Let us help you plan.
Penn State’s Office of Gift Planning will confidentially answer your questions about giving and work closely with your legal, tax, and other advisers to come up with an integrated plan that meets each of your personal goals. Please contact us anytime or visit our interactive website at giftplanning.psu.edu.

The Atherton Society

Planned gifts are crucial to sustaining the tradition and enhancing the quality of a Penn State education far into the future. They are especially important for the dual benefits they provide: your planned gift will create both a lasting legacy for you and your family and touch the lives of students or faculty you care deeply about. Because of the unique nature of these gifts, Penn State created The Atherton Society to honor those individuals who make this extraordinary commitment.

The Atherton Society honors donors who, like Penn State’s seventh president, George W. Atherton, and his wife, Frances, help carry this University to the forefront of teaching and research institutions. From 1882–1906, the Athertons built a thoroughly modern university with the capacity to educate a broad base of students for the demands of a changing world.

A champion of technical education, George significantly expanded Penn State’s early curriculum to include engineering and agriculture without denying a place for classical subjects. He helped foster agriculture extension programs and business outreach, solidifying the land-grant tradition in the Commonwealth. An educator herself, Frances was committed to improving educational opportunities for women. During the Athertons’ tenure, Penn State eliminated the “ladies’ course” and integrated female students into regular classes. By the end of their time at Penn State, the Athertons had significantly changed the face of the fledgling institution while shoring its foundation for growth in the generations to come.

Inspired by the Athertons, countless others have contributed to help Penn State maintain its longstanding strengths while also encouraging it to grow and adapt to today’s educational needs. Through their philanthropy and sustained commitment, these benefactors are continuing the work of the Athertons and assuring the future success of Penn State. We honor these donors for their vision and commitment through membership in The Atherton Society.
From James Irvin’s initial gift of 200 acres of land that would become the site of The Pennsylvania State University, now planned gifts typically account for 20 to 30 percent of all contributions received by Penn State. These important gifts provide extraordinary experiences for Penn State students today and build a legacy for Penn State students in the future. When you remember Penn State through a gift in your estate plans, you join a group of visionaries whose gifts have changed lives and shaped the very fabric of our University.

Membership is offered to all individuals who have made an estate provision for the University as a planned or deferred gift commitment, regardless of the amount, including:

- Bequest in a will or living trust
- Charitable gift annuity
- Charitable lead trust
- Charitable remainder trust
- Designation of Penn State as the beneficiary of a retirement plan or a life insurance policy
- Remainder interest gift of a home or farm

As a member, you will receive:

- A small gift as a token of our appreciation
- Specialized periodic updates about the University’s progress and programs, including the Gift Planning eNewsletter
- Remembering Penn State: The Gift Planning Newsletter, a publication of The Atherton Society
- Invitations to special events and seminars

Just as George and Frances Atherton laid the foundation for Penn State’s achievements today, your philanthropy will spur the next great accomplishments of our University.

For questions about membership or making a planned gift, please contact:

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Penn State Gift Planning

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