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Gifts propel comics collection at VCU Libraries

Comic books. The phrase conjures images of muscle-bound superheroes, friendly cartoon ghosts and word balloons: kids’ stuff, right? Not at Virginia Commonwealth University. Here, comics are serious business.

The university’s extensive Comic Arts Collection is housed in Special Collections and Archives at James Branch Cabell Library on the Monroe Park Campus. The VCU collection is one of the five largest in the country, said Cindy Jackson, archival assistant for Comic Arts and Digital collections at VCU. The collection, which VCU Libraries began amassing in the early 1970s, now comprises more than 100,000 items, including more than 30,000 single-issue comic books, Jackson said.

About 95 percent of the collection is composed of donated material, with supplemental reference materials and journals purchased by VCU’s Special Collections and Archives.

“Comic arts” is an umbrella term that covers a range of materials, such as editorial cartoons, newspaper strips, graphic novels and memorabilia. VCU’s Comic Arts Collection consists mostly of comics, especially in the superhero genre, from the 1960s and later, and contains some rare pieces, including the first books featuring now-familiar heroes such as Captain Marvel and Wolverine.

The oldest item in the collection is a Little Orphan Annie decoder pin from 1935, which some might remember from its appearance in the 1983 movie “A Christmas Story.”

The collection is also home to a variety of fanzines, reference books and other more scholarly materials including newsletters, journals and related periodicals detailing the history and art of comics.

Since 2005, the collection has also served as the repository for the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards Archives. The Eisner Awards, considered the “Oscars of comics,” honor the best and brightest in contemporary comic arts. The archives include more than 1,200 nominated and award-winning items.

Through recent donations as well as the addition of the Eisner archives, Jackson said, the collection has grown significantly in the realm of more recent independent and underground comics, as well as manga, a Japanese comic art form.

Likewise, the introduction of the collection on the Web in the late 1990s spawned another growth spurt, said Alex Lorch, interim head of Special Collections and Archives. Donors searching for a place where their comics will contribute to a larger...
collection come to VCU from all over the country after discovering the collection online, he said.

Kevin Winter, a 26-year-old undergraduate student of history at Sacramento State in California, found out about VCU's collection via the Internet. He recently donated about 1,500 items to the collection.

"I had run out of room for my comics at home; they were gathering dust and not being read. I figured I might as well give them to a library with a collection already in place," he said. "I felt that the comics would make a bigger impact at VCU."

Winter's donation consisted mostly of Japanese manga, which was exciting news for collection manager Jackson.

"Manga is the hot thing in comics right now. We have so many students ask for it, and before [Winter's] donation, we had very little to choose from. Now we have a very healthy collection of manga for patrons to choose from," Jackson said.

Many VCU students are interested in or influenced by comic arts, Jackson said. One such student, recent graduate Celina Williams, works with Jackson in Special Collections and Archives to maintain and preserve the collection. As a student of English and women's studies, she has used the collection a number of times in her own academic research, and each day she aids other interested students in utilizing the collection as well.

"I see a lot of students taking an interest in the collection," Williams said. "We have our regulars who … will visit periodically to read, sometimes multiple times in one day. We get a lot of art, history and English students who are utilizing the collection for academic purposes."

The idea that comics even have a valid place in academia is a fairly new one.

"Up until recently, comics were viewed as children's books. Only in the past 10 to 20 years have historians seen them as part of societal history. Now they are studied as a literary art form," Lorch said.

More and more, comics are being recognized as significant indicators of the cultural status of the times and places in which they were created.

"Comics and manga give us a glimpse of what is important to the society and culture," collector Winter said. "They tell, in a roundabout way, the problems, issues and solutions to the problems that a society is facing."

For more information on the VCU Libraries' Comic Arts Collection, please contact Cindy Jackson at (804) 828-1108 or hcjackson2@vcu.edu.

Alumni association honors graduating scholars

The Virginia Commonwealth University Alumni Association welcomed about 100 students and their guests to the annual Graduating Student Scholars' Reception this past spring.

Graduating students who were Presidential, Provost or Deans' scholars were honored for their achievements and encouraged to stay involved in the university after graduation.

