

Building Up, Paying Back

Jack Focht's \$100,200 building gift is a thank-you for his remarkable career.

With 55 years as a practicing attorney to his name, it's no wonder **Jack Focht, '60**, has some stories to tell. They range from one of his most interesting cases (pursuing — and winning — a first-degree murder conviction without the victim's body) to one of the highest compliments he's received (a high school student recently telling him he looks two decades younger than his 81 years). He even earned an Outstanding Citizen Award in 1976 for helping nab the Holiday Inn sniper in Wichita.

"I went home and talked to my wife, who also spent a semester at Washburn Law, and I said, 'You know, we've both been very fortunate in the practice of law. We've both done very well. I owe a lot to Washburn Law for where I am, and I'd like to repay that.'"

He's not done, by any means. Focht is still actively engaged in the practice of law as special counsel with Foulston Siefkin in Wichita.

Suffice it to say, he has been an active participant and leader in the Kansas legal profession. Along the way, he's witnessed firsthand how the profession has evolved in the last half century — and how the Washburn Law building has aged since opening in 1969.

"I've kept in tune with the changes that are going on in the education of law students," Focht said. "Then sitting in a law firm this big and seeing new associates come in every year — the technology just amazes me. The world has changed, so law school education has to change with it."

Those changes are exactly what prompted Focht, and wife (and fellow lawyer) Gloria Farha Flentje, to support Washburn Law's Ideal Place building campaign. The \$100,200 gift is their largest ever. Focht already gives his time and money to a laundry list of

deserving charities — most notably Kansas Appleseed, which helps citizens who need legal support and advocacy. A noble cause, to be sure. Yet something about the building project kept tugging at him.

"I went home and talked to my wife, who also spent a semester at Washburn Law, and I said, 'You know, we've been very fortunate in the practice of law. We've both done very well. I owe a lot to Washburn Law for where I am, and I'd like to repay that.'"

Service is a given, as far as Focht is concerned — led by one simple, guiding credo: To whom much is given, much is required. It's an idea he encourages fellow alumni to think about.

"Look at what you got as a result of your law school education — the opportunities that it provided you. And search your soul for whether or not you have an obligation to repay some of that by making it available for young people who are coming along."

