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Indiana storeowner uses farmland to invest in Liberty's future

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In the rural farming community of Twelve Mile, Ind., Michael Martin is busy every day managing his store that sells work clothing and boots, and hunting, trapping and farming supplies. As a small-business owner, he has learned to be wise with his money.

Even though his home is far from Lynchburg, Va., Martin has recently joined a growing list of Liberty University donors who are impacting the school's future.

Martin lives with his 82-year-old mother, Norma, and over the years they have used less and less farmland for farming purposes. So Martin put three parcels — 7.57 and 86 acres — into a trust with the help of Geary Gadomski of Liberty University's Planned Giving Department.

"Mike and his mother are wonderful people," Gadomski said. "They have supported the ministry for a number of years. Both are very quick to acknowledge God's blessing on their lives and the desire to help others through LU."

Martin's trust is a Charitable Remainder Unitrust, which means when Martin goes on to be with the Lord LU will receive the "remainder" of the money in that trust (which is growing daily), offering more young people a quality, Christian education.

Martin, who visited the campus in 1986, said that is exactly the reason he decided to establish a trust with Liberty.

"We've been connected with Liberty University, since back in the '80s. ... We like what we've seen and we've been longtime supporters of Jerry Falwell's and his ministry. We like the way the university is going and what they're doing and we decided that's where we wanted to put some of our money to help them out."

He said he would recommend Liberty University's Planned Giving Department to anyone who wants to invest in the future of a school with a solid, Christian foundation.

"The programs they've got and being a Christian university ... it's a good atmosphere for the students to learn in; that's hard to come by anymore. We think it'd be a good place [for donors] to check out and invest in for the Lord's work. It has a lot of opportunities there for the young people."

Tom Arnold, director of LU's Planned Giving Department, said the trust was a wise decision for Martin as well; he bypassed capital gains tax and was entitled to a charitable income tax deduction.

For more information on Planned Giving at Liberty, go to www.LUgiving.com or call (800) 543-5309.