The George & Nancy Axinn International Scholarship

Professors George and Nancy Axinn had endowed this scholarship to support graduate students who wish to pursue careers in international development. Recipients must be enrolled as graduate students in the Department of Community Sustainability (CSUS) and must focus their studies and careers on international development. Preference is given to international students. Each year one Axinn Fellow will be selected, assuming qualified candidates have applied. Self-nominations are possible.

ABOUT PROFESSORS GEORGE AND NANCY AXINN

George and Nancy Axinn were personal and professional partners for over sixty years. Over their long careers the Axinns have distinguished themselves as scholar-practitioners who were deeply committed to rural development in the Third World. As educators they have mentored countless graduate students and were admired for their deeply nurturing brand of guidance. George and Nancy were awarded the 2006 Distinguished Rural Sociologist Award by the Rural Sociology Society, the first time such an award has been bestowed jointly.

The Axinns arrived at Michigan State University in 1953. Over the course of 31 years they served together on several long-term overseas assignments and helped to establish MSU’s reputation as a uniquely international land grant university. In 1960 George began coordinating the MSU/University of Nigeria program. In 1965-67 the Axinns relocated their family to Nigeria, and George and Nancy both became immersed in
international education. From 1976-1978 they served in Nepal, where George and Nancy served as members of an MSU team at the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science. They returned to Nepal again in 1983 and remained through 1986, where Nancy worked for UNICEF and several Nepali organizations and George served as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative to Nepal. The Axinns also served in India between 1989 and 1991, where George continued to represent the FAO and Nancy worked with the Ford Foundation, the FAO, and other UN organizations.

After returning to East Lansing, George joined the Department of Resource Development and became deeply involved in the graduate program. In 1991 George officially retired, but neither he nor Nancy stopped working. In 1997 they jointly published a textbook entitled Collaboration in International Rural Development. In addition, George launched one of the University’s first web-based classes, International Rural Community Development.

George continued to teach his online course from his home in Tucson, Arizona course until Spring 2009. George passed away March 8, 2010 and Nancy followed less than seven months later in September. Each spring the Department of Community Sustainability honors the graduate student who most emulates the spirit of George and Nancy’s work in international development.

ELIGIBILITY

Each year one Axinn Fellowship will be awarded, provided that qualified candidates have applied. Eligible applicants include currently enrolled CSUS PhD and MS students as well as new applicants to the CSUS PhD and MS program (applicants may be nominated either by the student or a faculty member). Priority is given to international students. All students are encouraged to apply, but preference will be given to students who have not previously been awarded the endowed fellowship.