

Galloway Legion Post 430 Donates \$25,000 to Establish Fund for Veterans in Social Work Graduate Program at Stockton University

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Contact: Maryjane Briant
News and Media Relations Director
Galloway Township, NJ 08205
Maryjane.Briant@stockton.edu
(609) 652-4593
www.stockton.edu/media

Galloway, NJ -The American Legion Post 430 in Galloway Township on Monday donated \$25,000 to establish an endowment for the benefit of student veterans and their families in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Stockton University.

"After selling our Post home and property to Galloway Township, Post 430 members sought ways to use the funds to help our local veterans, so we established scholarships," said Russell Konrady, Post commander and a crew supervisor and carpenter at Stockton. "These include four annual \$2,500 scholarships for undergraduates for 10 years. We were approached by the Master of Social Work program to see if we could help the graduate students, which led us to establishing this \$25,000 Endowment for the MSW program. This will be one scholarship annually for \$1,000 for as long as the program is in existence."

He signed the agreement with Richard Dovey, chair of the Stockton University Foundation, and Stockton Interim President Harvey Kesselman.

"Let me thank Russ for this, the latest commitment of the American Legion to Stockton. The Legion is deeply supportive of what we do here and we are really honored that you have chosen us," said Kesselman. "To have support for this academic discipline pays double the benefits, as the graduates will be able to help others in need. It is the gift that keeps on giving."

"We probably could not have picked a better day - the 74th anniversary of Pearl Harbor - to keep the spotlight on veterans," said Konrady.

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The Legion post said it intends for the endowment's earnings to provide an annual award for student veterans in the MSW program, including students who qualify for benefits under the Disabled American Veteran, National Guard or Reserve programs. The agreement stipulates preferences for residents of Galloway, followed by residents of Atlantic County and finally, residents of New Jersey. The initial award will be distributed in the 2016-2017 academic year.

Stockton has a long history of welcoming and supporting student veterans. It formalized that support by forming the current program in 2008 and now serves over 600 veterans and active-duty service members.

Stockton is ranked at #6 among the best colleges and universities nationwide for veterans by the Military Times' "Best for Vets: Colleges 2016," the most comprehensive school-by-school assessment of veteran and military student services and rates of academic achievement.

The MSW program is designed to educate social workers who are prepared for advanced-level practice with diverse individuals, families, and communities.

The annual dollar amount awarded will vary and be determined by the Foundation's spending policy. The Foundation's investment and distribution philosophy is to preserve and grow the original funds so that the endowment's distribution may keep pace with inflation.

Student recipients will be determined by the University Scholarship Selection Committee.

The ceremony was attended by Tom O'Donnell, assistant dean of Students/Veteran Affairs and members of the Student Veterans Organization: Arz Nammour, a junior Biology major from Egg Harbor Township and Ty Sistler, a May 2015 Social Work graduate from Upper Township.

Dawn Konrady, the daughter of Russell Konrady, attended the ceremony. She is the director of the Child Welfare Education Institute and a graduate of the MBA program. Other supporters present included: Diane Falk, director of the MSW program, Kit Siracusa, coordinator of field education for the MSW, Robin Hernandez-Mekonnen, assistant professor of Social Work, and Guia Calicdan-Apostle, assistant professor of Social Work.

Philip Ellmore, chief development officer and director of the University Foundation, Jessica Kowal, director of Development and Special Projects, and Peg Fiore, director of gift fund stewardship, also attended.

Additional contributions to the endowment fund may be made at any time by the donors and others, and will be accepted by the Foundation.

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919. It is committed to mentoring youth, sponsoring community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security, and providing support and aid to service members and veterans.

Post 430 is a sponsor for transportation to the current display in Stockton's C/D Atrium, "Final Sale: The End of Jewish Owned Businesses in Nazi Berlin," which is being viewed this fall by over 1,000 area high school and middle school students and their teachers.

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“As our membership declines because of aging veterans, we invite all younger veterans to come join us and help keep the mission of The American Legion alive,” Konrady said. “Please come see us, as we need your help supporting each other.”

Post 430 meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Germania Volunteer Fire Co., 312 S. Cologne Ave., in Galloway.

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