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Office of the President
December 2, 2025

Members, Board of Trustees:

ACCEPTANCE OF CHARITABLE GIFT COMMITMENT FROM
W. NELSON MCMAKIN TO BENEFIT THE
MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees accept a charitable gift commitment totaling \$1,036,545 from W. Nelson McMakin to support the construction, renovation and/or expansion of two buildings on the University's North Farm to benefit the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Department of Animal and Food Science Equine Program. Specifically, the gift would provide funding for a student housing facility, a barn and general program support for the Equine Program.

Background:

W. Nelson McMakin earned his BS in Agriculture in 1955 and his MS in Agriculture in 1958. He is a prominent Lexington, Kentucky-based businessman known for his dual careers in the fast-food industry as a long-standing McDonald's owner/operator, and in the thoroughbred horse racing world as an owner and breeder.

As a founder of M & S Restaurants, Mr. McMakin opened his first McDonald's franchise in central Kentucky in 1970. The company still owns several restaurants today. He has supported the Animal Science department with donations of mares, often visiting the student-run equine breeding and sales prep program at the UK Maine Chance Equine Campus.

UK's Maine Chance Equine Campus sits on what researchers in the college collectively call "North Farm." Located north of Lexington next to Newtown Pike, Iron Works Road and Georgetown Road, North Farm resulted from merging Maine Chance Farm, Spindletop Farm and a portion of the Coldstream Farm.

North Farm's 2,400 acres provide many teaching, research and extension opportunities for the college's faculty, staff and students. Research revolves around initiatives, projects and programs in veterinary science, animal and food sciences, plant and soil sciences, biosystems and agricultural engineering, equine science and entomology. North Farm provides outstanding resources for extending the classroom for many students through field trips, laboratory exercises and employment opportunities.

Action taken: ☒ Approved ☐ Disapproved ☐ Other _____