

# Ruth Pollock provides largest endowment in Huskie Band history

What would inspire a talented—and incredibly busy—young man to drop everything on a Friday afternoon, rummage through a dusty storage closet, and squeeze into a band uniform that's at least three sizes too small? Gratitude.

"Our regular uniforms are at the cleaners," says Elliott Stanger, sophomore music education major. "But I wanted to be here in person...and in uniform...to get a picture with Ruth. I wanted to tell her how much we appreciate her gift."

Students like Stanger received a lot to be grateful for when Ruth Ashelford Pollock created the largest endowment in Huskie Marching Band history. That endowment will provide scholarship assistance for 30 to 40 band students a year.

Hours spent traveling and in practice make being a band member more of a lifestyle than a hobby. Yet, the students say the blisters and sunburn are worth it. "We work hard to support NIU, but we get a lot out of it, too," says music education major Kevin Nevsimal. You learn accountability and how to manage your time very quickly."

Senior geography major and band member Kara Haller agrees, "It's all about discipline," she adds.

All of the students' hard work paid off when it earned the respect of Pollock. She has become one of their greatest fans, "I understand football because of the band," she explains. I started going to games just to hear their wonderful music and

ended up learning the rules of the game while I was there."

Hard work and discipline are qualities Pollock says she wants to reward. Growing up during the Great Depression, she learned the value of a dollar and a good education. She fulfilled a lifelong dream when she graduated from the Sisters of Misericordia in Oak Park with a degree in nursing. In 1944, she enlisted in the Army, where she served as a dedicated and

caring nurse for over two decades.

The strength, compassion, and decisiveness that made Pollock a great nurse also make her a standout philanthropist. She has supported nursing students in DeKalb County for many years, and in 1999, she created a scholarship fund at NIU for ROTC students.

Pollock's energy, knowledge and appreciation of family and history have made her an integral part of the NIU community.

Through her generosity, the names of her mother,

father, and late husband grace the ballroom and great hall of the Barsema Alumni and Visitors Center.

"I give to help people, and education is key in that process. I want to encourage hard work...responsibility...and academic achievement, but above all, I want to reward students who demonstrate humanity. Music adds so much to the human experience," says Pollock.

"One of the greatest thrills for me is to give a student...who doesn't realize his or her potential...a little push. Philanthropy does that. It can give us all a little push."



*Left to right, Kara Haller, Elliott Stanger, Ruth Pollock and Kevin Nevsimal.*

**Behind every gift, there is a story.**

**To learn more, visit [www.truenorth4niu.com](http://www.truenorth4niu.com)**

**or call (815) 753-1386.**