

**E.J. AND MARY SIMON DISTINGUISHED FACULTY
ENDOWMENT AWARD – AUTOMOTIVE FUND**



SIU embarked on providing non-degree vocational training in auto mechanics in 1938 and further expanded it in 1941 under the National Defense Education Program.

Seeing a need for vocational teachers, in 1948 the State of Illinois began a survey of vocational programs in high schools. The head of this survey was Earnest J. (E.J.) Simon who also began discussions with university leaders about developing training for vocational education teachers.

SIU President Delyte Morris and E.J. Simon identified a gap in there was no vocational programs for students after high school except for a few junior colleges near large metropolitan areas of the country. Morris convinced E.J. to come to SIU and develop the first university-level academic unit dedicated to technical training in the nation. The SIU Vocational Technical Institute (VTI) was born and E.J. served as Dean from 1951 to 1970. VTI set into motion a national transformation of vocational training in the nation.

As the first-degree program in VTI, this endowment was established by E.J. and his wife Mary to annually recognize the outstanding teachers of SIU Automotive.