Associate Vice President for University Alumni Relations Gordon McDougall and VCU Alumni Association President Dan Massey (B.S. '92) stressed the need for students to maintain a lifelong connection with VCU, explaining such a relationship can be beneficial to both parties.

New staff members join VCU advancement team

Naomi P. Crown (M.A. '02)
Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Relations
School of Engineering Foundation
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npccrown@vcu.edu
Formerly associate director of annual giving at the University of Mary Washington

Jessica Feinberg Gurganus
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Stephanie R. Jenks
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Formerly membership and communications manager for the Virginia Biotechnology Association

Donna Stewart Sharits (B.G.S. '97)
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Formerly interim director of customer service and group sales for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

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VCU Massey Cancer Center
(804) 828-1451
cmtaylor@vcu.edu
Formerly director of marketing and public relations for Realty Ventures Group Inc.
Social work fellowship provides writing refuge

Writing her dissertation was a long and challenging journey for School of Social Work 2008 doctoral graduate Lori Thomas. With a part-time job at a local nonprofit organization and an adjunct teaching position in the school, Thomas found little time to devote to her dissertation.

Thomas began working on her dissertation, which addresses the practice of lobbying by religious groups in Virginia, in spring 2006. At Virginia Supportive Housing, where she was project coordinator for Greater Richmond Housing First, Thomas developed a program to help those who experience chronic homelessness and serious mental illness. Because she was so dedicated to her work with the school and Virginia Supportive Housing, Thomas often had difficulty focusing on her dissertation.

“Quite often, when I sat down to analyze, think and write, my mind was racing with program start-up issues and lesson plans from these other aspects of my life,” she said.

In November 2007, Thomas was given the chance of a lifetime when she learned that she had been chosen as the first recipient of the McGrath Morris Fellowship in the School of Social Work. The fellowship was created in fall 2007 by VCU alumna Patty Morris (M.S.W. ’03; Ph.D. ’05) and her husband, James McGrath Morris, a writer.

“James and Patty imagined creating an important refuge for writers, and now our doctoral students are the beneficiaries of that most generous reality,” said School of Social Work Associate Dean Kia J. Bentley, Ph.D. “It offers time to make sense of all that their dissertation experience has taught them.”

The fellowship provides a two-week writing retreat for a student of social work in the process of writing his or her dissertation as well as a $1,000 stipend to cover travel and other expenses. The residency takes place at the Morrises’ casita in Tesuque, N.M., near Santa Fe.

The casita, a small guesthouse on the Morrises’ property, is a peaceful adobe-style cabin with a beautiful view of the Jemez Mountains; in other words, a perfect place to get away from the daily stressors that make it difficult to focus on a dissertation.

As writers themselves, the Morrises understand the importance of the opportunity they are offering. James Morris has spent some time at a writer’s colony to focus on his work. A portion of Patty Morris’ dissertation — an analysis of social work as defined by Abraham Flexner’s 1915 speech “Is Social Work a Profession?” — appears in the March 2008 issue of the Social Service Review.

“One of the reasons I wanted to start the fellowship was because, in looking back at the process of my dissertation research, I realized that my most productive and creative moments were when I was able to get away from my family and the routines and responsibilities of daily life,” Patty Morris said.

She also pointed out that she had received such incredible support from the School of Social Work that she wanted to give something back. During the retreat, the student in residence is required to give a presentation on his or her dissertation to a group of people, selected by the Morrises, who are knowledgeable in the topic and can provide useful feedback. Thomas was nervous about this part of the retreat, but she said it proved to be a helpful learning experience.

“It was probably one of my richest intellectual experiences in the Ph.D. program — a real gift,” Thomas said.

In addition to this opportunity to discuss her work and gain insight from their different perspectives, Thomas also spent time with the Morrises during her stay at the casita. They shared most evening meals and went on hikes together. The Morrises, she said, made sure her stay was pleasant and intellectually rewarding.

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“The people I met, the communities I stayed with and the stories I heard while in Thailand will always be with me,” she said.

Thomas graduated in May with a bachelor’s degree in women’s studies and wants to get involved in community projects, she said. Eventually, she hopes to return to Thailand as an intern with the CIEE program in Khon Kaen. In the meantime, she has taken a position as an assistant in the VCU Department of Women’s Studies.

