South Dakota State University
Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science

2022-2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECOGNITION
Obtaining a college education has one of the greatest impacts and returns on investment when we look at the career and life opportunities of those entering the job market. The cost of higher education has increased over the years and, in many cases, may be falling outside the reach of many students and their families. One of the pillars of our great land-grant university system, and a major area of focus at SDSU, is to provide access to a premier college education to as many students as possible. The availability of a scholarship to a deserving student may be the deciding factor determining whether a student gains access to the wonderful resources found at SDSU, or if this extremely valuable opportunity to better their lives and society is missed because the cost of education was outside of their reach.

Scholarships play an increasingly important role for our students and we are so fortunate to have generous donors that have made scholarships within the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) and the Department of Agronomy, Horticulture, and Plant Science possible. In the current school year, 42.4% of CAFES students are recipients of a scholarship with an average of $1,478 awarded per student. In the Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science, over half of the students (55.5%) receive scholarships with an average of $1,412 awarded per student.

The generosity of donors supporting scholarships for our students makes a tremendous impact on their lives and the opportunities they are provided, and ensures that we are preparing the future leaders of the agriculture industry. We are so very thankful for the many generous supporters that open doors, and change the lives of our students.

Your gift directly supports our students’ education. In a single day, the 2022 One Day for State event raised $10,000 for undergraduate scholarships in agronomy, precision agriculture, and horticulture that made a difference in student lives this year. The Maynard A. Klingbeil endowment, a legacy gift, provided an additional $160,000 in scholarships. In total, students enrolled in Agronomy, Precision Agriculture, and Horticulture disciplines in the 2022-2023 academic year received more than $300,000 in scholarships from donors and university programs.

Giving back to support SDSU is critical to the continued success of your alma mater. The collective generosity of SDSU alumni, donors, and friends has a transformational impact on our department. Every gift has the power to impact lives. Past gifts not only supported undergraduate scholarships, but also student research projects and travel for student clubs to attend regional and national competitions. Your support—in whatever amount—demonstrates your vision that every student deserves the chance to be a Jackrabbit! Your support makes SDSU the best experience it can be by reducing the cost of our students’ education.

Making gifts to support the Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science also demonstrates the pride you have for SDSU and ensures that current students have opportunities like you had when you were a student. If you are a current or past donor, THANK YOU! If you are contemplating making a gift, please do so, your gift matters.
FROM OUR STUDENTS:

“Throughout my time at SDSU, I was extremely fortunate to receive several different scholarships. These scholarships have significantly enhanced my college experience. I had the opportunity to be more involved in clubs and activities relating to my majors, as well as being a member of the Honors College. Scholarships enabled me to devote more of my time to my studies rather than off-campus employment. Being involved on campus gave me many opportunities for networking and gaining experiences in various stages of research that will benefit me in my future career.”

- Ellen Fitzpatrick

“My experiences at South Dakota State University are unforgettable. I was able to attend Little I, go on visits to new production barns with the Swine Club, and make a lot of very good friends. The scholarships are very important for me to achieve my goals in school and in the future. They made it possible for me to work fewer hours in my part-time jobs, or not take a job at all in some cases. The scholarships allow me to have more time to attend club meetings, and be an active member in events around the campus. I am very thankful to the donors of the scholarships I received.”

- Corbin Fuoss

“This is my third and final year here at SDSU where I will graduate with a degree in Horticulture and two minors - Sustainable Local Foods and Pest Management. I am currently the manager at the Local Foods Education Center (LFEC) on campus where I apply much of what I learned in class to a real project. The scholarships I received at SDSU made it possible for me to continue my education and to improve my skills, not only for the local foods educational center, but also for future career options. I will be attending graduate school for Entomology in 2024 and this is only achievable through the help of donors who believe in students like myself.”

- Amelia Jones

“As a student in the Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science Department, I had the privilege to receive several different scholarships during my time at SDSU. The financial support from these scholarships has had a large influence on my academic pursuits by allowing me to attend classes that better prepare me for entering the rapidly changing world of agronomy and precision agriculture. These scholarships also allow me to be able to participate in many activities on campus. These activities range from club trips, such as the Agronomy and Precision Ag Club SASES trip, to industry networking opportunities provided on campus. As a 2022 recipient of the SDSU Klingbeil Scholars Endowment, I am very thankful for Maynard Klingbeil’s generosity and am honored to be part of his legacy.”

