

## NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Retired UCM Professor Establishes Scholarship for Sociology, Social Work Students**

WARRENSBURG, MO (Feb. 24, 2016) – Sociology and social work students at the University of Central Missouri will benefit from a \$25,000 gift to the UCM Foundation from J. Mark Wehrle, UCM professor emeritus of sociology.

The gift will endow the J. Mark Wehrle Scholarship in Sociology and Social Work and will be used to annually support a senior student who has declared a major in either sociology or social work. The purpose of the scholarship is to advance the attainment of social and economic justice for populations experiencing structural inequality. The first scholarship will be awarded in the fall 2016 semester.

“I personally owe a large debt of gratitude to the university and to those who comprise it,” Wehrle said. “I witnessed its evolution from Central Missouri State College to Central Missouri State University, to the University of Central Missouri. I have benefited from the countless friendships established with former classmates, colleagues and with the thousands of students who were enrolled in my courses. I encourage others to take an active role in the evolution of the university by simply extending a helping hand to deserving students as others may have done for them.”

“Dr. Wehrle’s impact on our sociology program and students during his tenure was tremendous,” said Wendy Geiger, chair of the Department of Sociology, Gerontology, and Cross-Disciplinary Studies. “He continues to be an inspiration with this investment in our students and program, setting us up for continued success into the future.”

“Dr. Wehrle's gift supports the social work profession's ethical responsibilities to advance social and economic justice and work to eliminate discrimination,” said Jean Nuernberger, chair of the Department of

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Communication Disorders and Social Work. “This gift enables a social work major with a strong commitment to social justice to continue his or her senior year with much-needed financial support.”

Wehrle, a resident of Lake Ozark, Mo., received a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology with honors in 1971 and a Master of Arts degree in Sociology in 1972, both from UCM. He earned his Ph.D. degree in Sociology from Southern Illinois University SIU at Carbondale in 1982.

Wehrle joined the UCM faculty in 1972 as an instructor in sociology and later served as a special doctoral assistant at SIU from 1974-77. He served as department chair from 1982-2002, retiring from UCM in 2003 as professor of sociology.

He maintained memberships in more than a dozen professional organizations and academic honor societies. He served as a board member and president of the Missouri State Sociological Association from 1987-88. As owner or partner in several Kansas City and Warrensburg businesses, he was appointed by the governor to the Missouri Private Industry Council from 1985-95.

Wehrle was a consultant to sociology textbook publishers and served as a liaison between the Missouri Division of Family Services and the UCM social work program. He served as a consultant to the United States Department of Education on three occasions as a grant application review panelist for grants that funded nearly \$45 million in pilot projects related to literacy and the workplace.

Wehrle is a member of the following UCM Foundation President’s Society, based on annual giving amounts of \$1,000 or more; the Old Elm Society for his total years of giving that exceed 10 years; as well as the Cornerstone Society for his cumulative lifetime giving of \$25,000 or more.

The UCM Foundation is the university’s nonprofit arm, raising money to further its mission making a college degree more affordable, accessible and beneficial for students. To learn more, visit [ucmo.edu/foundation](http://ucmo.edu/foundation).

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## **CUTLINE INFORMATION**

J. Mark Wehrle