

## Supporting future environmental leaders

Mike '69 and Becky Stinson of Apple Valley, Minn., have long been champions of the environment.

Mike works with both Trout Unlimited and the local nonprofit Wilderness in the City, while Becky has been volunteering at the Minnesota Zoo for 25 years. Protecting the environment is at the root of many of their volunteer efforts.

It all started after Mike was stationed in the Navy in New York City on the very first Earth Day in 1970. "It hung with me forever," he said.

Although Mike majored in psychology at Saint Mary's, he believes his true calling may have been forestry because of his love for the outdoors.

This passion for the environment is what spurred the Stinsons to generously donate to an environmental biology lab located in the Adducci Science Center. Saint Mary's is currently raising funds to revitalize and reconfigure the former science building on the Winona Campus into a technologically advanced hub of science, business, and psychology, as well as entrepreneurship — and the support of alumni like the Stinsons is helping to bring this vision to reality.

Mike, a native Nebraskan, attended Saint Mary's during the late 1960s, which were a tumultuous time in American history with the Vietnam War and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. But the De La Salle Christian Brothers made these important pieces of history a part of their curriculum. Brother K. Basil had Mike and his classmates read "Black Like Me" by John Howard Griffin. Another Brother assigned the reading, "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl. A third reading by Gordon Allport, "The Nature of Prejudice," tops Mike's list of significant academic readings.



Mike '69 and Becky Stinson

In addition to being academically challenging, Mike remembers making some very good friends and having a terrific time during his college years.

After graduation, he served as a Navy corpsman and then worked for the blood plasma industry for 25-30 years. From there, he directed blood and plasma products for the American Red Cross headquarters in Washington, D.C., before doing some consulting.

Throughout his career, for more than 20 years, he's given back to his alma mater. And they're excited that their latest gift particularly aligns with their passion for being better stewards of our world.

"I've always been keenly interested in making sure we have clean water," Mike said. "The climate is warming. The eco system is changing. We have got to be really aware of what we're doing. It is absolutely critical to our health as a human species.

"One of the things that has always been dear to me about Saint Mary's is they really talk about ethical leadership," Mike said, adding that the reason for his gift is to perpetuate good leadership. "I hope that these men and women studying environmental biology will learn the issues but also be able to lead and convince others that this is important. Really good leadership is hard. If they can do that, I think that's a terrific legacy."

## ABOUT THE LEADER

The stories and successes shared in each issue of *The Leader* highlight the extraordinary impact benefactors are making on the programs and people at Saint Mary's through their leadership gifts. The Leader is a quarterly publication.

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