The Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Memorial Foundation

The Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Memorial Foundation was established in 1978. The foundation’s support has been for educational and scientific purposes, including higher education, cultural agencies, youth and social service activities.

The insurance industry giant that is today’s Mutual of Omaha began in 1909 in the mind of a young Creighton University medical student, C.C. Criss, who sold insurance part-time to help finance his studies. In 1910, while still in school, Dr. Criss and his wife, Mabel, bought the year-old charter of the Mutual Benefit Health and Accident Association. Serving first as treasurer and eventually as president and chairman of the company that became Mutual of Omaha, Dr. Criss pioneered the concept of offering simplified, liberal policies to minimize liability from accident or illness. Mabel Criss provided the organizational and business management skills that enabled the young company to grow and gain a reputation for superior customer service. A highly regarded business leader, Mabel Criss received the Fellowship Award from the National Office Management Association in 1951 – the first woman to be so honored.

Over the years, the Criss Foundation has made multiple gifts in support of education and research at UNMC. In 1993, the foundation supported the four-story addition to the Eppley Hall of Science. In 2003, the foundation was one of the principal benefactors on the Durham Research Center, creating the Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Memorial Foundation Seminar Center on the sixth floor of the building.

James Linder, M.D.

James Linder, M.D., associate vice chancellor for research at UNMC, has been a key administrator and faculty member at UNMC for more than 20 years.

An Omaha native, Dr. Linder has served on the UNMC faculty since 1983 when he joined the Department of Pathology and Microbiology. He has held numerous administrative positions at UNMC, including vice chairman of pathology and microbiology, director of surgical pathology, director of cytopathology and associate dean for academic affairs.

Dr. Linder served as interim dean of the UNMC College of Medicine from December 1998 to March 2000 and developed the vision statement for the Sorrell Center. In 2002, he moved to the Boston area to serve as chief medical officer and senior vice president for Cytyc Corp., where he was involved in the development of liquid-based cytology, imaging systems, molecular diagnostics and medical devices for women’s health care. During that time, he maintained a faculty appointment as professor in UNMC’s Department of Pathology and Microbiology. This past September, he returned to Nebraska to become associate vice chancellor for research.

Dr. Linder earned his undergraduate degree from Iowa State University in 1976 and his medical degree from UNMC in 1980.