

## University Relations and Communications

Media Relations 715-346-2490  
715-346-3046

[urc@uwsp.edu](mailto:urc@uwsp.edu)  
[www.uwsp.edu/urc](http://www.uwsp.edu/urc)

**Oct. 14, 2015**

### **Gifts create waterfowl-wetlands conservation chair at UW-Stevens Point**

Generous gifts to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point will establish an endowed faculty position in waterfowl and wetlands conservation, enhancing one of the nation's largest wildlife management programs.

Gifts totaling \$2 million to UWSP Foundation from James C. Kennedy of Atlanta, Ga., and David F. Grohne of Wilmington, Ill., will create the Kennedy-Grohne Chair in Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation, a new faculty position in the College of Natural Resources.

The position will be the second endowed chair in UW-Stevens Point's history and will significantly enhance opportunities in waterfowl and wetlands research, outreach and education, according to Christine Thomas, dean of the College of Natural Resources. The first, a wildlife endowed chair, was created in December 2013.

"We are excited, humbled and honored by Mr. Grohne's and Mr. Kennedy's generosity and this expression of faith in our faculty and students," Thomas said. Their support represents a long-term investment in science that will strengthen education and research to secure the future of healthy waterfowl populations, she said, especially along the northern section of the Mississippi Flyway.

Earnings generated from the endowment will support collaborative research, outreach and related student-faculty activities of the chair. The university will provide the base salary and fringe benefits for the position.

"This substantial commitment will be transformational for our students," Chancellor Bernie Patterson said. "The new Kennedy-Grohne Chair will reinforce UW-Stevens Point's role as a national leader in undergraduate education in natural resource management."

A national search for a recognized waterfowl and wetlands expert will begin immediately.

Kennedy and Grohne are devoted conservationists and longtime members, volunteers and benefactors of Ducks Unlimited, Inc., the world's largest private, nonprofit, waterfowl and wetlands conservation organization.

Grohne is founder of Independent Tube Corporation, a leading manufacturer of structural steel tubing, based in Chicago. In addition to his lifelong passion for the outdoors and involvement in Ducks Unlimited, he is also a trustee for the Wetlands America Trust. One of the nation's largest accredited land trusts, it holds conservation easements on nearly 400,000 acres. An avid philanthropist, he is also a trustee for the David F. and Margaret T. Grohne Foundation in Western Spring, Ill.

Kennedy is chairman of Cox Enterprises, a leading communications, media and automotive services company, based in Atlanta. A lifelong nature enthusiast and conservationist, he once served as chairman of the Colorado Division of Wildlife Commission and was awarded Conservationist of the Year.

Kennedy currently serves on the board of the PATH Foundation, Georgia's trail system for walkers, runners, cyclists and skaters. He previously served on the boards of Ducks Unlimited and the Atlanta Committee for Progress, and is a current member and past president of Wetlands America Trust, Inc. He received the Distinguished Conservationist of the Year Award from the Georgia Conservancy in 2009. He and his wife, Sarah, were recognized as the 2003 Philanthropists of the Year by the Greater Atlanta Chapter of the Association for Fund-raising Professionals.

Their commitments are among leadership gifts in the early stages of UW-Stevens Point's Partnership for Thriving Communities capital campaign.