“My goal is to continue learning about community organizing and the fight to promote social justice and to use my degree in women’s studies to develop programs aimed at women and girls,” she said.

The semester Thomas spent working and learning in Thailand turned out to be an important experience that shaped her future, providing her with opportunities she might not have had otherwise.

“For many of the students who have studied and traveled with women’s studies, their international experience has been life changing,” department Chair Diana Scully said. “As an example, one of the Uganda/Kenya trip students returned to Uganda as a volunteer after graduating from VCU. She is now married to a Ugandan, has a new baby, is employed by the United States Embassy in Kampala and has just been promoted to the diplomatic corps.”

The Department of Women’s Studies has a long history of commitment to broadening students’ global understanding through international study and travel, Scully said. It is a tradition that the department hopes to continue.

In April, several more students were awarded the Women’s Studies International Experience Scholarship, letting them participate in this summer’s women’s studies trip to Spain for Women’s Worlds 2008, the 10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women.

For more information about making a donation to the College of Humanities and Sciences, contact Lois Badey, director of development, at (804) 827-0856 or lbadey@vcu.edu.

Scholarship gives students global opportunities

In 2007, a donor pledged $100,000 to the College of Humanities and Sciences’ Department of Women’s Studies establishing the Women’s Studies International Experience Scholarship.

The first scholarship recipient, Shayne Thomas, spent the fall 2008 semester at Khon Kaen University in Thailand, participating in a program offered through the Council on International Educational Exchange, a worldwide education organization.

The scholarship, established by the Sledd Family Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation serving Richmond and Central Virginia, awards up to $5,000 per recipient and up to $10,000 a year for study-abroad experiences for women’s studies students with demonstrated financial need.

The experience made a lasting impression on Thomas.

“The people I met, the communities I stayed with and the stories I heard while in Thailand will always be with me,” she said.

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Scholarship allows one student to ‘pay it forward’

Mary A. Hill, a recent Virginia Commonwealth University nursing graduate, calls herself “the bald goddess.” She hasn’t had hair since age 5, when she was diagnosed with alopecia areata, an autoimmune disease in which the body mistakenly attacks the hair follicles, causing partial to total hair loss.

“Bald has never always been easy, she said, but it has been a blessing in disguise because it has helped shape her into the person she is today. Hill readily admits that her baldness had a lot to do with her decision to pursue nursing.

“I know I wouldn’t be going into nursing if I had hair,” she said. “It has changed my whole outlook on life.”

In addition to having alopecia, Hill was diagnosed at age 3 with Celiac Sprue — another autoimmune-related disease that makes her allergic to gluten-based foods, such as rye, wheat and oats. Because of her illnesses and many sports-related accidents, Hill said she spent much of her youth in the hospital.

“I always hated doctors because they always had the bad news. Nurses were always there when I needed a shoulder to cry on and to help me pick up all the pieces,” she said.

As she grew up in Washington state and Nebraska, Hill was never allowed by her parents to feel different or unusual. They always made it very clear that she could do anything any other girl could do, “with less prep time and less wasted money on hair products!” she said.

Hill and her brother Carl, 31, both graduated from the VCU School of Nursing in May. Hill was accepted to the program during her senior year of high school, and her brother received his letter of acceptance soon thereafter, while he was serving in Iraq with the Air Force.

He joined his sister at VCU during her sophomore year.

When Hill and her brother both announced that they would be moving to Richmond, Va., their parents decided to pack up, too.

“We’re like gypsies,” Hill said of her family. “We go everywhere together.”

Now her parents and five of their seven children live in Richmond or close by. Her brother Joseph lives with his family in Washington, and her sister, Nancy, and her family live in Texas.

Coming from such a large family meant Hill needed to look elsewhere for financial support.

For the past three summers, Hill has worked as a camp counselor for the VCU Summer Discovery Program course “A Week in Scrubs – Nursing in the 21st Century.” The program welcomes rising sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders into the School of Nursing to see the latest equipment and to explore the profession by visiting different units in the hospital and spending time with nursing students.

