The Blount family has been very special to East Carolina University and vice versa.

“East Carolina University has always had a special place in my heart and always will,” said William (Bill) Blount.

Bill and his family have been proud Pirate supporters for several decades. The Blounts have already made a large impact on ECU’s campus through their generous contributions, which led to the intramural athletic complex behind the Belk Building being named after them. And now they are taking another milestone step forward which will directly impact the lives of future East Carolina students.

Bill Blount’s business, Home Builders Supply Company which is co-owned by his son Gray Blount, has created a scholarship for a Department of Construction Management student which will become the premiere scholarship in the department. The scholarship will support a full-time undergraduate student who is considered to be a premiere rising junior or senior in the construction management program.

“It gives me a warm feeling inside,” Blount added. “To know that a student will benefit from this, that they will be able to further their studies and that we played a small part in making that happen, it’s very rewarding.”

**Why Construction Management?**

While Bill Blount is a graduate from the University of North Carolina, make no mistake about it, he bleeds purple. And that purple bloodline runs throughout his family, especially with his son, Hunter.

Though he started out as a business major, Hunter said he always knew he wanted to build things. And with his father in real estate and home building, it’s easy to see where the spark ignited. He transferred from Elon College to ECU and said he found a perfect fit in construction management.

“As a student in Construction Management, you get the type of education which opens doors to a variety of career opportunities,” said Hunter Blount. “It did for me. I worked in a couple of different jobs after college before becoming a general contractor and I was able to do that because of the thorough education and leadership in the program.”
And Bill agrees.

“Very often companies are looking for people to do jobs that have the skills and abilities to both understand how to do a project and how to supervise others to carry it to completion. At ECU, students are receiving both.”

The scholarship, which includes books and tuition, will be awarded each spring to the top student in the Department. Dr. Douglas Kruger, who is the chair of the Department of Construction Management, says this is a tremendous opportunity for a young person which will prepare them for a professional career in this field.

“For the last 25 years we have been committed to creating a first class construction management learning community,” said Dr. Kruger. “Supporters like the Blount family enable us to continue raising the academic bar to meet 21st century global demands. We are very appreciative for Bill and Hunter Blount’s generosity and commitment to our program.”

**The Gift that Keeps on Giving**

The Blount family was motivated to create this scholarship to enhance the opportunities and skills of ECU Construction Management students, which once they graduate, will hopefully help strengthen Eastern North Carolina businesses. The Blounts believe that getting young, enthusiastic people to take a vested interest in local companies, through things like internships, they are more likely to stay in the area after graduation.

“Eastern North Carolina and ECU has been good to me and my family,” said Gray Blount, also an ECU graduate. “Having grown up around development and the construction industry, I felt my degree gave me the necessary tools and education I needed to succeed professionally. Giving back to the school is something our family feels strongly about and we appreciate the opportunities this region and University has provided us.”

Bill added “East Carolina University has been a driving force in the growth and development of this region. I love eastern North Carolina. When I think about all that’s here and all the potential of what can happen here, a lot of it is because of what East Carolina provides.”

Hunter whole-heartedly agrees with his family members and says graduates like him have a responsibility to give back to their alma mater when the opportunity arises.

“We need to do our part once we graduate and become business leaders to ensure that continues for years to come,” Hunter said. “I absolutely hope someone will see what we have been able to do as alumni, as business professionals and can find ways to give back. I think internships are a fantastic way for a young person to get some good hands-on experience, beyond what they can get in the classroom.”
And despite the fact that Hunter is still young himself and plans to be in the business for many years to come, he’s already looking to the future.

“Having students involved is already showing rewards, and I am hoping it leads to someone I can train to take over for me someday down the road.”

In the meantime, Bill and Hunter Blount are sharing in the joy that they are making a difference in the life of a young person. Bill likes to idea of serving as a role model in this manner and adds that everyone who can give back, should, no matter if it’s a big or small contribution.

Hunter agrees saying “it’s very gratifying to be able to give something back. We have built our family businesses up and the university has been a big part of that. We build places that house students. ECU has been very good to us and we want to do our part to give back.”

If you would like to join the Blount family by making a contribution to the Department of Construction Management, the College of Technology and Computer Science or East Carolina University, please contact Michael Ward at (252) 328-9566 or email him at wardmi@ecu.edu.

If you would like to find out more about this scholarship opportunity, please contact the Department of Construction Management offices at (252) 328-6490.