Giving the Globe
Alumna and her husband fund a student’s first trip abroad

A LASTING LEGACY

BENEFACTORS:
Glenda and Don Mattes

GIFTS:
• $1 million Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award bequest
• Additional funding every few years to send an Arts and Sciences student abroad

ESTABLISHED:
2007

TO SUPPORT YOUR PASSION:
Sheila Walker, director of development, shellaw@found.ksu.edu, 800-432-1578

Just one year ago, Jason Collett — ’10 B.S. geography, secondary major in natural resources and environmental sciences — had never even laid eyes on the ocean. However, the summer of 2009 saw him not only visiting a coastline for the first time, but taking in the vastness of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Savvy Adventurers

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.

The First-Time Traveler

Just one year ago, Jason Collett — ’10 B.S. geography, secondary major in natural resources and environmental sciences — had never even laid eyes on the ocean. However, the summer of 2009 saw him not only visiting a coastline for the first time, but taking in the vastness of the Great Barrier Reef.

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.

The Savvy Adventurers

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.

The Savvy Adventurers

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.

The Savvy Adventurers

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.

The Savvy Adventurers

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.

The Savvy Adventurers

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.

The Savvy Adventurers

In his month-long trip to Australia, Collett collected data on tree frogs in the Daintree Rainforest, volunteered with a group dedicated to preserving a local bird called the cassowary, and spotted humpbacked whales migrating to warmer waters. He did things he never could have done if he wasn’t so far away from his own backyard.

According to Collett, there was simply “no chance” the trip would have been possible without the Glenda Garrelts Mattes and Donald A. Mattes International Travel Award.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot,” Collett said.
Scholarships in Motion

Hoping to spark similar reflection in today’s students, the couple committed to a $1 million bequest for Arts and Sciences students who couldn’t otherwise afford international travel and who haven’t traveled abroad. But on top of that future commitment, they decided to donate additional funds to send students abroad now — with Collett as the first recipient.

“I wanted to be a part of the experience,” Glenda said. “We’re trying to change these kids’ lives, and we want to see if it’s working.”

For Glenda and Don, that means putting the chosen students right in the thick of a new culture.

“I want them to have home stays, I want them to meet the locals; I don’t want them to travel with a gaggle of kids,” Glenda said.

“The idea was that Jason was in a foreign country and immersed in the culture,” Don reiterated.

And immersed he was, traveling solo for the bulk of the trip. He swapped stories with strangers. He had a two-week home stay with a retired couple. And for the first time in his life, this Kansas native felt what it was like to be the outsider.

“I had significant culture shock. When I first went up to a cashier, and they asked me a question, I didn’t quite get the lexicon. I definitely had a different accent than everybody, and I didn’t know what was going on. That was a really eye-opening experience for me. I’ll never forget that.”

That realization was exactly what Glenda and Don had hoped for.

“He figured out that he was a foreigner as soon as he got off the plane,” Glenda said. “I read that in his post-trip essay, and I thought, ‘That’s what we were trying to accomplish.’”

“I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them, and this is probably the best experience of my life, so I owe them a lot.”

— Jason Collett

A New Future

Glenda and Don realize that the effects of Collett’s journey will continue to unfold over the coming years.

“What we hope is that in the decisions he makes, he will have broader perspective in making them. That he’ll have not just a Kansan view or an American view, but a world view,” Don said.

If Collett’s plans are any indication, his travels certainly accomplished that much.

“This has changed my life forever, and it has even changed what I’m going to pursue as an occupation,” said Collett, who is beginning a master’s program in security studies at K-State this fall. The program focuses on national security, international affairs, and world politics.

With many future trips like Collett’s on the horizon for students in the College, Glenda and Don only wish they could extend the gift even further.

“If we could make this opportunity available to every single student at K-State, we would,” Glenda said. “I think it would change the world if every American got out of this country and saw what the rest of the world was like.”

Jason Collett in Australia’s Daintree Rainforest, where he researched the habitat of local tree frogs.