

Couple endow an art scholarship at Clark College

By **HOWARD BUCK**
Columbian staff writer

As an artist, Joanne Peeke-ma has made her mark with a paintbrush.

But it was a few pen strokes from her husband, George, that should help young artists blossom at Clark College for years to come.

A \$100,000 gift to the Clark

College Foundation from the Green Meadows couple will establish an endowed scholarship for art students, named in Joanne's honor.

School leaders are thrilled with an endowment that boosts a field of study that's been thin on student assistance.

"This is a big deal for our

arts program. It provides a full-ride scholarship," said Lisa Gibert, Foundation president.

"What's really nice is, it encompasses all of the arts," Gibert added. That includes visual and performing arts, plus graphic arts and welding courses that are increasingly popular, she said.

For Joanne, 74, and George, 79, graduates of the University of California at Berkeley, the donation was a natural fit.

"It's something that I've been waiting to do," Joanne said. "I have an attachment and an affection for Clark. I love the arts, and my husband

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supported the idea."

In fact, she once taught a painting class at Clark. That's part of a long career of artistry and instruction that began a half-century ago in a second-grade classroom at Helen Baller Elementary School in Camas.

"I think that (Clark) students often are capable, but don't have the financial help," she said.

The endowment isn't her first gift to Clark. She purchased and donated the stainless steel sculpture "Gentle Commitment," which stands near Bauer Hall and, recently, a smaller piece for the arts department lobby.

In addition, the Peekemas chipped in \$10,000 to the college foundation, in response to a year-end, \$100,000 matching-fund challenge made by an anonymous donor.

Gibert said that challenge drew at least \$56,000 in new gifts, netting \$112,000 total for general foundation use. Another \$24,000 donated was tied to specific endowments, she said.

For inspiration, the couple

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PRESIDENT,
CLARK COLLEGE FOUNDATION

singled out Clark's Mature Learning courses, tailored to seniors, which both have attended. Gibert described the two as avid "lifelong learners."

While Joanne praised the hard work of local educators, George said he's most impressed with Clark's widening reach, for a community college.

"They have something like (13,000) students. That's big-league," said George, a longtime industrial engineer with Georgia-Pacific.

Indeed, the Clark foundation's total bounty is big-time. Through last June, the group boasted 91 scholarship endowments, \$57 million in total endowments and \$80.7 million in total assets, Gibert said.

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