

Jeff and Barbara Wahl

Scholarship Endowment

Young people, education, and giving back are some of the things that brought Barb and Jeff together in 1985.

At a young age, Jeff realized the importance and positive impact a helping hand can be to individuals who are dealing with difficult circumstances. When he was in elementary school his family relocated to Devils Lake so his youngest brother could attend the North Dakota School for the Deaf. Being one of five brothers, Jeff was a self-starter, and tried to help his family out. His first sales job was selling/delivering "The Grit," a weekly newspaper, and periodically selling greeting cards door to door in his elementary school years. In his high school years, Jeff spent two summers traveling with the Bill Dillard Carnival. The money he earned allowed him to buy his own clothes and bring home extra money to help his family. It also meant there was one less child to feed at home. He was very involved in the DECA program in high school. Jeff credits skills he learned from these early

business opportunities helped him succeed later in life. He prided himself in being the only one of his siblings to graduate from high school. Jeff was not afraid of a challenge, and never felt sorry for himself or his circumstances.

Upon graduation, Jeff attended then Lake Region Junior College; now Lake Region State College, with plans of becoming a policeman like his uncle. He also began employment as a salesman at Mark's Chevrolet in Cando, ND. It didn't take long for him to decide he could make more money and drive nice cars as a salesman. He later began employment with Lake Chevrolet in Devils Lake, ND.

Barb McDowell was born, and raised in New Rockford, ND. She graduated from UND and began employment at the Lake Region Youth Association as an assistant director in 1984. This is where the two met. Jeff was a very involved volunteer at the youth center. They married in 1986, making their home in Devils Lake, ND.



Barb and Jeff were blessed with a son, Christopher, in 1987. Jeff, with his outgoing personality, joined numerous civic organizations within the Devils Lake community. In 1988 the Wahl family moved to Bismarck, ND. This move allowed Jeff the opportunity to become a Sales Manager. Within the next several years, they were overjoyed to welcome two more sons, Michael and Daniel to the family. In 1997 the opportunity for advancement came once more, and the family returned to Devils Lake where Jeff achieved the position of General Manager.

Moving back to Devils Lake allowed Barb to continue her educational opportunities. She attended Lake Region State College and the University of North Dakota to complete a degree in elementary education. After graduating in 1999, she spent the next 23 years at the Devils Lake Central Middle School teaching 5th grade for 17 years. The last six years she was able to share her love of baking and sewing with the 7th and 8th grade FACS students. Through her instruction one of her goals was to help students become responsible, self-sufficient, productive members of society. She often stressed to her students things she learned from Jeff; the importance of resiliency, having goals, following your dreams, and seeking a job you love to do.

In 2015 Jeff took a leap of faith and began working for the Vision Consulting Firm. He later branched off to have his independent consulting firm. It was at this same time Jeff also acquired his Real Estate License working for the Reign Realty Company. He and his son, Chris, later purchased the company and it has become a family run business.

Jeff had always talked of one day owning his own car dealership. In 2016 Wahl Family Automotive became a reality. Another of Jeff's passions was helping to acquire a space for, and the establishment of The Hope Center Food Pantry. He was one of the founding members. He knew first-hand growing up how hard it was not having enough money to provide food for a family.

Lake Region State College is the other organization that was near and dear to Jeff's heart. He was so very proud of serving on the college foundation board and took pride in being able to help raise awareness and funding to promote LRSC. This scholarship will continue to help students in years to come.

Barb and Jeff are the very proud parents of: Chris and Jolene, Elliot, Wesley, and Colbie; Mike and Haleigh, Lily, Bennett, and Evie; Dan and Melanie, Amelia, Brianna, and Sophie.