For William Holtzman, contributing to Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) made perfect sense. It was a way to give back to the community he loves.

Holtzman, a Shenandoah Valley native, always knew he wanted to live in the area. Even as a youth, when his friends and classmates couldn’t wait to escape to the big cities, he said he knew he was already where he belonged. That’s why, after earning his bachelor’s degree in horticulture from Virginia Tech (VT) in 1959 and his master’s degree from Cornell University in 1961, he returned to Mount Jackson, Va.

After working in the local apple industry for 11 years, he decided the time was right to start his own business. In 1972, Holtzman Corp. opened its doors. Today, that start-up business has grown to include Holtzman Oil Corp., Holtzman Propane, Valley Ice, six Burger Kings and two Denny’s restaurants. Holtzman Corp. owns or supplies fuel to more than 100 service stations and convenience stores in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland.

Holtzman has a tremendous commitment to education that has presented itself through his many and various acts of generosity over the years. In 2005, he was on hand to witness the dedication of the Holtzman Alumni Center at Virginia Tech. Named after him, the Center houses the activities and operations of VT’s Alumni Association. His support of higher education was continued recently with his four-year philanthropic commitment to LFCC.

Holtzman’s dedication to investing in his community is something he has encouraged in his own children. His son followed him into the family business and now heads up his propane and ice companies. His daughter, Jill Holtzman Vogel, was elected in 2007 to the Virginia State Senate. He also has two stepchildren — one is a physician’s assistant in Richmond and the other is studying to be a paralegal.

It is evident that Holtzman has utilized his education and dedication to become successful. However, even with all of his accomplishments, Holtzman remains humble.

“Simply consider myself very lucky to be able to live in a city like Virginia and be successful in a business that I love,” he said.

Q: What inspired you to give to LFCC?
A: We make our money off the people who live here. I’m a firm believer that you have to give back to the community you live and work in. I gave to LFCC, because it offers students from our area education and opportunities and prepares them to be successful.

Q: Many donors choose to contribute funds to a specific program. What made you decide not to earmark your donation in this way?
A: Schools need discretionary funds. Hopefully, this way, LFCC can use the money for whatever programs will best benefit our area’s students.

Q: What advice do you have for LFCC students?
A: Never do anything halfway. If you’re going to do it, do it right. It’s so important that we instill in our youth a sense of pride in a job well done.
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