Perkinson Building ushers in new era for school

The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry’s dedication of its new W. Baxter Perkinson, Jr. Building in mid-June signaled a renaissance occurring on the MCV Campus.

The building is just one of many on the campus being built and undergoing renovations, such as the state-of-the-art Critical Care Hospital, a revamped Larrick Student Center and an upcoming new School of Medicine building.

“This new building represents the modernizing of our educational, research and clinical facilities and, along with that, expanding and improving our academic, research and clinical programs,” said then-VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D. “State-of-the-art education will be offered here, as well as interdisciplinary and translational research and high-quality patient care.”

The $20 million Perkinson Building is named in honor of Dr. W. Baxter Perkinson Jr. (D.D.S. ’70) whose $2.5 million gift in 2006 was the largest in the school’s 113-year history. The building opened when classes resumed in August.

The four-story, 55,000-square-foot structure connects the existing School of Dentistry’s Wood and Lyons buildings and enables the school to increase student enrollment in dentistry from 90 to 100 students and in dental hygiene from 20 to 40 students annually, to expand research and to improve patient access to care.

The new facility includes dental and periodontics clinics and an off-street drop-off and pick-up area for patients. The building also increases the school’s laboratory space for the Philips Institute of Oral and Craniofacial Molecular Biology. The Philips Institute, established in 1999, is the hub of oral and dental research at the dental school.

School of Dentistry Dean Dr. Ronald J. Hunt calls the new building a major milestone, allowing the school to provide a better learning environment for its students and better care for patients throughout the state.

“The VCU School of Dentistry’s mission has always been about meeting the oral health care needs of Virginians,” Hunt said. “The learning, patient care and scientific discovery that will take place within the walls of this new building will continue to bring that mission to life, inspiring future generations of dental professionals.”

That sentiment was echoed by Dr. Sheldon M. Retchin, vice president for VCU Health Sciences and CEO of the VCU Health System.

see Perkinson, continued on Page 4

On the cover  The façade of the W. Baxter Perkinson, Jr. Building of the VCU School of Dentistry incorporates elements of the Egyptian Building, one of the oldest structures on the MCV Campus.

Editor: Melanie Irvin Solaimani (B.S. ’96), misolaimani@vcu.edu, (804) 828-3973
Writer: Claire Hairfield (B.A. ’08), boswellrc3@vcu.edu
Perkinson, continued from Page 3

“Imagine looking back in 25 years at all the wonderful accomplishments that will happen here,” he said.

Perkinson has been an advocate of VCU since his days as a dental student. Following his graduation, Perkinson worked as an adjunct professor in the school until his retirement last year.

His dental practice is the largest in the state.

Perkinson is a former rec-

Former VCU first lady receives Wayne Medal

At spring Commencement, Lois E. Trani, Virginia Commonwealth University’s first lady for 19 years, received the Edward A. Wayne Medal. Established in 1971, the Wayne Medal honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions or provided exemplary services to the university.

She worked in countless volunteer capacities during her tenure, especially with the VCU Massey Cancer Center and the MCV Hospitals Auxiliary.

Lois E. Trani receives the Wayne Medal at VCU’s Commencement in May.

Donor hopes expo sparks interest in engineering

Bill Lamp, president of Engineers Plus, a Richmond, Va.-based design firm, has been a supporter of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Engineering since 1998, when he and several of his partners were on the engineering team that designed the school’s West Hall and the Virginia Microelectronics Center.

Since then, Lamp, a Virginia Tech graduate and an electrical engineer, has made a personal connection with the school and its students. For the past two years, he has directed his annual gifts to the school for support of the Senior Design Expo. This spring he served as a competition judge.

“Each year, I look forward to seeing the prototypes and listening to the student presentations. Many offer new perspectives and thinking, a few are award-winning, but all highlight the talent, energy and potential that new engineers bring to the diverse world of problem solving,” Lamp said.

At the 2009 expo in April, 133 students in 37 groups showcased in-depth design projects ranging from a hovercraft to a home-security system. Participation is a graduation requirement, and students work with faculty advisers, who guide them in applying their knowledge to real-life problems, sometimes solving challenges posed by local companies.

