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Planning for the Future

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Planning for the future

October 01, 2009 ¦ Mitzi Bible

Back in their traveling days, when their motorhome took them on many cross-country adventures, Mary and Robert Maier of Little Rock, Ark., made a stop in Lynchburg. They still remember what they saw here in the 1980s.

“We got up on Liberty Mountain when they were first starting the construction of dorms. Everything was red clay,” Mary said.

Mary, 85, and Robert, 87, haven’t been here since and are uncertain they will get the chance to return.

But one thing is certain — their support of Liberty University will continue.

“I think Christian education for young people is the most vital thing today because there’s so many things out there to turn them away from God,” said Mary, a faithful Sunday School teacher who is a longtime supporter of the late Dr. Jerry Falwell.

“I was not able to have a college education,” Mary added, “but I know today … a college education is necessary. (But) so many college educations now teach young people anything but religious thoughts — if they have any religious beliefs, by the time they get through with that college, they’re so confused and everything (else) is nullified. Liberty is one of the things I want to support because of what they do.”

On June 21, the couple celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. They met through mutual church friends in a camping group. At the time, they had both experienced the loss of a spouse — both having been married for 35 years. They quickly discovered they shared a love for camping and animals — Robert's dog and Mary's cat quickly became traveling companions. The couple married nearly two years later.
Keeping their estates separate, Mary decided to include Liberty in her estate plans and, about 15 years ago, purchased charitable gift annuities.

"I started out small. Then I grew … along with the college," she said, laughing.

The charitable gift annuities are "absolutely ideal for us," she added. "I just wish that more people in our situation would investigate and invest in charitable gift annuities because it's the best thing you can do."

In 2004 she made a $100,000 donation to Liberty, establishing the Mary P. Slimer Maier Memorial Scholarship Fund. Her trust will include "a sizable donation" to add to the fund, she said.

Robert, a retired rice and soybean farmer who enjoys woodworking, eventually decided to follow her lead and purchase charitable gift annuities.

"I talked him into it," Mary said. "I said, 'Why should we wait until we die to give what we have away?' We could give it now and see what benefit is being derived from it and have a good income, too. He finally saw what I was talking about and he's gung-ho for it now."

The couple, who have no children, enjoy regular visits from Liberty Planned Giving Officer Everett Foutz.

"It's really important to us because he keeps us in touch with what's going on and helps us realize that from time to time we can add to our charitable gifts," Mary said.

She has "every confidence" in Foutz: "He's just like a member of the family to us — he's such a sweet person."

And that's important in a world where there is "so much corruption going on in big organizations [and] people have gotten to the point where they don't know who to trust," she said. "I have full faith and confidence that the money we've invested in Liberty is as good as we can do."

To find out how planned giving officers at Liberty University can help you plan for the future, call (800) 543-5309 OR visit LUGiving.com.