

A natural affinity for Embry-Riddle



You wouldn't necessarily think that an avid gardener would have a natural affinity for a world leader in aviation and aerospace education, but Gertrude Worthington is no ordinary cultivator. For more than 40 years, Worthington has been helping Embry-Riddle grow to become the world leader in aviation and aerospace education that it is today.

"I've enjoyed every aspect of the work being done on Embry-Riddle's campuses, and am always thrilled to watch them grow," she said.

True to her gardening nature, Worthington has done much more than just watch the university grow. Over her 40 years of involvement, she has played a critical role in sowing the seeds of Embry-Riddle progress, from serving on the university's Board of Trustees for 20 years to championing the progress of the libraries at both residential campuses.

Today, with the ongoing expansion of the Prescott Campus, Worthington has stepped forward to ensure that the new Chris and Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Library and Learning Center at Prescott flourishes as the academic heart of that campus. Her substantial gift to name the Gertrude V. Worthington Reading Room will ensure that students have a place to call their own at study time.

"Gertrude's support of our libraries is a physical reminder of what is most important to her:" said Bob Rockett, dean of the Heritage Project, "reading, learning and providing students with the highest quality of education."

At no time was that commitment to students more evident than in December when a Christmas Day tornado ripped through the center of the Daytona Beach Campus, causing millions in damages and threatening the school year.

"One of the first envelopes I opened after the tornado was a check and hand-written note from Mrs. Gertrude Worthington," recalled Pat Ramsey, then assistant vice president for University Development. "The check was for \$100,000."

"I was really, really sorry to learn that so much of the campus had been destroyed," said Worthington. "I just wanted to help a little bit."

For Worthington, helping Embry-Riddle just comes naturally. "To me, supporting Embry-Riddle is just like watching a blade of grass grow," she said. "And like that blade of grass that came from a tiny seed, Embry-Riddle started from nothing more than one hangar building and is now a world-class university."