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# Freshman ethics lesson

## ETHICS • FROM DI

Foundation. Repeated inquiries and objections failed to resolve the situation. So as a last resort, my sisters and I were forced to sue Princeton to end its control of the foundation and its endowment so we can see our parents' wishes observed.

The case is expected to go to trial in several months.

Our parents established the Robertson Foundation for the express purpose of preparing Wilson School graduate students for government careers in international affairs. Princeton understood this when it agreed to the arrangement. But it has failed to fulfill this mission. In one recent year, for

example, the school placed only three of 63 program graduates in government jobs related to foreign affairs.

It's a sorry record.

When people donate money to a college or university for a specific purpose — or to any nonprofit organization for that matter — and the gift is accepted for that purpose, that's how the money should be used. It makes no difference whether the gift is \$100, \$100,000 or in the millions. The principle is identical.

The American Association of Fundraising Counsel, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Council for Advancement and Support of Education, and Association for Healthcare

Philanthropy have created a code of ethics known as the "Donor Bill of Rights." This code is unequivocal: It says donors have the right "to be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given."

Americans are the most generous people on earth. Sadly, they can also be naive — and their charitable giving is sometimes abused. Let this story be an important first lesson in ethics for the Class of 2010.

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*William Robertson is the lead plaintiff in Robertson v. Princeton, a lawsuit seeking to end the university's control of the Robertson Foundation and its \$750 million endowment.*