For the first time, Richmond-area middle and high school students came to campus for a preview of the expo. More than 150 students and educators attended the preview, which was designed to generate an interest in engineering.

“Attending the VCU Senior Design Expo was a perfect capstone to our year. It provided my students with an opportunity to connect their own learning of engineering principles and technologies to real-life applications that were on a scale much larger than I am sure they imagined prior to attending this event,” said Andrei Dacko, who teaches the Engineering Technology Program at Hopewell High School. “Perhaps the best thing about this event for my students was leaving inspired and charged up about the mind-blowing possibilities that an engineering education can unleash.”

One group of School of Engineering students created a system to minimize waste and maximize efficiency of a mineral oil recovery process used by Honeywell Corp. in its manufacturing process. This team was one of several that aimed for environmentally friendly projects.

Group member Michael Burt (B.S. ’09) said new engineering graduates need to be as environmentally conscious as possible. “Businesses want to be able to say, ‘We’ve done this to make our product more environmentally friendly,’ so it’s important for us to be able to do that,” he said.

Likewise, the expo gives students a chance to show the results of their capstone engineering experience, said assistant professor Frank Gulla, who teaches the “Senior Design Studio” course.

“Our hope is that the expo sparks an interest in engineering and technology among young and old,” Gulla said.

Lamp thinks that the current shortage of engineers needs to be addressed early in the educational process by encouraging problem-solving skills. “This is a day when the student teams step into the real world of engineering,” he said. “But they also are ambassadors to the next generation, with the expo serving as a wonderful forum for raising awareness of engineering, science and technology, which benefits us all.”

To make a gift to the School of Engineering, contact Brian S. Thomas, vice president of the School of Engineering Foundation, at (804) 828-0567 or bsthomas@vcu.edu.
Alumna gives back with gifts, time and expertise

When Cathy Saunders graduated from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work in 1976, she did not envision a career working with older people. She had a hard time finding her ideal position, however, and took a job in a nursing home.

To her surprise, it suited her well. “I loved it,” Saunders said. “It was so rewarding.” That first job set Saunders (B.S.W. ’76; M.S. ’82) on a course to becoming a gerontologist, a health care professional who specializes in working with the elderly. She earned a master’s in gerontology from the School of Allied Health Professions in 1982.

Saunders has served as vice chair of the Virginia Alzheimer’s Commission, as president of the MCV Alumni Association of VCU and as a member of the School of Allied Health Professions alumni board of directors. Saunders worked for the state Department of Social Services before becoming a real estate agent 14 years ago.

Even in her real estate work, Saunders incorporates her gerontology expertise. She focuses on helping to relocate older people to favorable new homes or retirement facilities.

Saunders has been an ardent supporter of VCU, not only helping new faculty members find housing but also making gifts.

“I love the complexity of the university — the excitement and diversity of programs,” she said. “I became a cheerleader for VCU.”

A couple of years ago, Saunders provided funding and call-center space for the School of Allied Health Professions’ annual calling program, where students ask alumni to make a gift to their alma mater. She also has spearheaded efforts to garner more alumni involvement in the schools of Social Work and Allied Health Professions, working to contact others and to create databases to track alumni.

In 2006, Saunders took her devotion a step further, establishing the Cathy Saunders Career Gerontologist Scholarship in the School of Allied Health Professions.

The scholarship supports a deserving student studying gerontology.

“The Cathy Saunders Career Gerontologist award was established to recognize a student with lengthy experience in the field of aging who is furthering her or his academic gerontological training in order to enhance existing skills,” said E. Ayn Welleford, M.S.G., Ph.D., chair and associate professor in the school’s Department of Gerontology. “This award embodies Ms. Saunders’ commitment to the Department of Gerontology’s mission: ‘Improving elder care through education.’ We are fortunate to have her as an alumna. Virginia elders are fortunate to have her as an advocate.”

At first, Saunders said, she waffled over whether funding a scholarship was financially feasible, but she realized the impact her philanthropy would have and found a way to make the commitment.

