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M E D I A R E L E A S E

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For Immediate Release

University of Winnipeg Alumnus Donates \$500,000 to Restore Historic Convocation Hall, Province of Manitoba Provides \$5.2 million to Make Wesley Hall A Sustainable Heritage Building

WINNIPEG – The University of Winnipeg will complete an historic renovation of its signature building, Wesley Hall – making it one of the most sustainable heritage buildings in the country – thanks to a total of \$5.7 million in funding from both a private donor and the Government of Manitoba.

Dr. Douglas W. Leatherdale, United College Alumnus and University of Winnipeg Foundation Board Member, today announced a significant gift of \$500,000 to complete the historical restoration of Convocation Hall. Meanwhile, the Honourable Diane McGifford, Minister of Advanced Education & Literacy on behalf of the Province of Manitoba announced \$4.2 million in funding to upgrade the mechanical and electrical systems of Wesley Hall to help make it a “green” heritage building. This in addition to \$1 million in support for the Convocation Hall restoration from the Province’s specified capital fund – a \$14-million fund originally announced in 2003 – for a total investment of \$5.2 million.

For nearly a century, Convocation Hall – the main lecture theatre in the Wesley Hall building – served as the centre of social activity at the University and its predecessor colleges. By the 1980s, however, the once regal and architecturally-stunning room featured boarded-up windows, black walls and pockets of holes in the original plaster ceiling. Dr. Leatherdale’s gift provides the support needed to complete the final phase of Convocation Hall’s interior reconstruction—the restoration of its magnificent coved plaster ceiling.

“Convocation Hall has always been the heart of the University and The Collegiate,” said Dr. Leatherdale, who experienced first-hand how central Convocation Hall was to campus life as a student in the 1950s. A 1957 graduate of United College, a predecessor of UWinnipeg, Dr. Leatherdale was awarded an honorary degree from the University in 2000. “I am delighted to be able to support the restoration of this beautiful and inspiring hall.”

“Dr. Leatherdale’s generous contribution to The University of Winnipeg will preserve and celebrate its rich history,” said Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President & Vice-Chancellor of The University of Winnipeg. “Students, staff and the community have been enjoying Convocation Hall for more than a century. With this renovation, Convocation Hall will once again become a destination point in downtown Winnipeg, playing host to a series of artistic and intellectual pursuits including the H. Sanford Riley Fellowship in History lectures, musical performances, seminars, concerts and academic programs.”

Wesley Hall itself has recently undergone extensive renovation to the building's exterior (stonework reconstruction and new windows and roof) thanks in large part to \$7.5 million in support previously committed by the Province of Manitoba. Reconstruction of the exterior stonework was completed in 2006.

"The Province of Manitoba is pleased to be supporting the restoration of historic Wesley Hall," said Minister McGifford. "The 'castle' on Portage Avenue has served as a symbol of higher learning in our province for more than a century. This project will ensure that Wesley Hall continues to play that role well into the future."

"This generous support from the Province of Manitoba allows us to not only bring Wesley Hall back to its historic grandeur but also to be on the forefront of sustainable building practices," said Dr. Axworthy. "By installing 'green' technologies such as energy-efficient air conditioning and electrical systems, and by converting from steam to hot water boilers, we will turn Wesley Hall into one of the most sustainable historic buildings in Canada."

Dr. Leatherdale has given generously to The University of Winnipeg in the past including a \$500,000 gift in 2005 to establish the *Dr. Douglas W. Leatherdale Global Citizen Internship Program*. Dr. Leatherdale also created an endowed scholarship fund of more than \$1 million to honour the memory of his father; *The Walter W. Leatherdale Scholarship* is awarded to students from rural backgrounds.

"To have this type of leadership from a member of our alumni group and University of Winnipeg Foundation Board of Directors is very gratifying," said Bob Kozminski, Campaign Chair. "Dr. Leatherdale's wonderful legacy gift will help restore Convocation Hall to its proper place as the heart of the University."

"Dr. Leatherdale has set a wonderful example for community and business leaders by supporting education, preserving history and building legacies for years to come," said Susan Thompson, President & CEO of The University of Winnipeg Foundation. "The restoration of Convocation Hall will create opportunities for the students and the downtown community to immerse themselves in our city's rich cultural history, at one of the finest post-secondary institutes in the country."

Located in the heart of downtown, the University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full-and part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian Universities when asked to rate their "Entire Educational Experience" (Maclean's Graduate Survey, June 2006). The Globe and Mail 2006 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall "A" grade in the areas of quality education, teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside of classroom hours. Find out why. Visit www.uwinnipeg.ca.

Celebrate The University of Winnipeg's 40th Anniversary at Homecoming - September 13-16, 2007. For more information or to register, visit <http://40th.uwinnipeg.ca>

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