

Walter Bradley and Rae Mellichamp Faculty Pioneer Fund

The word “pioneer” evokes images of sturdy people making their way across unknown territory searching for a better way of life despite the dangers and hardships. In many ways the modern university is similar territory. Christian academics know that their faith and view of the world may not be welcome because it does not fit comfortably with the established culture, and work in the academy is already arduous.

Some pioneers succeed simply because of dogged determination, and this is admirable. But a few pioneers lift their heads to see what others cannot see. They dream bigger dreams, climb higher mountains, and never relinquish that pioneer spirit of unwavering commitment. In turn, they inspire other pioneers to dream bigger, to aim higher in their lives.

Such exceptional pioneers in the academy are Dr. Walter Bradley and Dr. Rae Mellichamp. They aimed higher than simply surviving in their academic careers. They dreamed bigger than simply living their lives as devoted Christians in the university. They crafted ways of demonstrating the relevance of Christian thought and faith to the pursuit of knowledge. They invented new ways of being light and life in academia. They dreamed of the Christian faith being visible on campus by having a winsome, legal, and appropriate influence for Christ. They freely shared the stories of their wins and their losses with the other pioneers. They asked them to dream bigger and showed them how to aim higher. They inspired them to be beacons of Christ’s light in the sometimes oppressive darkness of their universities with little light of the cross. Dr. Mellichamp and Dr. Bradley, as well as their wives, Peggy and Ann, are pioneers that other pioneers respected, admired, and emulated as they accepted the challenge to endure the hardships and risks in identifying and serving as Christian professors in the secular university. Their initiative and fruitfulness prompted Cru to call upon them to help launch its faculty ministry in 1980, thus making them our founding professors.

For these reasons, we hereby establish the Walter Bradley and Rae Mellichamp Faculty Pioneer Fund to honor these two great pioneers and to call, equip, and embolden other professors to be pioneers like them—to dream bigger, to aim higher, to bring light and life to the academy. With God’s blessing, it is our desire that the Fund resource and mobilize faculty pioneers to continue Walter and Rae’s work. The Fund will seek contributions, under the direction of the development director of Faculty Commons, to be deposited in a designated Cru operating account. Ideally, financial support will come primarily from professors who want to tangibly honor Rae and Walter, express gratitude, and underwrite the work of identifying and equipping faculty pioneers.

The Fund will be subject to Cru’s financial policies and under the control of Cru’s professor ministry, Faculty Commons, and allocated by its national director or designee. Allocations will be made regularly to directly benefit the next generation of faculty pioneers, including those preparing for academic careers. The Fund is intended to give direct monetary assistance to selected professors and grad students to help defray ministry expenses for mission trips, sharing the gospel, giving leadership to local faculty or graduate student movements, launching new campus ministries, attending conferences and seminars for resourcing and equipping, etc.

Gifts can be from individuals, companies, or foundations via check or online; or from a donor advised fund, IRA Charitable Rollover (RMD gift or other QCD), stock or noncash gift, etc. Please contact our development director for details: rich.mcgee@cru.org or 214-727-6084.

Cru Account # 1281066 | Cru, Box 628222, Orlando FL 32862
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