“It’s very easy to do, to make a contribution, and I did,” she said. “Once you do it once, you realize you can do it every year.”

Saunders values education above all else, and she thinks all alumni should give back to their alma mater to show appreciation for their education.

“We all have a responsibility to give back — where would we be without our education?” Saunders said. “We need to recognize the value of that education and give others the opportunity to benefit from it.”

To make a gift to the School of Allied Health Professions, contact Jessica Gurganus, senior director of development, at (804) 828-3269 or jfgurganus@vcu.edu.

Bequest strengthens sculpture scholarship fund

For nearly 15 years, O. Jean Renick made annual gifts to a scholarship fund in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts. The Charles Renick Scholarship held special meaning for her.

In 1985, friends and alumni created the scholarship when Renick’s brother, Charles, retired from the school’s sculpture department. Charles Renick, who earned his bachelor’s and master’s from VCU, served 32 years as a professor and two-time department chair. He passed away in 1987.

In 1995, Jean Renick started making annual donations to the fund on behalf of her family, contributing more than $50,000.

This past January, she lost a three-year battle with cancer, and her will included a bequest to the School of Arts, designating $20,000 to the scholarship.

“Thanks to Jean’s generosity, the Renick legacy will live on in a meaningful way for many students in the future,” said Connie Brown, alumni coordinator for the sculpture department.

The Charles Renick Scholarship was awarded to junior Conor Backman and senior Michael Muelhaupt, who each received $1,500 toward their tuition for the 2009 fall semester.

Muelhaupt, who works full time in the sculpture department’s woodshop while pursuing his degree, is grateful for the award. “Making art can be expensive,” he said. “It’s important for students to have the ability to create art without the financial stress.”

Renick and her partner of 33 years, Mike Maxwell, met the Charles Renick Scholarship winners each year.

“The students would always tell me how much fun it was to meet her,” Brown said.

Renick acquired her endearing personality from her dad, Maxwell said.

“Jean’s father enriched the lives of many people in the community through his generosity, wisdom and counsel — traits that Jean inherited honestly. She was a very giving person, and her philanthropy spoke for that,” he said.

In addition to her support for VCU, she was a regular contributor to many other groups. She even hoped to dedicate her career to giving back and helping others, earning her bachelor’s in nursing from Duke University. After graduating, however, she decided to help her father negotiate a land purchase in Williamsburg, Va., for the Anheuser-Busch Corp., today home to Busch Gardens, the Kingsmill residential community and Busch Brewery, Maxwell said.

In retirement, Renick and Maxwell became world travelers, often taking cruises, visiting Bangkok, Bali, Australia and Russia, among other places.

Renick’s bequest to the school cemented her legacy of giving, as well as that of her brother, said Jayne Shaw, associate dean for development in the school.

“Bequests like this are a wonderful way to not only augment existing scholarships but also to honor the memory of a loved one,” Shaw said. “They are also a good way for people to continue their philanthropy during these challenging economic times.”

To make a gift to the School of Arts, contact Jayne Shaw, associate dean for development, at (804) 827-4676 or jdsawh@vcu.edu.
Scholarship helps ballerina spin career options

After starting to dance at age 3, Katie Skaggs always dreamed of becoming a ballerina. "I was selected to be in the 'Nutcracker' when I was 8 years old and I saw the professional dancers, and I decided this is what I want to do," said Skaggs, now 30.

She pursued her dream throughout high school in Maryland, and as graduation neared, she and her mother attended countless auditions in New York City and elsewhere, but Skaggs found the perfect fit in Richmond, Va.

After graduating in 1997, Skaggs, just 17, started an intensive program with the Richmond Ballet. She rented a three-bedroom apartment with two other trainees and worked mornings at a bagel shop, devoting the rest of her time to dance.

"I was really thrown into the real world then," she said, "but I wanted to be independent."

At the end of the summer, she was asked to stay on as a pre-professional trainee. Soon, Skaggs moved to apprentice status, a two-year training period. The Richmond Ballet became her second home.