“Mary was wonderful with this group of middle-school children. They really bonded with her,” said Susan Lipp, director of enrollment and student services in the School of Nursing and Hill’s supervisor at the summer program. “She also provided leadership with the junior counselors who were high school students.”

Loans and part-time jobs have funded much of her education, but last year Hill received some additional support via a scholarship offered in the School of Nursing.

Hill was the inaugural recipient of the Unity Scholarship for the 2006-07 academic year. The scholarship is awarded to a deserving VCU nursing student with financial need.

See Nursing, continued on Page 9

MCV Society members enjoy trip to Va. vineyard

On May 7, 2008, the MCV Foundation hosted members of the MCV Society at Barboursville Vineyards in Orange, Va. More than 65 MCV Society members, MCV Foundation staff and representatives of Virginia Commonwealth University’s MCV Campus schools enjoyed an entertaining tour of the vineyard, including the ruins of the Thomas Jefferson-designed Barboursville estate, before sitting down to a four-course meal with wine pairings prepared by James Beard Award-nominated chef Melissa Close.

The MCV Society recognizes individuals who have taken steps to provide support for the MCV Campus through a bequest or any of a variety of life-income gifts.

Nursing, continued from Page 8

Hill said she is grateful and honored to be the first recipient.

“Because of the assistance I have received, I can work less and focus more on my education, which is a huge blessing. It’s also an honor to be the recipient of a scholarship that was created with such a significant purpose in mind,” she added.

After graduation, Hill moved to Baltimore to be near her sister, Sarah, 19, who plays volleyball for the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She has a position in the surgical oncology unit at Johns Hopkins University, and she eventually would like to pursue a career in pediatric oncology.

In her training at VCU, Hill had the opportunity to work with many children with alopecia. The disease affects 1.7 percent of the total population, with more than 5 million cases in the U.S., according to the National Alopecia Areata Foundation.

“When they see me, they instantly can tell we are the same, and we bond right then and there,” she said.

Hill aims to apply all that she has gained from her experiences to helping young cancer patients, with whom she hopes to find that same bond over baldness.

“Bald is bald,” she said.

“I know I can’t go back and thank every nurse who has ever reached out to me,” she said, “but by essentially ‘paying it forward’ I can thank them in my own way.”

For more information about the Unity Scholarship in the School of Nursing, contact James Parrish, director of development, at (804) 828-5172 or jtparrish@vcu.edu.
2008 VCU dental graduates pledge $2,008 each

In November 2007, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry student Dave Turok came across a 45-year-old plaque bearing some familiar names.

The plaque, which had been locked away in an attic of the School of Dentistry’s Lyons Building for years, listed the names of each of the 63 members of the Class of 1962, including Dr. William Covington, Dr. Maury Hubbard and Dr. Gary Maynard.

The three currently serve as part-time instructors in the School of Dentistry. The plaque commemorated a promise made upon their graduation that, at some point during their careers, each member of the class would donate $1,000 to their alma mater.

The old plaque sparked an idea in the young minds of the School of Dentistry’s Class of 2008. They wanted to “get a plaque like that” for their class, Turok said. So Turok and a group of his classmates began considering how they could make a similar impression.

“We wanted to ensure that our whole class was on board rather than making the decision for them. We held town meeting-style lunches to get everyone’s opinions on how to develop this idea and make an impact,” Turok said.

After numerous meetings, the dentistry students came up with the solution: Collectively, the class would make a pledge to donate more than $100,000 to the VCU School of Dentistry. So far, 62 graduates have promised to donate $2,008 over the next five years. A few others have pledged smaller amounts, so the class has topped its goal, pledging more than $125,000.

This is a big commitment for recent graduates, especially dentistry alumni who are “some of the poorest people in the country,” said 2008 alumnus Mike Cattogio. The class estimated their accumulated debt to be about $13.6 million.

The School of Dentistry Class of 2008 revealed their ambitious plan to give back at a Countdown to Graduation dinner held in February. At the dinner, more than 40 class members were joined by staff, alumni and faculty, including Covington, Hubbard and Maynard, of the school’s Class of 1962.

“I was so proud of those students,” Maynard said of the Class of 2008. “I think it’s wonderful what they’ve done. My hat’s off to them. . . . It makes me proud of my own class.”