- Charles Tesch
Jim and Melody Mielke of Hartford, South Dakota, stand out among most South Dakota State University scholarship donors as non-alumni contributors. The Mielkes specifically chose SDSU because of its well-known agricultural programs, without having any prior ties to the school. The Mielkes began giving to SDSU in 2012, funding five scholarships each year, totaling 50 scholarships to date. To reflect both of their backgrounds and lifelong careers, they have supported students pursuing degrees in a variety of areas including agronomy, precision agriculture, agricultural and biosystems engineering and nursing, as well as those in graduate nursing programs. Going forward, they will fund approximately 11 scholarships each year through their newly completed endowment managed by the SDSU Foundation.

When asked, Jim described agriculture and farming as the root of his family, ultimately defining who he is as a person. On the other hand, Melody has a passion for caring for others and has worked as a nurse at Avera McKennan Hospital and the Avera Heart Hospital in Sioux Falls since she graduated from Augustana College in 1980. It seems fitting that they share their love for agriculture and patient care in providing scholarships for students pursuing careers in those same fields.

“Jim thought about our legacy for a while, and he just felt that he’d like to sponsor some ag scholarships,” said Melody. “We felt like SDSU was the perfect place to do that because it’s kind of what they’re known for – and they do it right.”

Prior to retiring from farming in 2020, the Mielkes funded their scholarships by gifting grain they raised – this program benefitted them while still contributing toward SDSU students’ tuition expenses.

“Rewarding” is a common word used by the Mielkes when speaking about the relationships that they have built with their scholarship recipients over the last 10 years. One unique quality the Mielkes possess is that they truly want to know their recipients personally and be able to support them on more than a financial level. This can be attested to as they’ve been invited to some of their recipients’ weddings, are some of the first to hear about recipients’ children being born and have even entrusted a past scholarship recipient and his brothers to rent a portion of their farmland.

Regarding their endowment, Jim and Melody never thought they would have the opportunity to see it come to fruition in their lifetimes. However, with the timing of their retirement following the 2020 crop year and the halted supply chain for new and used equipment due to COVID-19, it was the perfect opportunity for Jim and his brother to sell their fully depreciated equipment. This allowed Jim and Melody to fund the endowment with the earnings made on their equipment, rather than through their estate plan as they originally expected.

“We encourage those who have thought about giving to go through with a gift and provide support to the next generation,” they said.

“There are many different levels and ways of giving, so it doesn’t have to be anything more than what someone feels comfortable with,” said Jim.

Those interested in making their own gift can contact the SDSU Foundation at (605) 697-7475.

By Samantha Anderson
Q. What has been your favorite part about your program?

A. My favorite part about the agronomy and horticulture programs is that I am able to get a lot of hands-on experience. I enjoy working in the greenhouse and out in the fields doing research and learning about how plants work.

Q. What/who inspired you to pursue your career path?

A. My high school FFA advisor first got me interested in plant science, and he encouraged me to join the Floriculture team. We went on to win first place at State FFA my senior year, in 2020, and I knew at the time that I wanted to pursue a career in plant science. I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do after graduating, but later that summer I was inspired by the research and exploration of NASA scientists growing plants in space and decided that’s what I want to do.

Q. What clubs/organizations/community service have you been involved with on campus?

A. I play the violin in the SDSU Civic Orchestra, and I am currently involved with the Agronomy Club, as well as with the Honors College. I am also engaged in a Bible study, along with various other church activities at the Newman Center on campus.

Q. How has the Klingbeil scholarship impacted your education?

A. The Klingbeil scholarship has significantly benefitted my education; this scholarship has considerably reduced the amount of money I need to pay for school this year, and because of that, I am able to focus more of my time and energy on my studies. I am also able to work jobs that give me good experience in my chosen field, rather than having to choose a job based solely on the pay.

Q. What advice do you have for incoming students as they begin their journey to pursue a degree?

A. Don’t ever be afraid to apply for scholarships! No matter the amount, they help so much, and even if you turn in the application on the very last day, it might be totally worth it. Also, don’t let yourself become resentful. College is hard sometimes, but just remember why you’re here, and never lose your sense of curiosity and wonder.

Q. What do you feel is the biggest challenge we have in modern-day agriculture and how do you think we can evolve and work together as an industry to conquer that challenge?