During her second year as an apprentice, the dancer met her future husband, Philip Skaggs, when he joined the ballet.

Skaggs had achieved her childhood dream and had met the man of her dreams, but she always knew her dancing career would end someday.

Soon after her move to Richmond, Skaggs was diagnosed with lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease. With a good doctor and medication, she said, she spent seven additional years as a member of the company.

During her years with the Richmond Ballet, she suffered several injuries. Because of the lupus, she did not heal quickly.

"During my last season, it was just one little injury after another. It seemed like it was just this big, blazing sign — enough is enough. It’s time to take a rest," she said.

In 2007, she retired, but that opened a new door: a return to school. In the fall of 2008, Skaggs enrolled in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing.

"I thought when I left dance I’d want to do something more geared toward helping others more directly," she said. "Dance is all about your body and how your body works, and so is health care and internal medicine. It has always interested me."

Her dedication to her studies paid off when she received the Lettie Pate Whitehead Scholarship in Nursing allows former ballerina Katie Skaggs to focus on her second career, nursing.

Her scholarship will support a deserving student in the school.

In other giving news . . .

- Alumni and friends of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business raised $75,000 to name a room in Snead Hall and to establish the H. David Willis Scholarship. Named in honor of Willis, retired chairman of the Department of Accounting, the renewable merit scholarship will be awarded to an undergraduate or graduate student with a declared major of accounting.
- Joyce B. Clement gave $25,000 to create the S.B. “Jack” Clement Pharmacy Scholarship in the School of Pharmacy. The endowed fund honors Clement’s late husband, Sydney B. “Jack” Clement, a 1956 graduate of the school. The scholarship will support a deserving student in the school.
- The Nancy L. and Ronald McFarlane Pharmacy Professorship was established with a $250,000 commitment from the McFarlanes. Nancy McFarlane is a 1980 graduate of the school. The professorship is designed to recruit and retain a distinguished faculty member with a strong record of commitment and excellence in advancing the profession of pharmacy.
- Dr. Warren W. Koontz, former chairman of the Department of Urology in the School of Medicine, established the VMI Scholarship with a $25,000 gift to the school. Koontz, an alumnus of Virginia Military Institute, created the scholarship to support an incoming or current medical student who is a VMI graduate.
- The Jenkins Foundation has awarded a $200,000 grant to the VCU Massey Cancer Center. The gift designates $50,000 to cancer research and $150,000 to secure the Women & Wellness Presenting Sponsorship from 2010 to 2012. Beginning with the Women & Wellness event Feb. 9, 2010, all proceeds will benefit women’s cancer research, including breast, ovarian and cervical cancer, at Massey.

New staff members join advancement team

Molly Dean Bittner
Campaign Director
VCU Massey Cancer Center
(804) 827-0524
mdbittner@vcu.edu
Formerly assistant vice president for advancement at the University of Richmond

Curtis G. Harrington
Director of Information Technology
Advancement Services
(804) 828-2285
cgharrington@vcu.edu
Formerly information technology manager for Coventry Health Care
Dental grads support clinical program with pledge

During their senior year, students in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry practice in community-based and private-practice dental clinics. This preceptorship experience made a significant impression on members of the Class of 2009.

At a recognition dinner in April, 24 soon-to-be D.D.S. graduates each pledged to give $2,009 over the next five years to their alma mater in support of the preceptorship program. Their combined gift totals $48,216. In addition, members of the dental hygiene Class of 2009 pledged $7,232 to the school.

Class President Eric Whidden said the group was inspired by last year's graduating class, which was the first since 1962 to make a graduation pledge as a group. He sees the pledge as a way for the class to say thank you to the faculty and staff of the School of Dentistry and to provide resources to enhance the experiences of future dental students.

“It's important to give something of yourself back. It shows the value of your education,” he said. “I think it's important to invest in the people who have invested in you.”

Members of the class collaborated to determine how their collective money should be spent, he said. They agreed the preceptorship program was a worthy cause. In addition, the class made the gift in honor of Dr. Frank Robertello, who retired in June from teaching first-year operative dentistry.

“I'm honored to be included in this magnificent gift,” Robertello said.

