Inside this issue

- Couple’s annual gifts exemplify power of giving
- Art history expert plans to leave lasting legacy
- Alumnus etches proposal in Shafer Court brick
- Chapel renovations establish an interfaith venue
- Live from New York, it’s the VCU Brandcenter
- Arts alumna hopes gift cultivates creativity
- Scholarships help recruit star education student
- Tennis champ serves up smiles for Massey event
- Professor shares economic insights with donors
- Ram Spirit Walk excites incoming freshman class

Editor: Melanie Irvin Solaimani (B.S. '96), misolaimani@vcu.edu, (804) 828-3975
Writer: Claire Hairfield, boswellrc3@vcu.edu
Couple’s annual gifts exemplify power of giving

Dr. Joe Adair (D.D.S. ’57) knows about devotion. His answering machine message alerts callers they have reached “the Big Orange house” — he’s a proud graduate of the University of Tennessee. He was married to his wife, Jane, for 46 years and calls the day he married her “the best day’s work I have ever done in my life.”

He also is devoted to Virginia Commonwealth University, for many reasons, and makes annual, unrestricted gifts to the university as a sign of his unwavering support. Adair graduated from Richlands High School in Southwest Virginia as the No. 5 student out of a class of 127. During his sophomore year, he set his sights on a career in dentistry. He learned about a dental training program offered by the University of Tennessee, where students spent two years in Knoxville taking pre-dental classes and then moved to Memphis for three years of dental school. Most dental programs required eight years of study; this took only five, so he applied and was accepted.

“At the end of my second year, I had a 3.2 grade-point average, and I was not accepted to go to Memphis,” Adair recalled. “I went to talk to the dean and said, ‘I have Tennessee friends with a 2.5 and they were accepted, why wasn’t I?’”

The dean explained preference was given to in-state students and promised Adair a slot in the next year’s class if he would spend one more year in Knoxville.

Adair did just that — and raised his GPA along the way. A year later, he was accepted to the Tennessee program, as well as the University of Louisville, where his grandfather completed medical school in 1892, and the Medical College of Virginia.

“I went home and talked to the local physicians and dentists in Richlands, and they said MCV was a better school than the other two,” he said. “So I went to Richmond and, thank the good Lord I did because there I met my bride, the light of my life, at MCV.”

In the late 1950s, Jane Vanture (B.S. ’60), of Suffolk, Va., was a student in MCV’s School of Nursing. She and Adair started dating in 1957 and loved Richmond.

Adair graduated from the MCV School of Dentistry in 1957 and returned to Richlands to practice with a fellow alumnus, Dr. David R. Stanton (D.D.S. ’54), for a short time before joining the Air Force.

After his tour of duty, Adair returned to MCV and accepted a teaching position in the School of Dentistry. He and Jane were married July 18, 1959, just as she was entering her final year of nursing school.

“I was just not going to let her get that close and not finish her degree,” Adair said. “Her mother and father were so proud of her and had worked so hard for her to get there.”

The couple moved to Richlands after Jane’s 1960 graduation and set to work establishing Adair’s practice. They worked together until the office was up and running.

As a nurse, Jane donated her time and talents throughout the community as a volunteer at the local health clinic, at her church and with other civic organizations.

“Jane never practiced for money, but she helped so many in our area, especially those with arthritis and breast cancer,” Adair said.

Dr. Joe Adair still speaks with adoration of his wife, Jane, who died in 2005. “I made the living, but she made the living worthwhile,” he says.
The Adairs raised two daughters who both followed their father (“with no arm twisting,” he said) to the University of Tennessee — Elizabeth Lee, who is a lawyer in oil and gas leases in Texas, and Anne Harman, who is a nonpracticing dental hygienist and, along with her husband, is the owner of the Blue Ridge Mountain Sports sporting-goods chain.

Over the years, the couple made gifts to the VCU schools of Dentistry and Nursing as a sign of their gratitude to and support for their alma mater.

“I grew up in a coal camp in a four-room house with no central heat. We had running water, and my dad was industrious enough to put in a bathroom,” Adair said. “But if you grow up in a coal camp, you learn the value of God, of friends, of integrity, of money and of giving back.

“The University of Tennessee and MCV gave me the opportunity to get an education, and nobody can take that away from you. A formal education heightens your chances of being successful, and — if you keep your nose clean — it heightens your chances of being a good humanitarian.”

