Gloria Hewitt Student Support Fund Becomes Endowed Graduate Fellowship

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Last March, the Gloria Hewitt Endowed Graduate Student Support Fund was established to “promote excellence in the graduate program of the Department of Mathematics, in particular enhancing efforts to achieve a more equitable representation of those under-represented in the field of mathematics.” The initial endowment of $50,000 was made possible through reallocation of funds previously given to the department by the Washington Research Foundation, a gift from Ron and Gail Irving, and the transfer of other departmental funds. Included in the endowment agreement was a provision for converting it to the Gloria Hewitt Endowed Graduate Fellowship if additional gifts allowed it to reach the university fellowship minimum of $100,000. Now, a new gift from Ron and Gail has made this conversion possible. And, thanks to a subsequent matching gift from the Washington Research Foundation, the endowment total will be in excess of $150,000. The fellowship will be awarded “with a preference for students who contribute to the goal of a more equitable representation of under-represented minorities and women in the field of mathematics.”

Gloria was the sixth African-American woman to receive a PhD in mathematics, doing so at UW in 1962 under the supervision of Dick Pierce. She went on to a distinguished career at the University of Montana, retiring in 1999 after serving as department chair. Last March, Gloria’s department hosted an event in her honor in Missoula at which Ron announced the new UW endowment and Edray Goins, president of the National Association of Mathematicians, gave a colloquium talk that included an overview of the first six African-American women to receive mathematics PhDs. Inspired by the example Gloria set in her career—with her warmth, grace, and strength—Ron and Gail are pleased that she will serve as example and inspiration to graduate students for generations to come.
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