

# \$500,000 DONATION

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November 25, 2009 - The fundraising effort towards building a new campus for Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley took a giant leap forward thanks to Kathleen and F. Allan Huckabone, who donated \$500,000 to the project.



The gift to the capital campaign by the local couple is being called one of the largest charitable donations ever made in Renfrew County by an individual or family.

"We have decided to encourage and inspire in this worthy cause," Mr. Huckabone said, shortly after the announcement was made at a dinner held Tuesday night at the college.

"Kathleen and I are pleased our donation of \$500,000 has been made and accepted as of Nov. 24, 2009."

Mrs. Huckabone said she and her husband feel very strongly about the campus project, and hope their contribution will inspire others, and "this donation will spark a flame to go through this room to all of the valley" to encourage more support for this worthwhile project.

The Huckabones were early supporters of the project to build a new campus for Algonquin College. Mr. Huckabone is a well-known Pembroke lawyer, while Mrs. Huckabone is a founding member of the Pembroke and Area Women's Book Club, started more than 40 years ago.

The couple has supported and continues to support many community and charitable causes in the Upper Ottawa Valley.

## **PAGE 2 - \$500,000 DONATION**

Algonquin College President Robert Gillett said this is the largest single donation from a family the project has received and the college is overwhelmed by its generosity. In recognition of this and a way to express gratitude, he said the library of the new campus will be named the F. Allan and Kathleen Huckabone Library in their honour.

The donation pushed the capital campaign ever closer to its \$2.5 million goal, what the community needs to raise for its share of the \$36 million Algonquin College waterfront campus project. Prior to the announcement, some \$1.3 million had already been raised as groups, organizations, service clubs, businesses and individuals stepped forward to support the project.

The new campus, known as Renaissance Square, will see the construction of a more than 80,000-square-foot facility on property west of the Riverwalk Amphitheatre.

The new downtown campus for Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley is being seen as the great hope to revitalizing the city and its core, and a new and exciting chapter in the history of the college.

The proposed campus will be designed to house state-of-the-art learning environments for skilled trades, health care and hospitality education and will create a minimum of 300 new full-time spaces, bringing the total enrolment to 1,000 students.

The college's board of governors voted late last year to proceed with the work even without government help, although that is still being sought to help defray some of the costs. Fred Blackstein, the honorary chairman of the capital campaign, said it isn't a matter of if the project will proceed, but when. "This is going to be built," he said. "No question about it."

Construction is set to begin in April 2011, with the campus opening for the semester of fall 2012.

Stephen Uhler is a Daily Observer reporter

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