

By Amy Atkinson, OAC Development Manager

The themes of education and farming weave through the stories of Barry and Cheryle Hill.

In a recent visit to the Hill's cash crop farm just outside of Ohsweken, Ont, I got to know this couple a bit more by spending an afternoon hearing their stories.

After getting married in 1998 they settled into a new home built on the same land that Barry's maternal grandmother farmed.

Today Barry farms about 2,500 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat. He's a community innovator: he helped start the First Nations Agri Group co-op and the Integrated Grain Processors Co-operative, and has been actively involved in the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA).

His "University of Guelph story" started in elementary school when teachers would bring him on an annual trip to campus, where the highlights included seeing the cattle and a banana tree.

The University appeared on his radar again when he began teaching at Six Nations Polytechnic, which was formed in co-operation with a consortium of six universities, including the University of Guelph. Barry, who had recently retired from his career in engineering, worked with Prof. Jack Weiner in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics to teach U of G math courses to local students for 10 years.

Cheryle spent her entire career in education. She taught elementary school for 35 years on the Six Nations on the Grand River Reserve.

In 2009, the University came back to mind during Barry's time on the OSCIA board of directors. As part of his duties as vice-president, Barry and Cheryle hosted the OSCIA annual summer meeting at their farm. To cover the costs of the large three-day event, they raised



Cheryle and Barry Hill in their home.



**Shaelyn Prins with Barry Hill is the 2015 recipient of the Hill Scholarship. She is completing her fourth year of the bachelor of science in agriculture program majoring in animal science and hopes to one day own her own dairy farm.**

more than \$25,000.

"At the end of the event, we couldn't spend all of the money we raised," says Barry. "I didn't want the funds to go into general revenue, so I convinced OSCIA to do something different."

He worked to set up a graduate level scholarship for an OAC student with the residual funds. The scholarship was awarded five times between 2010 and 2014.

"As the money was running out we

thought we should keep it going," says Barry. "OSCIA came up with a different concept for a new scholarship fund, but Cheryle and I wanted to continue what we had started."

The Hills decided to personally donate to the college to continue supporting students studying agriculture and worked with OAC to start a new fund. The new Barry and Cheryle Hill Scholarship of \$2,000 will be awarded annually to a student in the bachelor of science in agriculture program for the next five years.

"We wanted to support what OSCIA and the college are doing in providing education. It's one way of giving back," says Barry. "The University of Guelph is such an important university for farming and for food," adds Cheryle.

To me the Hills' story of giving is an important one to share. Although they are not OAC graduates, they understand the importance of supporting agriculture through education and saw OAC students as the best place for their investment.