

## MIT Honors the Memory of IRDF Founder Reid Weedon '41

by Brenna Morrissey of the MIT Division of Student Life

Reid Weedon '41 was a very, very special member of the MIT community. His name may be familiar to many because Reid helped to found the Independent Development Residence Fund (IRDF) over 50 years ago and he was a very active member of his beloved fraternity, Phi Beta Epsilon. Reid was also an MIT Corporation life member emeritus, global businessman, inspiring mentor, lifelong sailor and outdoorsman, and outstanding fundraiser for the institutions he loved.

Reid died at his home in Cohasset, Massachusetts on November 2 at the age of 96. He left a lifetime of service to the Institute and the world. Until the last year of his life, he was actively volunteering and working at MIT and kept an office on the MIT campus. As Bonny Kellermann '72 put it, "One thing is for sure, there will never be another Reid Weedon."



Weedon's contributions to the MIT community spread far and wide. MIT President L. Rafael Reif wrote that he doubted "there has been anyone more instrumental than Weedon in building a culture of giving at MIT, and the benefits of this are everywhere around me." In particular, the members of every one of MIT Fraternities, Sororities, and Independent Living Groups -or FSILGs for short – have been direct beneficiaries of one of Weedon's great legacies, the IRDF.

This Fund has disbursed the following amounts to MIT's FSILG, since its founding by Reid in 1964.

- Over \$25M in loans for renovations and construction
- \$4.5M in direct grants to FSILGs for educational and safety improvements
- \$5.7M in annual operating grants for FSILG upkeep
- Over \$5M in FSILG community-wide for state-of-the-art computer network upgrades and compliance with new state safety regulations.

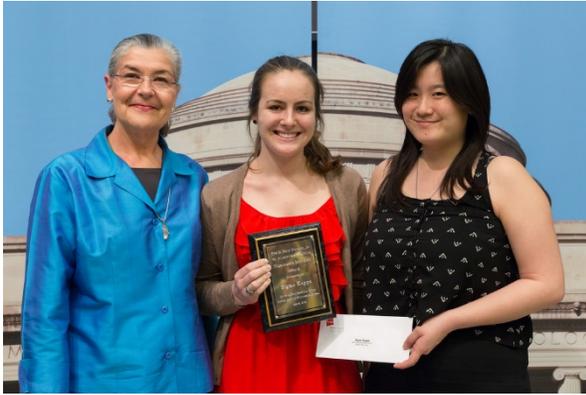
The IRDF has enabled MIT's FSILGs to continue to maintain and improve their facilities, and impact



others in many different ways. For example, the photo at the left captures the elegance of the newly remodeled kitchen at the Women's Independent Living Group (WILG), and this made possible by an IRDF loan. No other university has such a large, comprehensive resource at the disposal of its fraternities and sororities. To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IRDF, a major celebration was held on April, 26 2014 with Reid and Estelle as guests of honor. A [Youtube video](#)

captured the spirit of that occasion.

Many in the FSILG community are also familiar with the [D. Reid Weedon Jr. '41 Award](#), which Reid



endowed back in 1995 to encourage FSILG student outreach to their alumni/ae. The award has been annually ever since to up to 4 FSILGs that have demonstrated the greatest effort in alumni relations for the academic year. The completion is spirited, since first place includes a \$7,500 cash prize. In this picture on the left, Alumni Association CEO Judy Cole is presenting one of the Weedon Awards at the MIT Awards Convocation to the officers of Sigma Kappa Sorority. Especially to help groups seeking to build

their alumni relations programs, his past fall, the Alumni Association developed a companion [Weedon Grant](#) program. In the inaugural round, seven FSILGS received grants ranging up to \$1000, and henceforth each semester there will be similar rounds of grants.

The MIT Community made sure to honor Reid through a variety of ways. On Friday, December 2, 2016, several hundred people gathered in the MIT Chapel to celebrate the life of a man whose legacy spreads across every inch of the MIT campus. Stories of Weedon's life, devotion to MIT, passion for fundraising, and love for sailing, were shared by his family and friends. Chapel attendees included President and Mrs. Reif, many MIT Corporation, Alumni Association, and MIT staff members, alumni and students of Weedon's beloved fraternity Phi Beta Epsilon. Besides the large MIT contingent, there were people from the Manomet Foundation, the Museum of Science, and of course his cherished wife Estelle, his children, and a large group of family members. An [MIT video](#) captured the chapel service.

From the chapel, MIT provided two large buses to transport the group to the Phi Beta Epsilon house several block away. Reid's fraternity brothers put on a warm reception, including a wonderful spread of fruit, sandwiches, desserts, and plenty of Weedon's favorite dark chocolate. The brothers offered tours of their magnificent PBE house, which had a recent \$7M renovation in large part due to Reid's help. There was a brief ceremony honoring Reid's contributions to the fraternity and the larger community. His fraternity brothers Roy Russell '77, Steve Carhart '70, and Bob Ferrara '67 each spoke about Reid's impact. They presented Reid's wife, Estelle with a framed picture of Reid which was signed by dozens of his MIT friends and admirers, and framed by the MIT Hobby Shop. Estelle loved the portrait but insisted it be hung in the fraternity so that brothers who come after may better appreciate his legacy. The fraternity renamed the new tool-filled "makerspace" on the second floor the D. Reid Weedon '41 Makerspace and that where his poster now resides.

Weedon was a tireless fundraiser who volunteered his time to MIT and served in almost every leadership position at the Institution. He was a member of the MIT Corporation, president of the MIT Alumni Association, an energetic force in every MIT capital campaign, and a mentor to a generation of fundraisers who remained devoted to him. On fundraising, he felt "A lot of difficult jobs can be made easy just by tackling them."

Weedon started received his BS in general engineering at MIT in 1941 then served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Shortly after the war, he joined the international consulting firm Arthur D. Little (ADL), retiring as senior vice president after more than 50 years. Most notable of his work for ADL, and most meaningful to him, was monitoring the “Sullivan Principles.” Set forth by the Reverend Leon Sullivan, these principles for U.S. companies doing business in South Africa sought to end South Africa's economic isolation and, ultimately, apartheid. This work lasted 17 years until South Africa approved the reform process and held its first democratic elections in 1994. Reid’s final visit, of more than 21 trips to that country, came just after Nelson Mandela was released from prison.

We of the FSILG Community should be grateful for Reid for all he has done for us and for MIT, and how his legacy continues to contribute in both tangible and intangible ways, even after his passing. He was the product of an age, and “there will never be another Reid Weedon.”

For the November 16, 2016 MIT News article, please click [HERE](#).