A. I think the biggest challenge we have in modern-day agriculture is coming up with more sustainable and environmentally conscious farming practices, and not only coming up with them, but also putting them into practice. I think one of the hardest things to do is to change old ways of thinking, but in order to evolve and keep up with our world we need to be willing to work together, both within and beyond the agricultural industry.

Q. What has been your favorite class and why?

A. My favorite class so far has been either soils or plant pathology. I really enjoy learning about the chemistry and microorganisms of the soil, and I also like learning about different plant pathogens and plants’ defenses against pathogens. I am very interested in learning about microbiology relating to soils and plants.

Q. What originally interested you in your major?

A. I have always been interested in plants; I’ve been gardening with my dad for as long as I can remember. The first time I became interested in plant science as a career was during my sophomore year of high school when I joined the FFA Floriculture team. I hadn’t realized before then that I could take my love of plants and make a career out of it. I started looking into it and decided to double major in agronomy and horticulture at SDSU.
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**BRYCE ADRIAN**
*Precision Agriculture*
Raymond Benson Scholarship

**JADEN ANDERSON**
*Agronomy & Precision Agriculture*
Alfred and Joan Miron Endowed Scholarship

**GARRETT ARENDS**
*Agronomy & Precision Agriculture*
Alan C. and Carole L. Johnson Scholarship in Precision Agriculture

**NICOLE BAUMANN**
*Agronomy*
Dr. Clatus M. Nagel Memorial Scholarship in Plant Science
George Semeniuk Scholarship in Plant Science

**MASON BEBENSEE**
*Precision Agriculture*
Ag, Food and Environmental Sciences General Scholarship

**RYAN BLOMGREN**
*Agronomy*
Eldor P. and Dorothy E. Mueller Memorial Scholarship
HALEY BORMAN
*Agronomy*

Farm Credit Services of America Scholarship
Leonard L. Ladd Memorial Scholarship in Plant Science
Richard L. Elliot Scholarship in Plant Science

KYLIE BOTERMAN
*Agronomy*

South Dakota Crop Improvement Association Scholarship

LANDIN BRINK
*Agronomy*

Dean’s Scholarship in CAFES

NOAH CHRISTENSEN
*Agronomy*

Burton L. Brage Scholarship
Ralph and Wanda Hansmeier Scholarship in Plant Science
Ray F. Lund Memorial Scholarship

MARTIN BOETEL
*Agronomy & Precision Agriculture*

Dwayne and Carolyn (Ogren) Kettering Endowed Scholarship
Fred and Wilma Westin Scholarship in Plant Science
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

BRADY CHRISTIANSEN
Precision Agriculture
William and Byrne Griffith Scholarship Fund

MCKENZIE CHRISTOPHER
Horticulture
AHPS-ABE Ice Cream Scholarship Winner

ELIZABETH DEBOER
Horticulture
AHPS General Scholarship
James and John Low Scholarship in Horticulture
Medary Acres Greenhouse, Inc. Scholarship

RHETT DYKSTRA
Agronomy
Maurice and Delores Nold Memorial Scholarship

KELLEN ERDAHL
Agronomy
Levi Thomas Buresch Memorial Scholarship in Agronomy

JACK FARQUHAR
Agronomy
Rusty and Sherry Antonen Endowed Scholarship
Jolie Fournier  
*Agronomy*  
SD Wheat Commission Scholarship

Dr. Paul Prashar Memorial Scholarship in Horticulture

James and Carleton Randall Scholarship in Horticulture

South Dakota State Horticultural Society Scholarship

Connor Fiedler  
*Agronomy*  
SD Wheat Commission Scholarship

Ellen Fitzpatrick  
*Agronomy & Horticulture*  
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

Brooklyn Fiscus  
*Precision Agriculture*  
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

Trevor Frost  
*Agronomy*  
Leon and Joyce Wrage Family Scholarship in Plant Science

SD Wheat Commission Scholarship

Corbin Fuoss  
*Agronomy*  
Mel Kloster Memorial Scholarship

Richard and Norman and Ellen Kuecker Scholarship

SD Wheat Commission Scholarship

Soil Scientist Memorial Scholarship
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

CLAIRE GALVIN  
*Horticulture*

Shirley Peebler Luther Freshman Scholarship in Horticulture

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ANALIESE GOEHRING  
*Agronomy*

Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

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BRADEN GREIBROK  
*Agronomy*

