



Humanities Giving Spotlight: Inspiring Couple Provides Support to ASL



Lauren Sanders with Donna and Chuck Thomas

There are those who call themselves Buckeyes and then there are those who truly "walk the walk and talk the talk." Case in point is Ohio State alumnus **Charles William "Chuck" Thomas** and his wife **Donna**. To say that Chuck and Donna are big fans of the Buckeyes is a bit of an understatement—their Columbus residence boasts an amazing "Buckeye Room" where anyone with ties to the Bucks would immediately feel right at home.

Their pride in Ohio State drives them in their continued philanthropy to the university. Most recently, their pride in family led them to establish two funds in the American Sign Language Program (ASL) in the College's Foreign Language Center: The Donna Thomas Fund and the Lauren Sanders American Sign Language Fund, which is named in honor of their niece. These funds will support programming, student financial aid, and travel for ASL.

Thanks to the mentorship of her aunt and uncle, Lauren became the first person in her family to attend college. After graduating from Ohio State with a bachelor's degree in communications, she went on to earn an associate's degree in sign language interpreting from Columbus State Community College, and then a master's in Teaching American Sign Language as a Foreign Language from Columbia University. Lauren is the new associate coordinator of and instructor in the ASL Program at OSU. She credits her aunt and uncle for much of her success. In turn, Chuck and Donna are hugely proud of Lauren and were ecstatic that she chose to advance her career at their beloved Ohio State. "American Sign Language is one of the most commonly used languages in the United States," says Lauren, "and at Ohio State, we are working hard to build upon the program's existing foundation, including the goal of increasing outreach to the community. Chuck and Donna are giving us the opportunity to do just that."

Chuck and Donna are inspirational in many ways. After graduating from OSU in 1954, Chuck founded two successful companies: Helicopter Minit-Men and Noxious Vegetation Control. Together Chuck and Donna make an incredible team. They understand what it means to be Buckeyes and to invest in the future of our Buckeye Nation. They are truly a special couple and the ASL program is thrilled to have them as a part of their family.