

GENERATIONS

FALL 2026

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UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Dr. Vera Pezer (BA'62, MA'64, PhD'77, LLD'25)

Vera Pezer on legacy, learning, and giving

BY SARAH TREFIAK

For Dr. Vera Pezer (BA'62, MA'64, PhD'77, LLD'25), the University of Saskatchewan (USask) is much more than her alma mater. It is also where she studied, built a career, made lifelong connections, and devoted her efforts to helping students succeed.

Originally from Meskanaw, Sask., Pezer is a three-time USask graduate whose contributions to the university span decades. She first joined USask as an employee in 1966, serving in a variety of roles including instructor, director of student counselling, assistant professor of psychology, assistant dean in the College of Arts and Science, and associate vice-president student affairs. Following her retirement in 2001, Pezer went on to serve as USask's 13th chancellor from 2007 to 2013, becoming the third woman to hold the position.

Today, Pezer continues to support the university through volunteering as the president of the University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association, a gift in her will, and a life insurance gift to support student initiatives in the College of Arts and Science and establish the Vera Pezer Scholarship for female Huskie athletes.

She also donates the proceeds from her book, *Saskatchewan Superwomen*, to the Huskie Athletics Female Leadership Award.

We sat down with the celebrated alumna to learn more about the motivation behind her giving and the legacy she has created for future generations of USask students.

What are some of the reasons you give back to USask?

The university has been a very significant part of my life. I've benefited from my involvement with the University of Saskatchewan on a number of different levels. I was a student here, I had a lovely career here, and, over time, I came to really appreciate what the university has to offer. So, it became important to me to continue to give back.

I believe in the university. I'm a very loyal alumna, and I want to support what it's doing. One of the things I appreciate is that the university gives me the flexibility to support areas that are personally meaningful to me.

When you think about future students who might benefit from your gift, what do you hope they might feel or experience?

Through my roles in student services and as chancellor, I've had the opportunity to meet many students who have received awards from USask. They were always very grateful for anything the university could provide to help them with their studies.

Many students don't have abundant financial resources. My own background was growing up in a small town of modest financial means, so I have a soft spot for supporting students who might be in a similar position.

I hope students who receive support because of my gifts feel encouraged and valued. I know how appreciative they are when they receive scholarships or bursaries and I know it will make a meaningful difference in their educational journey — I've seen it firsthand.

What do you hope your support will mean for Huskie student-athletes in particular?

A good student experience involves much more than going to classes and labs. Students who participate in extracurricular activities—whether it's drama, music, art, or athletics—gain skills that complement what they learn in the classroom.

I was an athlete, so I've always had a special interest in supporting the Huskies. Student-athletes learn time management, teamwork, discipline, and how to work with others —skills that will serve them long after they graduate.

What would you say to someone considering a legacy gift to the university?

A legacy gift is an opportunity to contribute to a larger good well after your will is read.

In my case, I know that years from now, students will continue to benefit from the scholarships supported by my gifts to USask. And it's important to me that when I pass, the world is a little better than it was when I found it.

For anyone considering a legacy gift, I'd simply encourage them to make a donation or give in a way that feels comfortable. And if you're not sure where to direct your gift, go back and revisit some things that the university has to offer. Whether it's visiting the art galleries or attending free lectures, I would encourage you to become involved.

I find that once people give, they often find it very satisfying and will continue to give, continue to stay connected, and really begin to see the impact their support can make.

A family legacy, a student's future

Originally from Taiwan, University of Saskatchewan (USask) graduate Frank Chou (BComm'23, JD'26) grew up in Fox Valley, Sask., and calls it home. During his time as a student at USask, he received the **Sherman and Ena Scott Homesteaders Memorial Bursary** and expressed the profound impact of that award in the letter below. Frank recently graduated with his Juris Doctor degree from USask's College of Law and is currently articling at a law firm in Saskatoon, Sask.

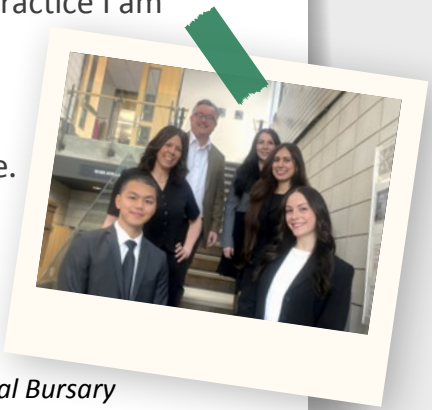
To receive the Sherman and Ena Scott Homesteaders Memorial Bursary is an honour, and words cannot fully convey the depth of my gratitude. As a third-year law student, I have found the cost of tuition to be a significant financial burden. Despite working summer and part-time jobs throughout my years in law school, I have often found myself worrying about basic living expenses, such as groceries, rent, and gas, during the fall and winter semesters.



At times, this financial pressure has been overwhelming and has taken a toll on my mental and physical health, which in turn has affected my ability to focus on my studies and my extracurricular commitments. Receiving this bursary has lifted an immense amount of stress from my shoulders. It will allow me to continue my legal education with greater focus and financial stability, without the constant need to worry about my day-to-day expenses.

Furthermore, this support will allow me to devote more time to initiatives such as access-to-justice work, an area of practice I am personally passionate about.

I am sincerely grateful for this support, and I am motivated to pay this generosity forward in the future.



Frank Chou

Recipient of the Sherman and Ena Scott Homesteaders Memorial Bursary

About the **Sherman and Ena Scott Homesteaders Memorial Bursary**:

In honour of his parents, Sherman and Ena Scott (née Tenant), Vern Scott left a gift in his will to establish the Sherman and Ena Scott Homesteaders Memorial Bursary Award at USask.

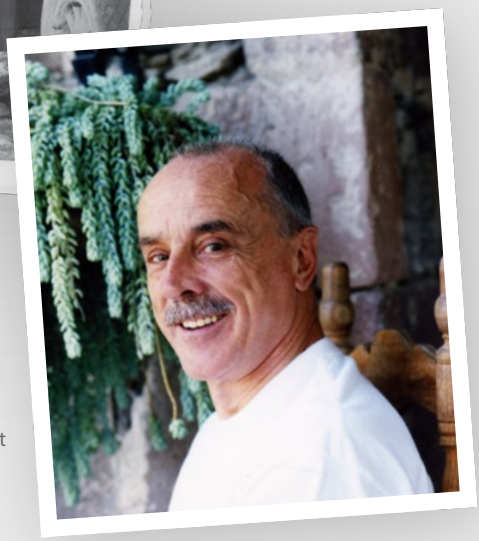
Described as a "very careful and highly successful farmer," Sherman began homesteading in the Highfield district of Swift Current, Sask., in 1905. He married Ena in 1915 and together they lived in a three-room shack before building a brick house for their family and boarders in 1918. Prior to their marriage, Ena helped her parents homestead in Roderickville, Sask.

Vern was born in Swift Current, Sask., and lived on his parents' mixed farm until 1946 and became the first person in his family to attend university. To help fund his education, Vern and his mother raised pigs and sold pork to the Canadian Armed Forces to feed troops during the Second World War. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Commerce from The University of British Columbia in 1954, where he served as president of the Economics Society and taught ballroom dancing weekly through the university's dance club.

Through his legacy gift, Vern continues to honour his parents' determination and hard work while creating opportunities for future students to pursue their educational goals.



Ena and Sherman circa 1943



Vern Scott



(L-R) **Savannah Zalik**, Development Officer, Legacy Giving; **Sacha Tegenkamp**, Director, Legacy Giving

Questions? We're here to help.

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