“But for Ohio State…”

For Merle Lashey, Jr., that’s more than a slogan. The former farmer, banker, and county commissioner credits his Ohio State education with launching him from Marion County’s farm fields to the steppes of Africa and the pyramids of Egypt. “If it hadn’t been for Ohio State—my whole life, really, in terms of success, would have been very different.”

Lashey grew up in Claridon Township, the son of the Marion Power Shovel’s chief engineer, Merle Lashey, Sr. His dad was one of the architects behind the Marion-made NASA crawler. Like many of his contemporaries, Lashey went to war following his graduation from Claridon High School. From 1942 to 1945, he marched through Europe, eventually as a Staff Sergeant in the 44th Infantry Division. “We were just a bunch of schoolboys,” he recalls. “We weren’t even dry behind the ears yet.” But he remembers, “having that tremendous experience led to thinking that, when I got out, I wanted to continue my schooling.”

Lashey attended Ohio Wesleyan University after his military service but was tapped by his new wife’s father to run the family farm near Green Camp. After a friend suffered a farm accident, he wondered how he would make a living if something similar happened to him. In 1961, he enrolled in Ohio State University classes which had recently begun in the former Harding High School. That led to a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. Lashey received a Wall Street Journal award and was voted “Outstanding Senior” in his class. With those credentials, it’s no wonder he quickly ascended to CEO at Marion’s Production Credit Association, making loans to area farmers from 1963 to 1973.

His Ohio State and banking credentials led to consulting positions for the U.S. Government in Kenya, South Africa, and Egypt. In between, he served a term as Marion County Commissioner. “I’ve lived a diversified life,” he says with his trademark smile and considerable understatement.

It’s a life that’s far from over. “I’m enjoying every minute of it,” he says. “Like Woody Hayes, I believe in paying forward.” The former banker recognizes a good deal and recently established an Ohio State charitable gift annuity paying him over nine percent interest. Through his estate, it will deliver a substantial boost to Ohio State Marion’s science building project.

“Ohio State sure helped me—and I’d like to be able to help those who come after me.”
Local community leader, Trella Romine, has been selected to receive the Ohio State University Distinguished Service Award for 2012. It will be presented to her by President E. Gordon Gee during summer commencement ceremonies in Columbus on August 12th.

Trella has been a frequent and long-time contributor to the success of The Ohio State University at Marion. In the late 1970’s, she was instrumental in the establishment of the Larry Yoder Prairie Nature Preserve and contributed generously to the endowment fund that sustains it. In 2010, she established the Trella Hemmerly Romine/Howard Howser Endowed Scholarship Fund with a gift of $50,000. The fund provides for at least one science-oriented student each year to benefit from this “portable” scholarship. Most recently Trella contributed an additional $5,000 to help fund the construction of a new science education building on our campus.

Established by the Ohio State University Board of Trustees in 1952, the Distinguished Service Award annually recognizes individuals who have rendered exceptional service to the university. Awards are not made on the basis of long, faithful, or loyal service alone, but rather for service that is truly distinguished. We are delighted that Trella, now 96 years young and still going strong, has been chosen to receive this prestigious and well-deserved award.
The Economy of Education

C. Gary Iams
Coordinator of Development and Community Relations
The Ohio State University at Marion

The I CAN Center for Excellence, for which The Ohio State University at Marion is one of the partners, motivates students of all ages to stay in school, earn a diploma, and view higher education as both necessary and desirable. The program develops, implements, and promotes unique and impactful college access programs in a six county region of central and north central Ohio.

The ACE Scholarship Program (Accessing College Experiences) annually provides need-based scholarships for elementary students who demonstrate academic promise but lack the resources to attend Kids’ College classes each summer.

GoBuck$ is a partnership with the Marion City Schools which provides Ohio State Marion tuition vouchers of $25 and $50 per quarter to any student meeting attendance and achievement criteria established by the school district. Begun in 2010, this program has already had a significant impact on district attendance and is creating thousands of excited “Junior Buckeyes” each year.

By making college a reality for our young people, the goal of better wages, a more robust economy, and a better way of life can become a reality. Call us at 740-725-6253 to discuss how you might become involved in supporting these and other important programs.

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The Ohio State University at Marion Scholarship and Endowment Funds

George and Dorothy Alber Scholarship
Babich Honors Fund
Ava King Brown Scholarship
Warren Brown Endowed Scholarship
Consolidated Electric Co-op Endowed Scholarship
Courtwright Faculty Development Fund
Mark A. and Debbie Cramer Endowment
Cultural Arts Endowment
W. Keith Davis Memorial Scholarship
Wm. Kay Davis Honors Award
Drew Scholarship
Friends of Delaware Endowment
Evelyn and George Ghearing Scholarship
A. Merle and Pearl Hamilton Scholarship
Hamilton Family Endowed Scholarship Fund
Oliver E. Hamilton History Endowment Fund
Warren Harding-Norman Thomas Fund
Francis and Virginia Hazard Scholarship
Hal Hazelett Endowment Fund
Hendricks Study/Travel Scholarship
Roy and Lillian Holdridge Scholarship
Sara Sprague Howser Scholarship
John Isler Scholarship
Geraldine McFadden Kuhn Scholarship
Geraldine M. and Wayne H. Kuhn Scholarship
Laurel Leffler Minority Scholarship
Ralph Lewis Scholarship
Loudenslager Scholarship
Lashley Lowe Scholarship
Cristi and John Ludwig Endowed Scholarship
Lowe Family Scholarship
Mary Alice Lyon Scholarship
Marion Campus Business Endowment
Marion Campus Dean’s Fund
Marion Founders Scholarship
Barbara and Peter Miller Scholarship
John H. Moore Scholarship
Theodore Myers Scholarship
Jane Peppard Scholarship
Prairie Nature Education Center Fund
Larry Prude Memorial Minority Scholarship
Romine/Howser Scholarship
Sims Family Scholarship
Donald E. and Lillian Sims Scholarship
Sue Galloway Swavel Endowed Scholarship
Evelyn E. Walters Endowment Fund
Jack and Ruby Weis Scholarship
Edwin Wolfinger Scholarship
WOSB-FM Endowment
A memorandum of understanding was recently signed by Marion County Commissioners and representatives of The Ohio State University to allow for construction of the southern extension of University Drive through the Marion campus. The new road will be located on the far west side of the campus and will connect SR 95 with SR 529. Officials believe that the road will not only improve campus safety but provide greater accessibility for students, staff, and visitors. It will also provide a link connecting the southern and western portions of Marion with the growing east side, and at the same time, it will reduce traffic pressure in surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Marion County will supervise the construction process, with County Engineer Brad Irons taking the lead. According to his office, the design engineering work will begin soon. He also stated that special care will be given to preserve the aesthetics of the campus surroundings by using gentle mounding landscape techniques and lighted walkways. The project is expected to be completed in 2013.