

Bequest continues professor's commitment to education, Alfred University

6/19/12

George A. Kirkendale, a professor emeritus of ceramic engineering who died in 1999, left the remainder of his estate to Alfred University; the funds will become part of the University's endowment, which is primarily used to provide financial aid to students. Kirkendale, who began teaching at Alfred University in 1947 and retired in 1976, stipulated in his will that upon the death of his son, Richard, the remainder of his estate would come to AU. Richard died in August 2011. Kirkendale and his late wife Doris made their home in Alfred for several years, and moved to South Carolina after their retirement. The funds, more than \$400,000, will become part of the University's endowment, which is invested by the Board of Trustees. The University spends 5 percent of its earnings on its investments each year, with the largest percentage of the funds going for financial aid; 93 percent of the University's students receive some form of assistance from the school to attend. "We are very appreciative of the Kirkendales' gift to the University," said Amy Jacobson, director of Gift Planning for the University. "With his gift, Prof. Kirkendale reaffirmed his lifelong commitment to higher education. Through thoughtful planning he provided for both his family and the University." Throughout his 30-year career with Alfred University, Kirkendale traveled extensively as a consultant for the United Nations, helping countries such as Pakistan, Israel, Taiwan, Ghana, Ethiopia and Guyana establish modern facilities for making bricks and ceramic insulators. Following his retirement, he completed similar assignments in Korea, Guatemala, Bolivia, Fiji, and Thailand. Kirkendale's avocation was archeology, an interest he developed while on a three-year assignment with the U.S. Department of State to help Israel design, lay out and develop what has since become one of the foremost ceramic research institutes in the world. Archeologists he met during that stay asked him to analyze the pottery they had unearthed, determine what processes might have been used to produce it, and what kind of kilns it might have been fired in. Soon, Kirkendale became interested in digging as well, and started collecting antique clay lamps, with pieces dating from about 1800 BC to about 100 AD. Kirkendale and his wife Doris donated their collection, which also included pieces of Roman glass dating from 100-299 AD to the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University in 1991. Alfred University Trustee Al Paladino '54 recalls Kirkendale was an adviser to Delta Sigma Phi fraternity during his tenure at AU.