

## Foreign Student Friendship Foundation

### *A Brief History*

Shortly after World War II, there was a great influx of foreign students coming to American universities. In the early 1950's, Dr. David Daugherty, a faculty member, assumed the leadership of establishing the foundation. He was assisted by Bessie Campbell, Fern Griffeth (Mrs. Ross), Mrs. Henry Burch, and one or two others. The first Farewell Dinner was held at the Veterans Memorial Building in May 1951. Most important was the establishing of the Friendship Family program — this occurred during the years Bessie Campbell was president, 1953-54, with Mrs. Griffeth as Chairperson. Each foreign student was provided a sponsoring family in the community. They were entertained in their "family's" home, shared trips to the beach and mountains as well as other special events.

In the Spring of 1954, the first Tour of Oregon by bus was started. The University YMCA cooperated for a time in setting up these trips. The itinerary was arranged so that students were entertained by local families in the community, and these students reciprocated by speaking and entertaining at community meetings, service clubs and churches. To begin, couples from Eugene chaperoned these trips — Mildred and Dick Crakes went on three trips. Later, knowledgeable graduate students acted as tour leaders.

It soon became customary to have "farewell" dinners at the Student Union, each Friendship family taking their student and paying for dinner. In 1963, potluck dinners were started. The first one was held at the Congregational Church. The crowd soon outgrew this facility, and dinners were moved to the dining hall at South Eugene High School. Laura Webb was Chairperson of the Foundation in 1962-63.

In 1966, the number of students had increased, and the securing, assigning and checking in with Friendship families was a great task. Dean DuShane, with Dr. Kenneth Ghent secured funds for appointment of a person to work 1/3 time, as an assistant to the Foreign Student advisor. Laura Webb had been handling this work for a number of years, as a volunteer, and she was hired for this position. Liz Litchman took over this work in 1970.

In the 1960's, an organization was set up to help foreign student wives become better acquainted with the university environment with its variety of offerings for personal and social enrichment. Many persons helped this program get underway, including Maxine Constance, Laura Webb,

Mrs. Woodhull, and Mildred Crakes. The program was called International Friends. For the next two decades, Dr. Kenneth Ghent was then the guiding hand to thousands of foreign students and their families at the University of Oregon. Ghent was Director of Foreign Student Offices, and served constantly on the Foreign Student Friendship Foundation.

In 1977, there were approximately 800 foreign students, who made up 5% of the university enrollment. Dr. Mills stated at this time that the Friendship Families program in the Eugene-Springfield area volunteered to provide a homestay for international students to help them adjust to an American university and foreign living situation. Spring bus tours around Oregon during Spring Break were sponsored by the Foreign Student Friendship Foundation.

The newsletter to all Friendship members was started in the Winter of 1983. At that time, the foundation was already 33 years old. It had grown from just a few Friendship families to over 450 families. The foundation was mainly supported by voluntary small donations from host families and the steering committee. In 1983, there were over 1000 students from 76 different countries enrolled at the University of Oregon.

By 2000, the Friendship Foundation for International Students had several programs. They included the Welcome Picnic, the Presidents' Reception, the Conversation Friend program, the International Friend program (with or without homestay), the Asian Celebration Festival, and the Annual Awards Ceremony.