time.

"Fritz and Dolores Russ lived modestly, thought expansively, and gave generously, but they did expect something in return—not recognition for themselves, not accolades, however deserving of them they may have been. They expected those to whom they gave to follow their example of thinking expansively," Irwin said.

Irwin will lead an external, blue-ribbon advisory group of experts from industry, government, and engineering education that will help the Russ College plan strategies for honoring the Russes' commitment to innovation and engineering education.

Research investment will take cues from the College's strategic research areas: avionics, biomedical engineering, energy and the environment, and smart civil infrastructure. It is expected that funds also will support student scholarships, leadership incentives, and activities including travel to competitions.

The Russ Research Center, a 28-acre research campus that offers a high-tech atmosphere and currently houses 13 companies, remained part of the Russes' real estate holdings and is included in the gift to Ohio University. Dean Irwin has recommended to the Ohio University Foundation that it be retained as a strategic partner in research and technology for the Russ College.

"We hope to connect our faculty, researchers, and students with the research endeavors of the high-tech companies located there—for the benefit of the center and for the Russ College and Ohio University," Irwin says. 

## OPPORTUNITY

"The paper that was selected for the award was the first publication about the ammonia electrolysis technology that has been licensed recently. Due to that paper, I won a National Science Foundation award. There are a lot of things the Russes left behind that we are learning from still, and that's inspiring."

— Gerri Botte, associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, Russ Outstanding Research Paper Award recipient

## VISION

"The biomedical engineering program is unique because it involves not just engineers but also molecular biologists, physicians, and also research physicians. You can actually expand to all these different fields and get their input and it can help accelerate your research as well as bring in new ideas."

— Anthony Schwartz, B.S.C.S. '08, biomedical engineering M.S. candidate

## GROWTH

"The Russ Teaching Award came at a time when I was actually considering another career path. It had been about seven years since I had started teaching and I was very excited about what I was doing but I was discouraged and actually was looking for other opportunities. The students who vote on the award and do the interviews encouraged me by saying, 'We like what you're doing.' So in essence, the reason I'm still here today is because of the Russ teaching award."

— Ben Stuart, associate professor of civil engineering, Russ Outstanding Teaching Award recipient

## POSSIBILITY

They are for me, and I think for the College, a great source of inspiration. They've always worked on things very, very hard and building things up from ground level. But I think, for me, their personal interest in everybody has been quite influential. I remember talking to Fritz, and he was always very interested, wanted to know exactly what was going on, and most importantly, how he could help."

— Frank VanGraas, Ph.D. '88, Fritz J. and Dolores H. Russ Professor of Electrical Engineering

## DEDICATION

"Through my Engineering Ambassador experience I was given the privilege of meeting Dolores. She told me the stories and gave me insight into the love that they had in their relationship and the respect that they shared, and also that they were one spirit in their generosity and their dedication to education."

— Sadie Roth, B.S.I.S.E. '06, industrial and systems engineering M.S. candidate

