

# Education a life-long love for Lane patron

## King's donations help fund Reading Together

**Larry Coonrod**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

For many people retirement is time to kick back after a lifetime of hard work. For Jane King it meant going back to school.

It wasn't King's first time at college. From a young age, education had always been important to her.

"I grew up in a little farming community and not a whole lot of people went to college, but that was something I always planned to do," she said.

In those days, educational programs for women were limited. King earned her undergraduate degree in home economics.

"It was the traditional thing then," she said. "I originally planned to work for a big company and give cooking demonstrations."

Twenty years later, she earned a master's degree in remedial reading and diagnostic information at Miami University of Ohio.

"I was going to take a class just for fun because I loved to go to school," King said.

"I took one class and then I said I might like to substitute teach and about a month later someone asked me if I'd like to take over this remedial reading program. So, while I was getting my master's I was running the program."

King put her new degree to work by teaching in schools in Pennsylvania and Ohio. After her husband Don, with whom she just celebrated their 62-wedding anniversary on Nov. 11, retired from Pennsylvania Plate Glass, they decided to move to Eugene where their daughter works as a fundraiser for UO. Originally, they thought they might retire in North Carolina, but after visiting Oregon, they changed their minds.

"What an adventure. We did camping and things I'd never

done before," King said.

Called by her love of education, King decided to take a class at LCC.

"I thought it would be fun to go to school to take a class. I went out to Lane and took a couple of classes and then I was hooked."

Over the next several years, King completed more than a hundred credit hours. She took courses in writing, literature, philosophy and religion.

"Some classes I'd take twice because I enjoyed them so much," King said.

Of all the classes she took, the learning community ones were her favorite, she said.

"The most fun one I ever had was a learning community where we had four instructors and 12 hours of credit. It was history, writing, theatre and philosophy and it went for an entire year," she said.

"When you were with the same group of people for that long, you got to know them. It's been probably 10 years ago, but when I see those students we still have a bond and we talk about the times that we had out there."

Learning how to use a computer proved challenging for King who had never used one before attending LCC.

"I also took a class in desktop publishing when I got my first computer with Pete Peterson. That was a real stretch. I didn't even know how to turn on the computer and here I am trying to make newsletters," she said.

Appreciating the opportunity that LCC provides to students, King started supporting learning community programs financially. Don King's former employer, PPG, would match their educational contributions up to \$20,000.

"Of course I couldn't quite make that," she said, chuckling.

The Kings recently received notice the PPG was phasing out the matching contributions.

"I can understand, they're situated in Pennsylvania so they don't really get a lot of credit for what they do in Eugene," Jane King said.

King said that eventually she didn't feel as though LCC was putting her contributions to effective use.

"Over the years I had given a lot of money and after one instructor left, nobody was really doing very much with the money," she said. "Then a new (Lane) foundation director came in and said, 'Let's do something really big with the money'"

Faculty and the Lane Foundation decided to expand on the learning together communities with a new reading together project.

**Lane philanthropist Jane King supports learning communities.**



Reading Together coordinator Ellen Cantor said that she believes that King's financial contributions have given students a unique opportunity.

"She wanted students at Lane to have the co-curriculum enrichment that students at a (4-year) liberal arts college would get," Cantor said. "She's a pretty amazing woman."

A year-long campus wide reading program is so unique Cantor said that she believes LCC maybe the only college in the country doing it.

"Most colleges will use a book for entering freshmen, and they'll use it for maybe a month or two and that's it," she said.

"I was thrilled, because I love to read," King said. "By that time I was not taking classes anymore, so this gave me an opportunity to be on Lane. I've been on the reading committee and get to read the books and help choose

the books."

LCC invites one of the reading together authors to speak with students and faculty every year. Visiting authors stay for several days with the Kings at their home near Hendricks's Park.

Jane King said she was looking forward to having "Buffalo for the Broken Heart: Restoring Life to a Black Hills Ranch," author Dan O'Brien stay this year as she is a great fan.

"I've read them all," she said. "I think he'll be an interesting person to have on campus. I'd love to hear more about how the students respond to the books."

Even though she no longer takes classes, King said she is at LCC "when ever I can be."

Last year, LCC ecology instructor invited her on a coast field trip.

"Walking over the strawberry fields was pretty challenging, but it was so much for me," she said.

Attending plays produced by

the Students Production Association is one of her favorite activities, King said. After funding for theatre productions was cut, King said she has been impressed at how well the students have done running their own production group.

"That's an amazing story, because everything just folded for them. I can't believe the students do that," she said, adding that she particularly enjoyed SPA's production of "The Cherry Orchard" this year.

When not attending events or learning community meetings, King said she enjoys traveling and enjoying all the "wonderful things to do" in Eugene. Always the educator she tutors once a week at an after school homework club.

Reflecting on her education, King said that her years at LCC were among her favorites.

"It was certainly the most rewarding and inspiring part of my education I think."