Wilmer L. and Adele Davis Scholarship in Plant Science

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AUSTIN HAND  
*Agronomy*

James and Joan Likness Scholarship in Agronomy  
South Dakota Crop Improvement Association Scholarship

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JACOB HEIGEL  
*Agronomy*

Raymond C. and Maxine Kinch Scholarship in Plant Science  
South Dakota Crop Improvement Association Scholarship
BROOKE HOFFBECK
Agronomy
Eldon F. Herring Scholarship

ASHILYN HULSTEIN
Agronomy
Don Moore Award for Undergraduate Research in Plant Science
Joseph J. and Coral (Coffey) Bonnemann Scholarship in Plant Science
Richard L. Elliott Scholarship in Plant Science

REGAN HEINE
Precision Agriculture
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

JOEL JAMES
Agronomy
Merl Krier Scholarship in Agronomy

AMELEA JONES
Horticulture
AHPS General Scholarship
F. David and Claus Johnson Scholarship in Horticulture
James and Barbara Jessen Scholarship in Plant Science
SD Master Naturalist Scholarship
South Dakota State Horticultural Society Scholarship
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

ANNA KARELS
*Precision Agriculture*
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

ANNE KNOFCZYNSKI
*Horticulture & Psychology*
Minnehaha Master Gardeners Scholarship in Honor of Dr. Graper
MNLA Foundation Scholarship

DUSTIN KOHN
*Horticulture & Agricultural Leadership*
Gottlieb Scholl, Sr. and Gottlieb Scholl, Jr. Scholarship

BENSEN KUECKER
*Agronomy*
AHPS General Scholarship
Hilbert D. Bogue Family Scholarship
James D. Curry Memorial Scholarship
Levi Thomas Buresch Memorial Scholarship in Agronomy

JAKE LARSEN
*Agronomy*
James and Melody Mielke Endowed Scholarship in Agronomy

ZACHARY LOOMIS
*Precision Agriculture*
Ervin and Lucille Boyd Family Scholarship
Leon Wood Scholarship
Raymond A. Moore Scholarship in Plant Science
ROSALYN MADSEN  
*Precision Agriculture*
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

AUSTEN MARUDAS  
*Horticulture*
Cecil and Grace Sanderson Family Scholarship in Horticulture

CALEB MCGREGOR  
*Agronomy*
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

LACEY MOCKLER  
*Horticulture*
Keith and Beverly Keltgen Scholarship in Plant Science

LUCAS MORRISON  
*Precision Agriculture*
Norman A. and Jean C. Evans Scholarship Endowment

JONAH OLSON  
*Precision Agriculture*
CHS Foundation Scholarship

CLAY POPHAM  
*Agronomy*
AHPS-ABE Ice Cream Scholarship Winner
Dick Clarin Memorial Scholarship

WYATT ROBERTS  
*Agronomy*
Mel Krier Scholarship

EMMA ROBINSON  
*Agronomy*
Raymond C. and Maxine Kinch Scholarship in Plant Science
William and Mabel Peterson Endowment in Plant Science

CONNOR RUEN  
*Agronomy*
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

JARED SIMONS  
*Agronomy*
Arthur H. Davis Scholarship

ZOEY STEFANICH  
*Horticulture*
Donald H. and Carol E. Tollefson Scholarship
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

NICHOLAS STOLE
Agronomy
South Dakota Crop Improvement Association Scholarship
Dr. E. Brent and Susan Turnipseed Scholarship

CHARLES TESCH
Agronomy & Precision Agriculture
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

TREVOR THUE
Precision Agriculture
William and Byrne Griffith Scholarship Fund
AHPS-ABE Ice Cream Scholarship

JOSEPH TILSTRA
Horticulture
Adams Homestead Ladies Gardening Scholarship in Horticulture
AHPS General Scholarship
Dean and Dorthy Martin Family Scholarship in Horticulture
Dr. Paul Prashar Memorial Scholarship in Horticulture
James and Barbara Jessen Scholarship in Plant Science
Rodney N. Richardson Endowed Scholarship in Plant Science

JAKE VEE STRA
Precision Agriculture
Marvin E. Larson Memorial Scholarship
COLTON VOVOS
*Precision Agriculture*
Dennis L. and Hazel J. Moe Scholarship in Ag Engineering

JACOB WEBER
*Precision Agriculture*
Michael and Nancy Roberts Scholarship

MATTHEW WEYL
*Agronomy & Precision Agriculture*
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment

