



NEWS

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For Immediate Release: Sept. 19, 2008

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Mesa State receives first \$1 million private donation *Names soccer field in honor of Walter and Pres Walker*

Grand Junction – The new soccer field at Mesa State College tonight (Friday, Sept. 19) was named Walker Field in recognition of all the contributions Walter and Pres Walker made to the community. The naming came in conjunction with the announcement of a \$1 million gift to the college by the family of Ken Johnson.

The announcement came between an MSC Men’s soccer game and an MSC Women’s soccer game, both against Colorado Christian University.

Walter Walker became the publisher of The Daily Sentinel in 1910 and was instrumental in establishing a college in Grand Junction. He and his son Preston, who took the reigns of the Sentinel when his father retired, were cornerstones of this community.

Ken Johnson worked for both Walter and Pres Walker and became owner and publisher of The Daily Sentinel. Johnson was a founder of the Grand Junction Free Press.

“Pres was my mentor. He and his father were outstanding publishers,” Johnson said. “Both thought that a community newspaper not only has to reflect the community’s best interests but also has to guide the community. Both put the best interests of the community ahead of their own and that is the best definition of a publisher.”

Johnson said he and his children believe it is important to recognize those who “have lived their lives well” both by naming buildings and such after them but also by ensuring that they and their contributions and stories be remembered and shared with future generations.

“Recognizing that our history as a community and people who were visionaries is important to our future,” he said. “Perpetuating the names of the Walker family of Grand Junction – Walter and Pres – was significant to me and to my children. What better way to memorialize the Walker name and tell their stories than to name a national-quality stadium at a growing Mesa State College for them.”

Johnson and his four grown children - Caryn, Thom, Derek and Bryan – have pledged \$1 million to Mesa State College.

“A gift of this magnitude doesn't come along very often and we are immensely grateful for it," said Mesa State President Tim Foster. “Ken Johnson and his family have always been generous to this community.”

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