The school's preceptorship program gives students opportunities for clinical enrichment by visiting public sites such as free clinics, many in rural areas, to provide dental care to those who might otherwise have access.

Kim T. Isringhausen (B.S. '95; M.P.H. '04), assistant professor of dental hygiene and director of the preceptorship program, sees the gift from the school's newest alumni as a testament to the significance of the program in their clinical experience.

“For them to so unselfishly give money they haven't even earned to enhance the program — it's phenomenal. It will only make the experience better for the students who will follow behind them,” she said. “Most importantly, this is a gift that extends beyond the school and has a much broader impact and will be felt throughout the VCU community and the commonwealth of Virginia.”

Because they work in the clinics and can assess the needs, students will provide feedback to Isringhausen to help determine where the money will be spent each year.

“As students, they were experiencing first hand the powerful impact of alumni giving on the quality of their education,” said Jim Doyle, director of alumni engagement for the dental school. “As graduates giving for the benefit of future students, they are creating a remarkable example of alumni generosity in action.”

To make a gift to the School of Dentistry, contact Jim Doyle, director of alumni engagement, at (804) 828-1138 or jpdoyle@vcu.edu.

Massey dedicates library in honor of Lois E. Trani

In early June, the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center dedicated its patient resource library at Stony Point in honor of Lois E. Trani, a long-standing Massey advisory board member, volunteer and wife of former VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D.

Mrs. Trani, a former registered nurse, has a strong interest in patient education to help people cope with serious illness such as cancer. She has volunteered for Massey's library program since 1991 and has served on Massey Cancer Center's advisory board since 1993. As a library volunteer, she has served as a valuable and trusted resource for patients, and as a board member, she has been a strong advocate for cancer research.

At this free-lending library, which serves nearly 1,000 annually, staff and volunteers assist patients and their families in finding cancer information and supportive resources.

“In early June, the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center dedicated its patient resource library at Stony Point in honor of Lois E. Trani, a long-standing Massey advisory board member, volunteer and wife of former VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D.”

“I think it’s important to invest in the people who have invested in you.”

— Eric Whidden, president, Class of 2009

Philanthropy Award in honor of his outstanding volunteer philanthropy efforts.

At the MCV Foundation’s annual dinner in May, the board of trustees celebrated the foundation’s 60th anniversary with about 115 donors and friends.

During the dinner, the foundation bestowed several awards.

Dr. Walter Lawrence Jr., director emeritus of the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center, won the 2009 Robert Irby Award, which honors outstanding faculty volunteers on the MCV Campus. Charles G. Thalhimer, an honorary trustee, received the 2009 Michael B. Dowdy Philanthropy Award in honor of his outstanding volunteer philanthropy efforts.

Additionally, then-VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., and his wife, Lois, were honored as the inaugural recipients of the Dr. Eugene P. Trani Award for MCV Campus Leadership.

MCV Foundation President William P. Kotti, Ph.D., thanked the many donors and volunteers who give their time, talents and treasures generously to support the research, learning and patient care executed on the MCV Campus.

Dr. Walter Lawrence Jr. (left) claps as Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., graciously accepts a white coat given by the MCV Foundation in appreciation of his dedication and efforts on behalf of the medical campus.
Members of giving societies enjoy special events

In April, members of Virginia Commonwealth University’s two planned-giving societies, as well as other donor groups, enjoyed annual outings.

First, VCU Heritage Society members, Pollak Society members, School of Allied Health Professions donors, and VCU Alumni Association and MCV Alumni Association of VCU board members gathered for the VIP opening-night performance of “Chicago,” performed by Theatre VCU. After the performance, the group of about 150 enjoyed a reception in the lobby of the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts where the audience met and mingled with cast members.

Theatre VCU’s show is the sole production of “Chicago” allowed in the U.S. while the Broadway company of “Chicago” is on tour.

The VCU Heritage Society honors friends of VCU who have made provisions for the Monroe Park Campus in their estate plans. The Pollak Society includes donors who have made an unrestricted gift of $1,000 or more in the last fiscal year.

