

Larry Simonson, SD A '69

The Shawn R. Schwaller Memorial Endowment for South Dakota Alpha Chapter at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

LARRY SIMONSON, right, is no stranger to discipline and the value of hard work. "Growing up on a farm, I learned from my father's example that developing a strong work ethic is an important life lesson. Working 14-16 hour days was how I spent much of my teenage years. There was always something that needed to be done on the farm and pride in ownership resulted."

TBPI has benefited greatly from Larry's involvement. As a faculty member for over three decades at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and Chief Advisor to the chapter there for almost as long, he became known for his cross-country trips with vans full of students to attend TBPI Conventions. In recent years, Larry served as TBPI President (2006-14) and many members are familiar with the sight of him in his red Prius delivering homemade Black Hills jams and jellies to grateful Tau Bates.

Following retirement from the classroom, he keeps in touch with SDSM&T alumni as a major gifts officer with the South Dakota School of Mines Foundation raising funds for scholarships and new buildings.

Larry's decision to fund a chapter endowment was influenced by his insider's view of TBPI. "As president for the past eight years, I know there are tremendous opportunities for Tau Beta Pi to provide life-impacting activities for our members, but if we are going to keep moving forward, we need additional resources. I am hopeful that my gift will inspire others who have the resources to put the Association in a position to take on new projects."

Former student

Larry's gift in support of SD Alpha was inspired by one of his former students, Shawn R. Schwaller, left.

Shawn's early years were spent traveling with his family as his father was a field service technician, which took them throughout the United States and to the countries of Germany and Jordan. In 1982, the family returned to the United States and settled in Sioux Falls, SD, where Shawn completed his secondary education.

Larry met him when Shawn came to the School of Mines as an electrical engineering major in 1990. He was one of Larry's students in several classes. "Shawn became very engaged in learning and mentored many

students—his positive attitude was contagious!" Shawn and Larry remained close friends after Shawn graduated from college and they enjoyed their time together. Larry credits Shawn with many great TBPI ideas that became the backbone of the Foundation Slate platform when Larry, Solange Dao, Norman Pih, Jason Huggins, and

Jonathan Earle were elected as the Executive Council at the 2005 Salt Lake City Convention.

Shawn spent one semester on a co-op assignment with Rockwell Collins in Cedar Rapids, IA, and graduated with an electrical engineering degree in May 1995. While at the School of Mines, Shawn met Tricia Mohrhauser who began her studies there in 1992, spent two co-op semesters at Rockwell Collins and

graduated in 1998 with degrees in electrical engineering and computer science. Tricia and Shawn were married on the weekend of the 1998 TBPI Convention. Shawn and Tricia worked for Raytheon in Aurora, CO. Tricia was appointed District 12 Director in 2000, and together Shawn and Tricia attended many Conventions, District Conferences, and chapter functions.

Shawn passed away on September 9, 2007, after a short battle with leukemia. In the spring before his death, Shawn was honored that the Colorado Mines chapter asked him to be one of their advisors.

As a tribute to Shawn's active involvement in many facets of TBPI, the CO A and SD A chapters teamed with Shawn's family and many friends to honor his legacy by establishing the TBPI Shawn R. Schwaller Memorial Scholarship. CO Alpha held a Texas Hold 'Em tournament to raise money for the TBPI Scholarship fund. A scholarship endowment was also established at SDSM&T.

•EDITOR'S NOTE: Based on Larry's recommendation, the Executive Council appointed Tricia Schwaller a District 12 Director in 2000. After Shawn's passing, Tricia met fellow District Director Curt Gomulinski, and they were married on December 31, 2010.

Tau Beta Pi appreciates all the donors who have come forward over the years to support the two scholarships in Shawn's name, one at Tau Beta Pi and one at South Dakota School of Mines.

