Douglas J. Hoekstra Endowment
for the Study of American Politics and Political Institutions
James Madison College

Doug Hoekstra was a central figure on the faculty of Madison College for more than three decades, from his arrival as a graduate student in 1969, working for the founding dean, Herb Garfinkel, until his death in May of 2006. He made important contributions to help shape and mold James Madison College into the institution it has become today. Doug left an indelible mark on his students and colleagues with his outstanding courses, keen intelligence, and unforgettable wit. For these and many other reasons, he will always be remembered. To show our appreciation for Doug’s tireless service to the mission of the College, the students, alumni and friends of James Madison College are establishing the Douglas J. Hoekstra Endowment for the Study of American Politics and Political Institutions.

Douglas Jon Hoekstra was born in Grand Rapids and attended Grand Rapids Central High School. He went on to study at Michigan State University and received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from MSU before joining the faculty of James Madison College. As a professor, he inspired generations of students with his teaching of American politics, the founding, and especially the presidency. As a scholar, he contributed greatly to the study of the presidency, with particular emphasis on the role of character in decision-making. His most recent research drew upon original documents and focused on President Gerald R. Ford, whose football locker he used at Central High School.

In his personal life, Doug’s great love was his wife, Ellen, and children and other family members. His idea of respite was the Sunday Times or a mystery, and an occasional trip to Traverse City’s East Bay. He read voraciously, enjoyed movies, followed MSU sports, and traveled widely though less than he wished. His friends, family, and colleagues miss his acerbic wit and critical intelligence more than his cryptic, punctuation-free e-mails and shameless puns.

Doug’s contributions to James Madison College and its students have been numerous, but one particular theme rises to the top. Doug was always an advocate and strong proponent of strengthening the college’s curriculum and field experiences connected with American political institutions and the rough and tumble of the American political process. He had a talent for bringing to life current events and today’s front page by connecting them with the history of American politics, institutions, and political theory. He helped students see the big picture. The endowment we are establishing in Doug’s name—the Douglas J. Hoekstra Endowment for the Study of American Politics and Political Institutions—will continue his legacy by supporting student field experience and internships that allow students to connect their coursework with the reality of American politics and institutions at the state and national level. Through this endowment, we want future students to benefit from Doug’s passion and to come to know in some small way the power of his legacy at James Madison College. Please consider making your most generous contribution to benefit the Douglas J. Hoekstra Endowment.

James Madison College
Development Office
328 S Case Hall, MSU
East Lansing, MI 48825
(517) 432-2117
beckettr@msu.edu