DANIEL WILLIAMSON
*Agronomy*
Leonard Freiwald Family Scholarship in Plant Science
Rodney N. Richardson Endowed Scholarship in Plant Science

LEAH WYNIA
*Precision Agriculture*
Klingbeil Scholars Endowment
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS NOT PICTURED

BRADY AHLNESS
Agronomy
Errol EerNisse Scholarship

ANNE BARTZ
Horticulture
Paul Collins/Paul Bunyan Scholarship

ALANDRA EISENMINGER
Horticulture
Horticulture Practicum & Travel Studies

CAYDEN EISMANN
Agronomy
Marilyn and Quentin Schultz Plant Science Scholarship

CHANCE ELNESS
Precision Agriculture
Roger and Doris Lageson Scholarship Endowment

CODY FERGUSON
Horticulture
Wintrode Incentive Award Fund for Non-Traditional Students

MASON GODE
Precision Agriculture
Ag, Food and Environmental Sciences General Scholarship

EMILY GUGGISBERG
Horticulture
Jim and Elaine Waples Scholarship

REGAN JACOBY
Horticulture
David and Selina Hume Scholarship in Agriculture

ELISABETH KELM
Agronomy
Donald and Francisca Kluckman Scholarship in Agriculture

SIERRA KLEIN
Horticulture
Horticulture Practicum & Travel Studies

CLAYTON KOPPATSCHEK
Agronomy
Rogen-Trooien Scholarship in Agriculture

JACOBI KROUSE
Precision Agriculture
Tom and Michele Olsen Scholarship

SPENCER KUIPER
Agronomy
AHPS General Scholarship
D. Boyd Shank Scholarship in Plant Science
Vernon Brose and Marilyn Dahl Brose Scholarship in Agriculture

KADIN LABRIE
Agronomy
Frank & Lela Christensen Scholarship

DREW LEENERTS
Agronomy
CAFES Dean’s Excellence Scholarship
DAVID STEINHAGEN
Precision Agriculture
James and Melody Mielke Endowed Scholarship in Precision Agriculture

ASHTYN SCHULTZ
Horticulture

NATHAN MOBERG
Agronomy
Lawrence O. Fine Scholarship in Agronomy

DELLANA MUCK
Agronomy
Gale and Marie Erickson Scholarship

TYLER OGLE
Agronomy
Joseph F. Nelson Undergraduate Scholarship

ALEXANDER OTTO
Agronomy
Jerome Norgren Soil Conservation Scholarship

ZACHARY POST
Precision Agriculture
Stanley and Ella Skorr Scholarship

JESSE POTTS
Agronomy
CHS Foundation Freshman Scholarship

KYLE RESSE
Agronomy
Levi Thomas Buresch Memorial Scholarship in Agronomy

DERREK RUSSENBERGER
Precision Agriculture
Dennis L. and Hazel J. Moe Scholarship in Agricultural Engineering

COLE SANOW
Agronomy
Joseph J. and Coral (Coffey) Bonnemann Scholarship in Plant Science

KELLEN SCHMIDT
Agronomy
Paul and Evelyn Carson Scholarship in Plant Science

ALEC SERNETT
Agronomy
David and Selina Hume Scholarship in Agriculture

ASHTYN SCHULTZ
Horticulture
Harry B. Domke Memorial Scholarship in Horticulture
Myron E. and Bernadine L. Enevoldsen Scholarship

ALEC SERNETT
Agronomy
David and Selina Hume Scholarship in Agriculture

DAVID STEINHAGEN
Precision Agriculture
James and Melody Mielke Endowed Scholarship in Precision Agriculture

Caden Vandrorgeleen
Agronomy
CAFES Dean’s Excellence Scholarship
INAUGURAL CLASS OF KLINGBEIL SCHOLARS NAMED THIS FALL

Sixteen students in the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering and Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science were awarded the Klingbeil Scholarship this fall.

Klingbeil scholars were awarded $10,000 each that can be renewed for four years. Moving forward, four incoming freshmen will be selected to be Klingbeil Scholars each year.

Students are selected by a committee made up of faculty and staff in the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering and Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science. Students selected for the scholarship must plan to major in Precision Agriculture, Agronomy, or Agricultural Systems Technology. These students are expected to have strong academics, leadership involvement in high school activities, must be making a positive impact in their communities and show potential for success at SDSU. Most importantly, these students must exemplify the type of student that should be representing the Klingbeil Legacy by having a strong commitment to agriculture and its professions.

