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AMERICAN WELDING SOCIETY ESTABLISHES LARGEST ORIGINAL SECTION-ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN SOCIETY'S HISTORY

Update on "Welding for the Strength of America" Capital Campaign

Miami, FL – June 12, 2007 – The [American Welding Society](#) (AWS), the world's largest organization dedicated to advancing the science, technology and application of welding, and the [AWS Foundation](#) announced today the establishment of the largest original section-endowed scholarship in the Society's history. The Lou DeFreitas \$60,000 scholarship fund, endowed by the Santa Clara Valley Section, will enable the AWS Foundation to award \$3,000 in scholarships to welding students on an annual basis.

The AWS Foundation, which provides funding to students and supports programs to strengthen research and educational opportunities in welding and related fields, will grant annual awards from the Lou DeFreitas-Santa Clara Valley Section Scholarship to students in the Santa Clara Valley Section. While the AWS Foundation will administer the scholarship fund, the Santa Clara Valley Section is responsible for the awards process, including setting the criteria for the grants and selecting the awardees.

"We are honored that our Santa Clara Valley Section has committed their time and funds to establish this significant scholarship and assist AWS in our mission to help aspiring welders become trained," said Sam Gentry, executive director of the AWS Foundation. "In addition, with this endowment, this section celebrates a man who is a true inspiration to the current and future welders of this country. Louis DeFreitas made significant contributions to the welding industry, not only as a published author and teacher, but also as a mentor, role model, and an active volunteer member of the American Welding Society."

Louis DeFreitas began his career 60 years ago as a welding student at a Massachusetts vocational high school. After serving the industry in various capacities, he became a professor and chairman of the Welding Technology Department at the College of San Mateo in San Mateo, California. During his 30-year tenure, DeFreitas taught more than 3,000 students and graduated more the 350 with bachelor's of science and engineering degrees. Upon retirement in 1995, DeFreitas assisted one of the largest welding supply companies in the Silicon Valley area to launch an Arc Gas Training Institute and serve as their director of training.

Since its inception in 1989, the AWS Foundation has awarded over \$3.4 million to nearly 2,200 students seeking careers in welding and allied processes. [AWS awards scholarships](#) locally by AWS sections, regionally by AWS districts and nationally by the AWS Education Scholarship Committee. Member and non-members alike may contribute, endow, or establish a named scholarship of their choice. The Foundation's most significant scholarship fund, the Ronald C. and Joyce Pierce Mobile Section Named Scholarship, was established by a \$50,000 initial sponsorship from Mr. and Mrs. Pierce, and is currently valued more than \$80,000.

“With only four section-named scholarships in existence, this group has become a model for other sections in the AWS family to follow, and demonstrates the power that exists at the section level,” said Gentry. “Our section’s efforts not only drive this widespread and dynamic industry forward, but also help to solve a [critical skills shortage across the country](#) by providing for the recruitment, mentoring and career development of welding students.”

In addition to its multitude of scholarships, the AWS Foundation embarked on a \$10 million dollar national capital campaign, [“Welding for the Strength of America.”](#) to help facilitate programs and other initiatives aimed at relieving the nationwide shortage of welders. At year-end 2006, the foundation had already raised \$1.6 million, thanks to a generous contribution from its initial donors, Ron and Joyce Pierce, as well as a \$1 million donation from Miller Electric and Hobart Brothers.

About AWS

The American Welding Society (AWS) was founded in 1919 as a multifaceted, nonprofit organization with a mission to advance the science, technology and application of welding and allied joining and cutting processes, including brazing, soldering and thermal spraying. Headquartered in Miami, Florida, and led by a volunteer organization of officers and directors, AWS serves more than 50,000 members worldwide and is composed of 22 districts and more than 200 local sections. For more information, visit the [AWS website](#) at <http://www.aws.org> and click on the “[Press Room](#)” link located at the bottom right on the main page.

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