

Alumnus to donate tree; add beauty, shade to campus grounds

By [TYLER SIPE](#)

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When 1962 MSU alumnus Peter Secchia read an article last year about students donating a tree to the university, it made him reminisce about his days on campus.

Secchia, a financial contributor to the Student Academic Center and the new addition to Breslin Students Event Center, thought it would be fitting to donate a tree on Arbor Day.

Secchia, chairman of Universal Forest Products Inc. in Grand Rapids, and others will be planting a 20-foot autumn blaze maple tree at 10:30 a.m. today at Bryan Hall.

"MSU was so good to me," Secchia said. "It is my turn to give back.

"MSU is known for its beautiful campus. Whenever you add a beautiful tree, you add to a beautiful campus."

The tree will accompany the more than 14,000 trees that have been planted on campus since the school was established in 1855.

The tree, which was grown at the Beaumont Nursery, will be planted by MSU Grounds Maintenance workers.

Roger Thelen, landscape services coordinator will be working with Big John equipment that has a mounted 80-inch tree spade capable of transplanting trees with an eight-inch diameter tree trunk.

"We will go set down the spade, dig out a cone-shaped block of soil and take out the plug," Thelen said.

Then grounds workers will plant the tree which will take about two years to gain its footing.

"There are a lot of people who have never seen a 20-foot tree moved," he said. "The machine has really revolutionized the industry, it is worth looking at."

Karen Wenk, director of development in Campus Park and Planning, said the department chose the autumn blaze maple tree because of its fall foliage and the shade it provides in summer months.

"It really is a beautiful tree," she said. "We also selected the maple based on the trees surrounding Bryan Hall."

Wenk suggested members of the public attend the hour-long event.

"People love this campus, people talk about the beauty of it," Wenk said. "The trees are a large part of what makes the beauty of this campus. It will be a minimal time investment to see something really wonderful happen."