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Chapman Announces Naming of Schmid College of Science

ORANGE, Calif., Sept. 4, 2008 – Chapman University’s new College of Science now has a name, thanks to generous donations from a pair of Santa Ana brothers, Don and Dick Schmid, who are sons of one of Orange County’s most visionary farming and business leaders, Walter Schmid. The new Schmid College of Science will be named for the Schmid family, whose friendship with Chapman University is as historic as the family’s interwoven relationship with Orange County.

“This is a monumental gift, the kind that sparks an evolution and will propel Chapman to heights we never imagined,” said Chapman President James L. Doti. “Don and Dick’s commitment to our Schmid College of Science will change the face of our university forever, and we cannot thank them enough for their extraordinary generosity and vision.”

Chapman’s College of Science was established this past spring as a separate entity (the science disciplines previously had been part of the Wilkinson College of Letters and Sciences, which subsequently became the Wilkinson College of Humanities and Social Sciences). The new Schmid College of Science, under interim dean Dr. Janeen Hill, will include the Departments of Biological Science, Chemistry, Mathematics and Computer Science, Physical Therapy and Psychology, as well as Chapman’s new Department of Physics, Computational Science and Engineering. The Schmid College will also include graduate programs in Food Science and Health Communications.

Chapman’s new Department of Physics, Computational Science and Engineering, announced last spring, was the catalyst for the development of the Schmid College of Science, said Chapman Chancellor Daniele Struppa. “The arrival of Wolf Prize winner Yakir Aharonov and his team has given us the opportunity to capitalize on the remarkable strengths of our current science faculty. Our professors have always focused on working with our undergraduate students in meaningful and timely research. This is something that is very important to our new colleagues as well, and it will be one of the hallmarks of our new Schmid College of Science.”

The Schmid Family:

Orange County Visionaries Build a Gateway to Chapman’s Future

Dick Schmid, 75, a Chapman trustee, was originally a partner and founder of Williamson and Schmid Civil Engineers and is now partner in Sundstrom and Schmid Engineers. Don Schmid, 78, is chairman of ECCO equipment rentals in Santa Ana. Both have degrees in Civil Engineering from Cal Tech. Their father, Walter Schmid (1902-1995), emigrated to Anaheim from Germany in 1911 and became a successful farmer in the young Orange County, acquiring considerable farm land in Southern California by the 1940s.

During his 80 years of farming, Walter grew the majority of the crops that did well in Orange County, including oranges, lima beans, tomatoes, sugar beets, cauliflower, broccoli, green peas and spinach. Relocating his operations to the lower Coachella Valley, he raised carrots, corn, radishes, cotton, dates, tangerines, grapefruit, lemons, and grapes, as well as running cattle for a year. He was a pioneer in the development and use of “new age” mechanical farming equipment and irrigation systems instrumental in conserving water, one of his major interests.

By the 1950s, Walter’s agricultural triumphs allowed him to turn his focus to commercial properties and other investments. In 1971, Walter and his wife Margaret founded the Waltmar Foundation (“Waltmar” is a contraction of “Walter” and “Margaret”) to support causes such as education, health care, medical research, and abused women and youth.

(Find a detailed biographical sketch of Walter Schmid here:
<http://www.chapman.edu/argyros/oc.bus.his/schmid.asp>)

Said Dick Schmid: “As a matter of fact, our father probably would have been a good scientist or engineer. He never had that opportunity because at an early age he became the sole male at home and had to quit high school. Eventually he did finish high school when he was 21. But he was always good in math and was an innovator in his approach to farming. He would come up with unique ideas and then take them to a blacksmith to make them work, such as in preparing seed beds and preserving water. He had lots of good ideas on how to improve irrigation.”

Throughout the last 35 years, the Schmid family has supported Chapman University continuously and generously, both as individuals and through the foundation. In the 1960s, Jim Farley, vice president of the then-Chapman College in charge of fund-raising, was a neighbor of Walter and Margaret Schmid in Santa Ana, and the two families played bridge and talked shop. At the time, Chapman College was faced with considerable financial hardship. “Dad never asked Walter for money,” recalls Farley’s daughter, Shauna Farley, now director of the Waltmar Foundation. “Walter would hear of a need and drop off a check later.” Thus, Walter Schmid’s support for education and his love of Orange County helped Chapman first to survive a rough period, and then to prosper.

“Father had always been generous all his life,” said Don Schmid. “His father told him he needed to give back to the community that had done so much for the family. He started ‘giving back’ in the 60s and 70s, and Chapman was one of the main beneficiaries of his success.”

“A knowledge of science helped my father succeed in agriculture, and the breakthroughs that come from scientific research today will be critical to the success of our region and our nation. My family and I are glad to know that our support will make a difference in the lives of Chapman students and, through their work, in the lives of all Americans,” said Don Schmid.

“None of us has ever studied at Chapman,” said Dick Schmid, who served on Chapman’s Board of Trustees for several years alongside Walter before his father passed away in 1995, and has continued as a board member. “In the early years we thought that Chapman would stay a small college like Pomona and Whittier, and we didn’t think it would become a recognized scientific institution. However, because of the great leadership of Jim Doti and Daniele Struppa and the

formation of the Physics, Computational Science and Engineering program and the College of Science, we are confident that this is the beginning of GREAT science and engineering programs at Chapman.”