

The Wendt Character Initiative



Dick and Nancy Wendt, who endowed the Lester G. and Michael Lester Wendt Character Initiative at the University of Dubuque in 2004

[The Wendt Character Initiative is] really one of the things that I feel most grateful for having the privilege of participating in. I believe it's a lasting legacy and I think it will do really good things for our students and for the world around us in perpetuity.

—President Jeffrey Bullock

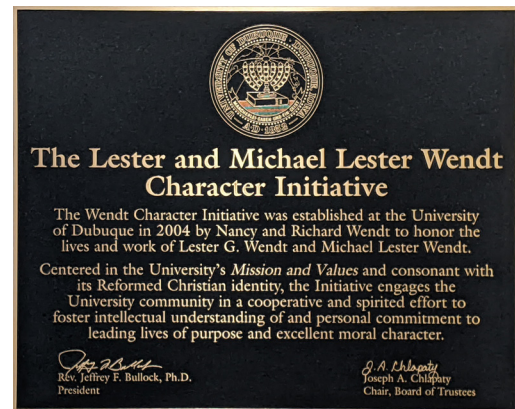
The Wendt Family: Committed to Character

Good character was an essential part of the Wendt family's set of values. Richard (Dick) Wendt credited his father, Lester Wendt, with instilling in him integrity and a commitment to service and ethics. When Dick and Nancy Wendt started a family, they, too, emphasized and encouraged good moral character in their sons.

With the success and growth of Dick's company, JELD-WEN, the Wendts found themselves in the position to fulfill their philanthropic inclinations, generously investing in programs that supported children and workers, as well as political and cultural endeavors.

After the tragic loss of their youngest son, Michael, in 2003, Dick and Nancy honored his memory and Lester's by establishing and endowing the Lester G. and Michael Lester Wendt Character Initiative at the University of Dubuque. Working with UD President Jeffrey Bullock, they together determined that the Initiative would focus on truthfulness, fairness, honesty, and the Golden Rule in order to, according to its mission, "foster intellectual understanding of and personal commitment to leading lives of purpose and excellent moral character."

In the years since its inception, Dick and Nancy remained close to the Wendt Character Initiative. After Dick passed away in 2010, Nancy continued her interest in the Initiative's work, corresponding regularly with the Director.



In Memory of Two Men of Integrity



Michael Lester Wendt

*A Faithful Servant, Father, and Son
A truly loving Husband, and yet one
Who found the time to show his love
With kindly gestures to everyone.*

Excerpt from the poem, "Michael Lester Wendt," by Dick Wendt

Integrity is essential to all other considerations and this principle of mankind should be the Golden



Lester G. Wendt

Rule Americans must concern themselves with the basic questions of what they can do for their fellow man and at the same time assist each person to help himself or herself.

—Lester G. Wendt

20 Years of Cultivating Character



Inaugural class of Wendt Character Scholars, 2004-05
The Character Scholars program began with a commitment to holistically engage students through self-reflection, academic exploration of character, and service.

The Wendt Character Initiative established programs to cultivate a culture of good moral character on UD's campus. With the exception of the Dubuque Opportunity Scholars Program, the main pillars of the Initiative put into place in 2004 continue to be maintained today:

- *Wendt Center for Character Education*
- *Wendt Character Scholars*
- *Faculty Support*
- *Michael Lester Wendt Character Lecture*
- *Wendt Library Collection*

Wendt Character Initiative Directors through the Years



Carlyle Haaland, Interim Director 2004-2006



Paula Carlson, Director 2006-2008



Henry Pittman, Director 2008-2012



Annalee Ward, Director 2012-present



John Hatch, Wendt University Professor 2007-2011

20 years of the Wendt Character Initiative

104 Faculty projects

38 authors in 10
Character and . . . journals
read in 136 countries
53 states and territories
63,418 views/downloads

524
Wendt Character
Scholars

37 Faculty Mentors

34 Michael Lester
Wendt Character
Lectures

\$5.2 million in scholarships

29 Character Explorations podcast episodes