

Paying It Forward to the Next Generation of USU Aggies



Mark Stoddard, USU alum

Raised in a modest family, Utah State University alum Mark Stoddard grew up in a home where education was always valued. When Stoddard received a leadership scholarship from USU, due to both of his parents being alumni, it felt like destiny was calling him to follow in their footsteps.

Once he started at USU, Stoddard felt compelled to enter the College of Business, majoring in finance with a minor in economics. The nurturing environment of smaller class sizes and dedicated professors made a profound impression on him. Among them was an algebra professor who went out of his way to ensure that Stoddard and his friends grasped the concepts, igniting a spark of gratitude within him for the mentorship that shaped his academic journey.

However, university life wasn't just about studying. With the need to support himself, he found employment at a local dairy, where he tended milk cows in the evenings. Stoddard's industrious nature led him to take on additional work at a biotech company and, later, in construction.

After graduation, his career path took unexpected turns, from banking to eventually finding his calling in healthcare administration. Inspired by his family's ties to the medical field, including two sisters who are nurses and a brother-in-law who is a physician, and fueled by his passion for the business side of healthcare, Stoddard embarked on a journey that would lead him to transform rural healthcare in Utah and beyond.



Nursing students demonstrate features of the new nursing suite at USU's Logan campus.

In 1983, Stoddard accepted the role of administrator of Juab County Hospital, a position that set the stage for his future endeavors. Collaborating with his friend, Gaylord Swim, they envisioned a revolutionary approach to hospital management that would alleviate the financial burden on county hospitals. Their pioneering efforts culminated in the establishment of Rural Health Group, a company dedicated to revitalizing healthcare infrastructure in underserved communities.

Through all the twists and turns of his career, Stoddard never forgot the support he received from his alma mater. With a deep sense of gratitude, he and his wife LeAnn made it their mission to give back to USU, endowing scholarships in honor of their parents and supporting programs close to their hearts, such as nursing and athletics. The couple are major donors to the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services' new Advanced Nursing Education Suite located in the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation building that allowed the college to double the number of nursing students enrolled in the program.

The Stoddard family have also created and support endowed scholarships in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, and they are also strong supporters of USU Athletics. Stoddard joined the USU Foundation Board in Spring 2024.

The essence of giving back isn't just about financial contributions, it is about paying forward the opportunities he had been given and witnessing the transformative power of education firsthand. As he reflected on his journey, Stoddard knew that his legacy would extend far beyond the halls of academia, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals who would benefit from the opportunities he helped create.

Reminiscing about his time on the USU campus, Stoddard can't help but feel a sense of pride in his alma mater and

the generations of Aggies who will continue to shape the future. For him, Utah State University will always be more than just a place of learning—it was where dreams took root and where the spirit of giving flourished, ensuring that the legacy of education and opportunity would endure for years to come.

Read more about the new [Advanced Nursing Education Suite](#) at the Logan USU campus.