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## Bradley Family funds innovation center at Andrews University

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich.—The family of Dr. Fay Bradley, Pittsburg State law school graduate, physician and philanthropist, has given a \$2.8 million legacy gift to develop a new Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

The donation will play a vital role in ensuring that one important component of the University's strategic plan becomes an immediate reality. "The donation will help us build a physical innovation space with both specialized and open areas," says Andrea Luxton, president. "It also will aid in the appointment of a director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship and the development of industry and community partnerships."

Bradley passed away in January of 2021. "During his lifetime, Dr. Bradley helped many students gain an education which allowed them to become productive citizens," Luxton explains. "It was as a result of his generosity helping students attend Andrews University that [he] was contacted by the Andrews University Office of Development. Now, the Bradley family has helped facilitate this gift to make Dr. Bradley's wishes of an Innovation & Entrepreneurship program a reality."

Ideas for the creation of the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship began circulating during the 2017–2018 academic year when the president and provost commissioned a group to begin thinking about innovation efforts on campus. The group was inspired by the need for all students, regardless of their majors, to have a place to develop new ideas. The first step toward this goal was to launch the interdisciplinary Innovation & Entrepreneurship Certificate; however, the vision for the program is larger. "We need a place where students can find an atmosphere of creativity and

entrepreneurship. Engineering majors, business majors, dietetics majors, theology majors — any major can benefit by having mentorship, guidance and space to develop new and exciting ideas," says Ralph Trecartin, associate provost and dean of the School of Business Administration. "We envision new product developments, new businesses launched, new ministries created and new social innovations that benefit an array of organizations."

Bradley aided in the development of an innovation center in his own community. "He supported his local community college in the establishment of an innovation lab that enabled students, as well as members of the community, to explore ideas and projects that could be patented and/or manufactured," Luxton says. "He knew that Andrews University did not have such a program, but that it was part of the strategic plan to establish one."

The Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at Andrews University will provide a place for students to actively pursue projects and research. "[The Center] will enable students to enrich their curriculum and research projects, find a space to explore self-start projects and interface with business and industries that could offer work opportunities and/or internships," says Luxton. "Additionally, it will provide opportunities for students to learn design thinking and methodologies of creating new ideas in all discipline areas. It will encourage students to not stop at knowledge accumulation or analysis, but to add to this action and implementation."

These goals have become especially important in light of the pandemic. Professionals across fields have had to think flexibly and quickly to respond to the emerging needs of their businesses. "The world needs individuals who can build on solid traditions in new ways that are responsive to the needs of 2021 and beyond," explains Luxton. "My dream



Darren Heslop

▲ Students at Andrews University explore innovations in VR technology.

is that employers will be increasingly excited to hire an Andrews University graduate, because amongst their value, knowledge and skill mix is the capacity to dig deeply, reflect robustly and then create solutions and pathways that will bring increased quality and meaning to the world."

Any future gifts to the development of the innovation program will help in gathering further resources to support the needs of students. "We need successful innovators and entrepreneurs to give us help and advice as we mentor students and faculty members through the launch process," says Trecartin. Additionally, the gifts will be used for creating a capital fund to invest in innovations, providing new equipment and potentially building expansion. ■

Moriah McDonald, University Communication student writer