“The Klingbeil scholarship will attract talent to the precision ag sector that will serve as the backbone of the industry in future years. Individuals who graduate from our program will drive the change of tomorrow, helping to make farms more efficient, advance production practices, and help maintain a healthy environment for generations to come,” said Nic Uilk, Instructor and member of the Klingbeil Scholarship Selection Committee.

The Klingbeil Scholarships were made possible through a gift to the South Dakota State University Foundation by Maynard Klingbeil. After his death in 2020, Klingbeil gifted all 2,683 acres of his farm east of Onida, South Dakota to the University.

The land was sold for almost $17 million at an auction hosted by the South Dakota State University Foundation.

“Getting the opportunity to go to this auction and see the impact that Maynard has made is one of my top experiences in college, this is something I will remember for the rest of my life,” said Anna Karels, precision agriculture major from Norwood Young America, Minnesota and Klingbeil Scholar. “Seeing the amount of money raised and knowing that it would go to help students further their education, as it did mine, was a surreal experience.”

2022-2023 Klingbeil Scholars:
• Caden Bottum, Agricultural Systems Technology major from Tulare, South Dakota
• Colby Crabtree, Agricultural Systems Technology major from Luverne, Minnesota
• Brooklynn Fiscus, Precision Agriculture major from Crofton, Nebraska
• Ellen Fitzpatrick, Agronomy and Horticulture major from Brookings, South Dakota
• Annaliiese Goehring, Agronomy major from Mound City, South Dakota
• Regan Heine, Precision Agriculture major from Vermillion, South Dakota
• Anna Karels, Precision Agriculture major from Norwood Young America, Minnesota
• Rosalyn Madsen, Precision Agriculture major from Franklin, Minnesota
• Caleb McGregor, Agronomy major from Webster, South Dakota
• Cutler Michalski, Agricultural Systems Technology major from Willow Lake, South Dakota
• Connor Ruen, Agronomy major from Lanesboro, Minnesota
• Colten Scheldorf, Agricultural Systems Technology major from Chokio, Minnesota
• Charles Tesch, Agronomy and Precision Agriculture major from Henderson, Minnesota
• Chase Thiessen, Agricultural Systems Technology major from Larchwood, Iowa
• Matthew Weyl, Agronomy and Precision Agriculture major from Henderson, Minnesota
• Leah Wynia, Precision Agriculture major from Luverne, Minnesota

“Hearing the story of Maynard Klingbeil and learning about what he did for SDSU will leave a lifelong impression on me,” said Karels. “Maynard was a good steward of his land, always paid it forward, and helped others no matter what. These are three things that I want to do not only during my time at SDSU, but after graduation as well.”

By: Nicole Hudson
MARK SANDAGER
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR FOR THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

The South Dakota State University Football Team won the FCS National Championship in January 2023! Could you imagine that just 20 years ago? In 2004 there was a bold and controversial decision to move South Dakota State University athletics from a Division Two program to Division One program. The decision by former South Dakota State University President Peggy Gordon-Miller and SDSU leadership came with a lot of emotion and controversy. Most considered the dream to be out of reach for a state like South Dakota.

On the drive home from Frisco, Texas, where I watched the game and felt the emotion in person, I had the opportunity to reflect on what it took for SDSU to grow a National Championship program. I settled on; success does not happen by accident, and it does not happen overnight. For decades the SDSU football team has had a singular goal: to be a National Champion.

To achieve this goal there were several strategic investments made to give the football team the resources needed to compete at the highest level. The first and most important investment was finding and building the leadership to guide the team. The second most important investment was building a fan base that was emotionally connected to the success of the program. Lastly the football team needed the capital investments to perform at the highest level. Those investments include a new football stadium, strength and conditioning areas, and indoor practice facilities.

Once we attained the necessary framework, success was inevitable.

Success does not happen by accident, and it does not happen overnight. The Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science made a similar bold decision when they, along with the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, decided to create the world’s first four-year degree in Precision Agriculture. This set the college on a trajectory to become the premier land grant university in production agriculture.

Since the decision to become a premier land grant university we, the stakeholders, have been strategically investing in people through scholarships and faculty endowments. We invested emotionally with our time and research, and we invested in a world class Raven Precision Agriculture Center.

What’s your next dream?

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