

MAGNATE DONALD STURM GIVES BACK TO UNIVERSITY, COMMUNITY

For Donald Sturm (LLB '58), it isn't enough just to run an interstate banking operation with billions in assets while also overseeing an array of investments and real estate holdings. His real passion, he insists, is giving back, both to his University and his community.

And while his financial contributions are substantial, Sturm also gives something more valuable: his time.

This year's recipient of the University of Denver Evans Award — the highest award bestowed by the University — Sturm has served on the Board of Trustees since 1992, guiding the school from one of its most difficult periods to a new era of growth and achievement.

"Both my wife and I are bent on helping people, and we've done a number of things to help the community. This is where I live," he says. "As you work with something, you want to make it better. You want to use your experience and whatever talent you have to help make the institution better. And our goals have been high."

Sturm had a 28-year career with Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc. — a large construction and mining company in Omaha, Neb. — where he served as vice chairman. He returned to Denver in 1991 and founded the Sturm Financial Group, which includes American National Bank and Premier Bank. He also started the Sturm Realty Group, which owns real estate in Cherry Creek and Castle Rock, Colo.

In addition to serving on the DU board, Sturm and his wife, Susan, have donated \$29 million to the University, including \$20 million to the law school, now named the Sturm College of Law.

Ed Harris, vice chancellor of University Advancement, says recognizing Sturm with the Evans Award is long overdue. And while the award is restricted to DU alumni, Harris notes that Susan Sturm is every bit as important



PHOTO BY: Wayne Armstrong

Donald Sturm received the University's highest award this year.

to the University as her husband.

“What they have done to fundamentally, systemically improve and change the University is immeasurable,” Harris says.

Sturm’s civic involvement includes creating and funding programs that extend educational and housing opportunities to low-income families while also serving on boards for the Boy Scouts and the Denver Art Museum Foundation. Volunteering, Sturm says, is a passion and something he encourages everyone to do.

“You don’t have to have money. Anybody can give their time. We live in a great country, and it’s a great country because people give back in time and money to their communities,” he says.

For DU, Sturm says his vision is for the school to continue to excel and evolve, both in the educational opportunities it affords and in the top-level facilities it provides for scholarship and research.

As for receiving the Evans Award, Sturm says he’s appreciative, but he’s never sought recognition for himself.

“That doesn’t drive me,” he says. “What drives people is what comes from inside.”