**Taltree Arboretum & Gardens and Purdue University Northwest announce $12 million partnership**

***PNW to assume operations of arboretum in early 2018***

VALPARAISO, Ind. – Taltree Arboretum & Gardens Foundation’s Board of Directors; Damien and Rita Gabis, the founders of Taltree Arboretum & Gardens; and Purdue University Northwest (PNW) today announce a unique partnership in which the Taltree Arboretum & Gardens Foundation and the Gabis family will donate the arboretum and its more than 300 acres to the university.

PNW will continue to operate the property, to be renamed Gabis Arboretum at Purdue Northwest, as an arboretum for public, educational, conservation and recreational use.

The gift to the university is valued at approximately $12 million. It is the largest donation in the history of the PNW campuses to date. PNW will assume operations of the arboretum upon closing of the transfer of ownership, anticipated to occur in early 2018. The renaming of the property is pending final approval of the Purdue University Board of Trustees in February 2018.

“We are truly grateful to the Gabis family, as well as the Board of Directors of the Taltree Foundation, for their visionary and generous gift to advance learning, research and engagement in Northwest Indiana,” said PNW Chancellor Thomas L. Keon. “We are tremendously excited

about this exceptional opportunity to expand the mission and impact of both the arboretum and PNW.”

Keon noted that PNW and Taltree have much in common. Both institutions focus on enhancing the quality of life in the region; both support and advance economic development and sustainability; and both provide educational and research opportunities for people throughout Northwest Indiana and beyond.

“This partnership with Purdue Northwest is a tremendous opportunity for the sustainability of Taltree as a public arboretum,” Damien Gabis said. “Rita and I would like to thank those who have played a part in Taltree’s growth and success, which would not have been possible without the support of our Board of Directors, our dedicated staff, numerous devoted volunteers and our faithful members. We are excited about the prospect of becoming a small part of Purdue Northwest and what the future holds.”

Taltree, home to one of the most diverse oak collections in the nation, welcomes nearly 50,000 guests annually to its beautiful vistas, diverse landscape and six miles of hiking trails. Damien and Rita Gabis made an initial purchase of land on the site in 1990. With additional land purchases through the Taltree Arboretum & Gardens Foundation, which the Gabises began in 2002, the property grew to its present size. The arboretum today features multiple gardens, pavilions, a Monarch waystation, an outdoor classroom, and the popular Railway Garden.

Keon noted that the partnership with Taltree will enable PNW to offer new and expanded academic courses, enhance recruitment efforts, support community educational and outreach programs, conduct new research projects, and engage further with area K-12 teachers and students.

**Taltree Arboretum & Gardens**

Taltree Arboretum & Gardens is a 300+-acre, dog-friendly oak preserve of formal gardens, woodlands, wetlands and prairies with more than 6 miles of hiking trails. Taltree is open year round and offers a wide variety of events and classes for all ages. Proceeds received by the nonprofit organization power its conservation, restoration and education initiatives.

**Purdue University Northwest**

Purdue University Northwest (PNW) is a student-centered university that values academic excellence, supports growth and celebrates diversity. Located in Northwest Indiana, near Chicago, PNW fosters a vibrant academic community through high quality and engaging undergraduate and graduate education. For more information about PNW, visit[www.pnw.edu](http://www.pnw.edu/).