During a presentation at dinner, Turok, Cattogio and classmate Jeff Allred announced that the money will be used to purchase new digital radiography equipment for the Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology Clinic in the School of Dentistry. The clinic currently uses conventional film radiography to capture X-ray images of patients’ teeth. Dr. Laurie C. Carter, professor and director of the radiology clinic, was moved, she said, by the class’s decision to provide new equipment with their gift.

“I was overjoyed that they chose to grace radiology with their gift and bring us into the 21st century with digital equipment, the recent grads have cleared the path for dental students to come,” she said.

During the presentation, Allred compared the old, out-of-date radiography equipment with which they were familiar to a mattress in the road, slowing their journey toward a dental degree. By bringing the radiology clinic into the 21st century with digital equipment, the recent grads have cleared the path for dental students to come.

At the dinner, the students took a moment to acknowledge those who had given back to the school before them. In addition to the Class of 1962, Allred singled out Dr. Mike McMunn (D.D.S. ’77) for his class’s reunion gift of $109,000 and for establishing the Dentistry Class of 1977 Scholarship. Dr. Jeff Levin (D.D.S. ’68) was honored for his successful leadership of the school’s recent multimillion-dollar Campaign

Hygienists make historic pledge to program

When the School of Dentistry’s Dental Hygiene Class of 2007 graduated, its members made a combined gift of $2,100. It was the first student gift in the history of the 39-year-old program. One year later, their philanthropy has inspired another class to follow in the same path.

The members of the Dental Hygiene Class of 2008 have also banded together to give back to the program, making a class gift of $2,500. The class members decided that their gift should go toward the Virginia Commonwealth University chapter of SADHA, the student member sector of the American Dental Hygienists’ Association.

In partnership with the Salvation Army in Richmond, Va., the VCU chapter of SADHA offers dental screenings and oral hygiene instructions to residents who might not otherwise have access to dental care.

But the Class of 2008 went even further, pledging a collective $16,867 to be paid during the first five years following graduation and completed by the time the classmates return for their first reunion in 2013. This is the first student pledge in the program’s history, and 14 of the 21 graduates have signed on.

The aim, said class President Golby Jalali during a May dinner to announce the gift, is to start a tradition of giving and to support future students coming into the dental hygiene program.

“Our class wanted to do something to help future dental hygiene students and start a new generation of alumni who are more involved with the school,” Jalali said.

To that end, the money from the pledge will be used to purchase new equipment for the dental hygiene program, including a new intraoral camera, air polishers and typodonts. Any part of the pledge money not used for equipment costs will be available to Kim Isringhausen, director of the Division of Dental Hygiene, to use as most needed.

How can this group of fresh graduates make such a commitment? Each of them will meet their pledge at $20.08 a month, fulfilled electronically using the new VCU online giving system. Pledge fulfillment will not begin until Sept. 15, 2008, to give graduates time to secure jobs and to feel comfortable satisfying their commitment.

In addition to Golby’s announcement of her class’s ambitious giving goals, several faculty members also spoke at the May dinner, praising the students for their philanthropy.

“Students to come won’t know your faces but will recognize you for the gifts you’ve left behind,” Isringhausen said.
*Development officer retires from MCV Foundation*

Sharon Larkins-Pederson, who has served as senior development officer for the MCV Foundation since 1996, is retiring. She has worked part time through the summer as a search for her replacement begins.

During her 12 years of service, Larkins-Pederson has transformed hundreds of MCV Campus friends and alumni into dedicated supporters of Virginia Commonwealth University Health System programs and has raised millions of dollars for campus entities, said Bill Kotti, president of the MCV Foundation and chief development officer for VCU's MCV Campus.

Larkins-Pederson coordinated two campaigns for what is now the VCU Pauley Heart Center, raising nearly $20 million. She also championed fundraising efforts for the divisions of Gastroenterology and Pulmonary Medicine in the medical school’s Department of Internal Medicine.

“Sharon’s passion about the mission of higher education combined with her genuine care and respect for people have created wonderful synergies for donors, volunteers and the university. She has been an outstanding member of the team for the Campaign for VCU, and she leaves an incredible legacy through her work of inspiring so many people to realize the importance of private support to the university and the great impact philanthropy has in helping others,” Kotti said.