At the MCV Society’s annual event, about 70 members and friends enjoyed an evening of great food, wine and music at the Williamsburg Winery, preceded by a private tour of Westover Plantation. The MCV Society recognizes individuals who have taken steps to provide support for the MCV Campus through a bequest or other life-income gift.

Da Vinci students wow with innovative project

At da Vinci Day 2009 in April, a student team from the schools of Engineering, Business and the Arts unveiled the prototype for a $500 operating table — a 24-inch, easy-to-ship cube that assembles into a full-size, hospital-grade table that moves in three dimensions.

The students worked on the project through the Virginia Commonwealth University da Vinci Center for Innovation in Product Design and Development. The center partners with a number of local corporations that pose product-development challenges taken on by the center, ensuring that student teams experience a rich variation in project scope.

The students represent the second group at the da Vinci Center to work on Operation Simple, the quest for an affordable operating table to fill a burgeoning need in developing countries. For optimal results in surgery, patients should be on a raiseable, movable and partitioned operating table. A standard operating table, however, can cost up to $80,000, a prohibitive expense in developing countries that often forces health care providers to work with just one table.

The Operation Simple presentation was followed by a lecture from noted da Vinci scholar Bülent Atalay, Ph.D., of the University of Mary Washington, who discussed “Leonardo and the Unity of Art and Science.”

Donor gifts honor Dr. Trani, benefit scholarships

In mid-June, more than 400 donors, board members, alumni, friends and family gathered at The Jefferson Hotel to pay tribute to Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., on the eve of his retirement as president of Virginia Commonwealth University.

The Tribute Dinner featured remarks by then-Rector Thomas G. Rosenthal, as well as longtime VCU benefactors William H. Goodwin Jr., Steven A. Markel and Thomas G. Sneed Jr. (B.S. ’76), all co-chairs of the Tribute Dinner Committee. Gov. Timothy M. Kaine sent a videotaped message.

Goodwin, who has played a leadership role in the growth and development of the university, called Dr. Trani the “spark plug of Richmond.”

Markel presented Dr. Trani with a one-of-a-kind VCU golf ball marker — golfers use them to mark the location of the ball on the putting green — to add to his collection, which numbers near 12,000. Likewise, all dinner guests received a similar VCU ball marker.

Sneed offered a champagne toast and announced that $1.574 million had been raised in Dr. Trani’s honor to support the Trani Scholars Program and new scholarships in the School of Engineering.

Dr. Trani acknowledged the committee and the guests, as well as his wife, Lois, thanking everyone for helping to make his 19 years at VCU so successful.

Endowment marks business dean’s retirement

About 200 friends, alumni and faculty members gathered in the atrium of Snead Hall to honor Dean Michael Sesnowitz, Ph.D., at his retirement.

Presentations from then-VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., Kenneth G. Blaisdell, Ph.D., executive director of the School of Business Foundation, Senior Associate Dean E.G. Miller, Ph.D., foundation board member Thomas G. Sneed Jr. (B.S. ’76) and board Chairman Steven A. Markel honored Sesnowitz.

A portrait of Sesnowitz was unveiled and is now displayed in the board room on the fourth floor of Snead Hall. About 60 friends gave $62,970 to create the new Michael Sesnowitz Endowment for High School Economics.

In a letter asking for support for the effort, Markel said, “The endowment will be a perpetual tribute to Michael and his career-long legacy of social responsibility and compassionate teaching.”

The fund will support programs in Richmond Public Schools.

“As I reflect on my time as dean, I realize that it has been people like you that have made the past nine years so meaningful,” Sesnowitz said.

Sesnowitz also acknowledged his wife and two sons, who attended the event.

Sesnowitz will join the Department of Economics as a professor. David Urban, Ph.D., who has served on the VCU faculty for 20 years, will replace him as interim dean.
10k runners raise $423,000 for cancer center

The 2009 Massey Fundraising Challenge — the largest participatory event benefiting the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center — collected almost $423,000 through the Ukrop's Monument Avenue 10k.

