Charles Hardcastle Kentucky Building

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For decades, our state’s rich history has been collected and displayed inside the Kentucky building on WKU’s campus.

A generous gift will make sure as many students as possible learn that history as Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

A building that opened on WKU’s campus back in 1939 now bears the name of Charles Hardcastle. A former Bowling Green Mayor and WKU alumnus who hopes his family’s gift will impact generations to come.

 “You can’t rewrite history but you learn from history cause it has a tendency to repeat itself.”

Charles Hardcastle is leaving his mark on WKU.

“I think it’s very important that we understand the history. The good and the bad.”

Hardcastle wasn’t even born when construction began on the Kentucky Building in 1931. Delayed by the Great Depression, it didn’t fully open until 1939, twelve years before the Alvaton native arrived as a student.

 “When I first came to Western my tuition the first semester was 35 dollars.”

It may bear his name now but the 1955 graduate with a double major in history and government says his main memory of the Kentucky Building has nothing to do with history.

 “When I first came here we had a reception in this building for freshmen and we always wanted to come check out the freshmen girls. Maybe I remember the girls better than the building.”

 “Thank you for paying it forward.”

Last week a luncheon and dedication was held in honor of the Hardcastles’ one point five million dollar gift benefitting the museum.

 “There will be stipends that will be figured into this gift as well over time too. How can we help those students I think Charles Hardcastle and Carolyn Hardcastle really wanted to touch with this.

While he wasn’t expecting all the fanfare, Hardcastle says he’s proud of the impact.

“I think it would be a whole lot better to have that than be a tombstone in Fairview cemetery.”

Bjorkman says there’s no way to overstate the longterm impact a gift like this will have.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Several projects are underway at the Kentucky Museum including preparing a new Teaching Gallery and renovation of the lobby.

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