Before joining the MCV Foundation, Larkins-Pederson worked as a community volunteer in North Carolina and served as associate director of development for the Duke University Medical Center.

In retirement, Larkins-Pederson is looking forward to spending more time with her husband, Edson Pederson, a Presbyterian minister and retired high school history teacher, as well as her three sisters, three sons, four grandchildren and her mother.

*VCU donor, friend Charles G. Thalhimer Jr. dies*

Respected Richmond, Va., businessman, philanthropist and longtime friend of Virginia Commonwealth University, Charles G. Thalhimer Jr. died April 28, following a brief illness. He was 58.

Thalhimer was a well-known figure in his hometown of Richmond, where his father, Charles G. Thalhimer, served as vice chairman of Thalhimer's Department Stores. After graduating from Brown University in Rhode Island and serving briefly in the Navy, Thalhimer held management positions with Thalhimer Bros. Inc., a family-run business. In 1993, he purchased the 46-year-old Green Top Sporting Goods in Hanover County, where he served as president until his death.

In addition to his long history of giving to the university, Thalhimer served on the VCU Foundation board and was a former member of the MCV Hospitals Hospitality House Advisory Board.

“Charlie was such a great guy who cared deeply about a lot of things, and we are so thankful that one of those things was VCU. I loved talking to Charlie because you never had to guess what he really meant,” said Peter L. Wyeth, vice president for University Advancement. “He will be sorely missed, and our hearts go out to his loving and devoted father and family. I keep saying to myself, it is just not fair that he was taken from us all.”

*VCUQatar marks expansion, commencement*

On May 9, 2008, 10 years to the day since its inception, VCU School of the Arts in Qatar held a groundbreaking ceremony marking the expansion of the campus in the Middle East.

Since 1998, VCUQatar has offered three degrees to design students taking courses in the country’s growing Education City. Virginia Commonwealth University was the first institution to offer degree programs there.

“When we began 10 years ago, we started with a class of 35 bright young women and six pioneering faculty members,” VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., said at the ceremony.

“Today, our student body has grown to just under 200, and we have over 35 faculty members. In addition, we have made a smooth transition from an all-female student body to a coed student body this past year.”

The new space will more than double the size of the existing facility to accommodate the needs of the ever-growing student population. With the building expansion, VCUQatar will also increase its academic offerings to include a master’s degree in design as well as a large library and other facilities.

VCUQatar Dean Allyson Vanstone is excited about the coming changes for VCUQatar.

“The building expansion marks the culmination of 10 years of hard work in becoming a leading force for fostering a design culture and creativity in Qatar and the region,” she said. “Today we celebrate a decade of accomplishments of our alumni, students and faculty as we build and prepare for the decade to come.”

Dr. Trani, VCU Rector Tom Rosenthal and other VCU dignitaries also participated in VCUQatar's seventh graduation ceremony.

The commencement address was delivered by fashion designer Isabel Toledo, whose debut at New York City Fashion Week 2007 with Anne Klein was met with critical acclaim.

Interior design student and class salutatorian Sheikha Ali Al Mansoori said she appreciates having earned her education in a setting of such diversity.

“Studying in a multicultural environment has helped me realize the potential of young educated women and better understand the importance of the role we play in our society,” she said.

With the graduates of the Class of 2008, VCUQatar has 180 alumni.

*VCU researchers receive grant from U.S. Army*

Virginia Commonwealth University's Reanimation, Engineering and Shock Center (VCURES) has been awarded a three-year, $1.5 million grant from the U.S. Army to study new technologies for optimizing wound healing and limiting wound infections.

The study is based on technologies discovered at VCU that have demonstrated that a naturally occurring hormone called androstenediol, or AED, is biologically active and can reverse stress-inhibited wound healing. In addition, AED has been shown to have the biological ability to combat bacterial, viral and fungal infections as well as to protect against lethal radiation poisoning.

VCURES is the university's critical injury and illness research group, which also has developed a combat casualty care research program. VCURES has generated about $36 million in research funding since 2000 in work that has a myriad of applications in areas as diverse as the military, homeland security, emergency medicine and traumatic brain injury.
MCV Foundation recognizes volunteers, leaders

At the annual MCV Foundation dinner in May, nearly 100 trustees, guests and honorees dined at the Country Club of Virginia.