This year, 1,851 individuals and 137 teams participated in the challenge, with team involvement increasing 23 percent from last year. This was the fourth consecutive year Massey served as the official charitable fundraising partner of the 10k and the second consecutive year Anthem sponsored the challenge. Only funds raised through the challenge benefit Massey; race registration fees do not.

One of the many teams that joined the 2009 challenge was The Herd for Ferd, with members running in honor of their friend, cancer patient Ferd Baruch. With 100 members, this team raised a record-breaking $41,176, outpacing all other teams by more than $29,000. Ann O’Keeffe led the pack of individual fundraisers, collecting more than $7,000 to honor her six-year battle with ovarian cancer. Leading corporate fundraisers included Napier Realtors ERA and McGuireWoods. Massey honored all top fundraisers with a reception in April.

The 2010 Massey Fundraising Challenge starts Dec. 26, 2009, with the 10k scheduled for March 27, 2010. For more information about joining the challenge, call (804) 828-0883.

Moonlight Magic draws 500 guests for Massey

Massey Alliance’s seventh annual Moonlight Magic, presented by Gilbane, dodged rain and a down economy for another successful event benefiting the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center.

The Massey Alliance, the cancer center's young professional board, hosted a crowd of more than 500 at James River Cellars in June. Guests enjoyed wine tastings, beer, a gourmet buffet and live music from The Remnants. A silent auction and raffle topped off the evening's festivities.

Since its inception in 2002, the Massey Alliance has donated more than $250,000 to the Massey Cancer Center from proceeds of its two annual fundraisers, Moonlight Magic and Swinetangle.

Next year’s Moonlight Magic is set for June 11. For more information, call (804) 827-0642.

Education alumni tee off to support scholarships

In late April, the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education Alumni Council hosted its third annual golf tournament at The Crossings in Glen Allen, Va. About 70 golfers participated, raising more than $10,000 for scholarships in the school. Bob Almond (B.S. ’74; M.Ed. ’85), Susan Younce (M.S. ’91) and Michael Huffman (M.S. ’02) co-chaired the tournament committee.

At a post-tourney dinner and auction, participants bid on several donated items, including an NBA basketball autographed by more than 100 former VCU basketball players, many of whom went on to play professionally. Thomas C. Burke (B.S. ’79), executive director of the VCU Foundation, won the basketball.

“It was a good turnout,” says Magnus Johnsson, director of external relations and development for the School of Education. “A mix of local alumni, school administrators and other friends of education all had a great time.”

Pollak Society ends 2009 season with a flourish

The Pollak Society — the leadership donor group of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts named for Richmond artist Theresa Pollak and chaired by Bev Reynolds, Meg Gottwald and Alan Kirshner — concluded a season of diverse activities in May.

Events began in December with a gala at The Jefferson Hotel to announce the selection of Gwathmey Siegel Design as the architect for the School of the Arts’ new gallery. In January, Pollak members mingled with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts’ Friends of African Art at a private preview of the Anderson Gallery’s exhibit of Yoruban art.

Lewis Hyde, this year’s Windmueller lecturer, spoke to a standing-room-only audience at VCU’s Grace Street Theater in February, soon after being profiled by the New York Times for his work in copyrighting creative works.

Later that month, Deborah and Thomas Valentine hosted an elegant evening focusing on the school’s interior design department.

A highlight was the private fashion show in March at Charles and Martee Johnson’s home. The season came to an end in May at the home of Bill Royall and Pam Kiecker, where Rob Tregenza, director of the arts school’s cinema program, told the assembled guests about the outstanding students currently studying under him. Lastly, Dean Richard Toscan showed the preliminary drawings for the gallery.

As the Pollak Society continues to grow in popularity and in support for the School of the Arts’ nationally ranked programs, members will be treated to many more behind-the-scenes glimpses of the remarkable art created by the school’s talented students and faculty.

For information about becoming a member of the Pollak Society, contact Jayne Shaw, associate dean for development, at (804) 827-4676 or jshaw@vcu.edu.

Cancer survivor Margaret Broaddus, a top fundraiser in the Massey Fundraising Challenge, masters the 10k.