

FAR ABOVE

The Campaign for Kansas



Photos by Jill Hummels

KU EcoHawks moves into a new sustainable structure designed and built on West Campus by students in KU's Studio 804 course led by Distinguished Professor of Architecture Dan Rockhill. The structure is funded through a generous gift to KU Endowment by engineering alumnus Ron Hill and his wife, Sue.

Couple's Gift Houses KU EcoHawks

As a University of Kansas freshman in mechanical engineering, Ronald Hill built a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus and demonstrated it (under water) at KU Engineering Expo. Today, 60 years later, that project represents the type of innovative mindset that he and his wife want to advance at KU.

Ronald and Sue Hill, of Lee's Summit, Mo., have made a generous gift to support the construction and equipping of the Hill Engineering Research and Development Center on KU's west campus. The center, which was completed this spring, houses KU EcoHawks, a student research program of the School of Engineering that focuses on developing innovative sustainable energy solutions for transportation and other areas of research.

"Sue and I are excited about the new KU Research and Development Center," said Ron Hill. "We see the research and development center as an opportunity for mechanical engineering students to learn by doing with hands-on experience, turning ideas into sustainable products and services now and in future generations."

Ronald Hill earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from KU in 1957. He is president of HEMCO, a firm he started with his father in 1958; Sue is the firm's vice president of customer development. Located in Independence, Mo., HEMCO is a leading manufacturer of laboratory equipment and fixtures serving global medical, academic, life science, biotech and pharmaceutical markets.

Christopher Depcik, associate KU professor of mechanical engineering and director of EcoHawks, expressed appreciation for the Hills' generosity.

"This gift provides a needed boost to the mechanical engineering department for the recruitment and retention of exemplary undergraduate and graduate students interested in the areas of sustainable energy and transportation," said Depcik. "The



The dedication on June 7 included a ribbon cutting with Interim Dean Stan Rolfe, Sue Hill, Ron Hill, Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little, Associate Professor Chris Depcik and incoming Dean of Engineering Michael Branicky.

novel integration of electrified vehicles and a building that has a possibility of attaining a LEED platinum rating will excite students through research projects, and they will leave KU better prepared to make a real difference in the world."

The Hill Engineering Research and Development Center, located at 2105 Becker Drive on KU's west campus, was dedicated June 7. The 4,000-square-foot building was designed and built by KU architecture students in Studio 804, which is committed to the research and development of sustainable, affordable and inventive buildings.

Ronald and Sue Hill are longtime and generous supporters of KU and the School of Engineering.

This gift counts toward Far Above: The Campaign for Kansas, the university's \$1.2 billion comprehensive fundraising campaign.

— Story by KU Endowment