Bill Kotti, president of the MCV Foundation, joined Dr. Sheldon Retchin, vice president for health sciences and CEO of the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, and Dr. Gordon D. Ginder, the Lipman Chair in Oncology and director of the VCU Massey Cancer Center, in recognizing outstanding service and philanthropy of some of those present.

Dr. Ruth Campbell (M.D. ’57) was recognized for her service as chair of the MCV Foundation board of trustees.

Dr. Richardson Grinnan (M.D. ’69) was presented the Michael B. Dowdy Award honoring MCV Campus volunteer philanthropists.

Dr. Thomas J. Smith, professor and chair of the VCU Division of Hematology/Oncology and Palliative Care, was presented the W. Robert Irby, MD Award for Philanthropic Leadership.

Christine Gove (B.S. ’82; M.B.A. ’93) was recognized for her 26 years of service to the MCV Foundation.

Dr. John C. Doswell II (D.D.S. ’79) is the new chair of the MCV Foundation board of trustees. He has served as a member of the board since 1998.

Dr. Richardson Grinnan (left), the Michael B. Dowdy Award honoree, with Dr. Sheldon Retchin

VCU awards Wayne Medals to Fraizers, Lambert

At the 2008 Commencement ceremony in May, VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., awarded Edward A. Wayne Medals to three individuals who have helped shape the university through their service and philanthropy: Michael Fraizer, Elizabeth Royer Fraizer and former state Sen. Benjamin J. Lambert III.

Since 1971, the Edward A. Wayne Medal has honored individuals who have made outstanding contributions or provided exemplary services to VCU. The medal is named in honor of Edward A. Wayne, who was instrumental in the establishment of VCU in 1968 and served as the university’s first vice rector.

Lambert served as a senator representing Virginia’s 9th District from 1986 to 2007 and as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1978 to 1985. He serves on a number of area boards, including the VCU Health System Authority Board and the VCU Inger and Walter Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences board.

Michael Fraizer and Elizabeth Royer Fraizer were also honored. Michael Fraizer is the chairman, president and CEO of Genworth Financial Inc. and serves on the boards of the VCU School of Business Foundation and the Andre Agassi Charitable Foundation. Elizabeth Royer Fraizer is a member of the William Byrd Community House board. The Fraizers also provided funding for the Mary and Frances Youth Center on VCU’s Monroe Park Campus. The center is named for the couple’s mothers, Mary Fraizer and Frances Royer, both of whom were dedicated to community service during their lifetimes.

Annual gifts support med students’ Match Day

The third Thursday of March each year holds special significance for medical students. At noon throughout the country, students receive envelopes containing the name of the residency program they will attend.

This past spring, Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Medicine experienced an unprecedented Match Day, exceeding the national average with 96 percent of its students matching with the residency of their choice.

Last year, gifts to the School of Medicine Annual Fund made possible several milestone events in the school, including the 2008 Match Day.

The process begins in December when students visit hospitals nationwide to decide where they would like to perform their residencies. By the end of February, the students have ranked their top choices, while the hospitals have ranked their top candidates.

The data is sent to the National Resident Matching Program in Washington, D.C. A computer algorithm is used to establish the matches, and sealed results envelopes are sent to each medical school. Each student receives an envelope with the name of the institution where they will spend the next several years.

To add some additional excitement to the event, students drop a dollar into a bowl near the room’s entrance. Because names are called randomly, the student who has waited longest receives the money in the bowl.

Pledge, continued from Page 10

...for Clinical Simulation. Allred also recognized Dr. Baxter Perkinson Jr. (D.D.S. ’70) for his long history of giving to the school, as well as Dr. John C. Doswell II (D.D.S. ’79), who was instrumental in the creation of the school’s annual alumni golf tournament.

The students said they hope that someday their philanthropy will inspire another class of dental students. “Maybe some class will look back at us in 46 years and be inspired to give back, as well,” Allred said.

To make a gift to the School of Dentistry, contact Ed Kardos, senior director of advancement, at (804) 828-0324 or egkardos@vcu.edu.