June 24, 2010

Dear Warren:

While I’m pleased to respond to the appeal you are making with Bill & Melinda Gates to promote “Giving Pledges” among our peers, I made that commitment long ago. As you know, I’ve already contributed quite a bit, beginning in earnest 35 years ago with my first significant contribution to the Zoo.

As long as health permits, Sue and I plan to be active and engaged philanthropists. Like our good friend Chuck Durham, who made some wonderful gifts in his final years, we enjoy seeing the fruits of our philanthropic efforts. Upon my death, virtually all of my remaining estate will go into the Walter Scott, Jr. Foundation.

My interests, that I hope my foundation’s successor trustees continue, are twofold. Number one is causes that serve young people. I have nothing against old people. I am one! But I believe society will get the most bang-for-the-buck if I invest in things that help us produce educated and productive citizens, whether through youth social services or assisting them pursue a college education through scholarships.

My second major interest is causes that help improve our community. That can take many forms, beginning with our Zoo. But it can also include causes like helping Dr. Maurer build a world-class research institution, or helping improve engineering and information science education at the Peter Kiewit Institute. I like to invest in causes that move our community forward because if we don’t, we will find that it has begun to deteriorate.

Our community is fortunate to have had a series of exceptionally generous philanthropists. I don’t know if Mary Lucretia Creighton was first, but Creighton University is quite a legacy. The people of Omaha enjoy a higher quality of life because of the significant charitable investments made by wealthy individuals for more than a century.

In my remaining years, through my foundation, I’ll continue to invest in our community, including additional gifts to our Zoo. There’s still room for a Buffett exhibit. Call me when you’re looking for an idea!

Sincerely,

Walter Scott, Jr.