The Adairs also made trips back to campus, oftentimes bringing their children, to see their friends and classmates during Reunion Weekend. They watched appreciatively as their alma mater changed and grew.

As the university evolved, new buildings sprouted up throughout the city and others underwent significant renovations. Yet, support from the commonwealth of Virginia did not keep pace, echoing a growing trend in higher education across the nation, said Stephen D. Gottfredson, Ph.D., VCU provost and vice president for academic affairs.

“When I began my career as a university educator, about 75 percent of any public university’s budget came from its state’s general fund, and about 25 percent came from all other sources. And by all other sources, I mean tuition and fees, I mean private gifts and endowments and I mean federal, state or industry grants and contracts for research and services,” he said. “Today, 30 years later, that picture is just about reversed: About 25 percent of a major public university’s budget comes from its state’s general fund, and about 75 percent comes from those other sources.”

At VCU, private philanthropy from alumni, friends, corporations and foundations plays a significant role in helping the university enhance the quality of education, said Peter L. Wyeth, vice president for university advancement.

“VCU receives money from the commonwealth, but the university relies on unrestricted gifts to fund scholarships for outstanding students; professorships to attract and retain gifted educators and researchers; classroom and clinical improvements; and other pressing needs at the time,” he said. The university cannot depend on consistent, significant funding from the state, especially in uncertain economic times, Wyeth said.

“Annual giving smooths out the peaks and valleys that we see in funding from the state,” he said. “The generosity of our annual donors makes a profound difference in helping to keep the university on a forward trajectory.”

Adair relishes the fact that his gifts can make a difference. After Jane Adair died in 2005 following a recurrence of breast cancer, her husband remains devoted to the School of Nursing, making annual gifts to the school in her memory. That philanthropy supports a scholarship program in the school.

“I hope my gifts, even though they are not huge, allow some students to obtain an education they otherwise might not have had the opportunity to do because their parents cannot afford to send them to school,” Adair said.
Art history expert plans to leave lasting legacy

When Regenia A. Perry, Ph.D., professor emerita of art history at Virginia Commonwealth University, earned a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Pennsylvania in 1965, she became the first African-American woman to hold a doctorate in art history and the first African-American to hold a doctorate in American art.

Today, Perry feels strongly about giving back to VCU. She has created a scholarship in the School of the Arts and has included VCU in her will.

The daughter of a poor tobacco farmer, Perry was born and raised in Virgilina, Va., and had to fight her way to the top.

“I have made sacrifices,” she said. “It’s not luck. It’s hard work.”

During her tenure at VCU, Perry took unpaid leave to travel across the country, discovering and documenting the work of often overlooked African-American folk artists.

These days she spends her time representing many African-American folk artists, living and dead, through Raven Arts, the art consulting firm she founded and operates.

As she made a name for herself in the world of African-American folk art, Perry also embarked on a successful career in academia. For 25 years, Perry taught art history at VCU. She reflects fondly on her years spent teaching in VCU’s School of the Arts.

In 2000, Perry established the Regenia A. Perry Merit Scholarship.

“I feel benevolently toward scholarships because every year of my education — undergraduate and graduate — was financed by scholarships and fellowships. … It would be remiss if I didn’t reach back and try to help someone else the way I was assisted,” Perry said.

In addition, Perry has included the university in her will. Upon her death, her bequest will establish a scholarship in the Department of Art History.

VCU was her only choice as a bequest beneficiary, Perry said, explaining, “That’s where I spent the majority of my career — I wouldn’t think of another place.”

Planned gifts are vital to maintaining a high-caliber educational experience while creating a lasting legacy for the donor, said School of the Arts Dean Richard Toscan.

“VCU Arts through their estates. Generous bequests like Dr. Perry’s allow our students even greater opportunities,” he said.

Scholarships are a key tool in the university’s admissions portfolio for attracting and retaining the best and brightest students from throughout the country, said Thomas C. Burke, executive director of the VCU Foundation.

“Historically, our top-rated programs, such as those in the School of the Arts, lure exceptional scholars and artists from throughout Virginia and beyond, including many who could attend any college or university of their choice,” he said. “Bequests are a great way to ensure future excellence at VCU.”

To make a gift to the School of the Arts, contact Jayne Dolton Shaw, associate dean for development, at (804) 827-4676 or jshaw@vcu.edu.
Alumnus etches proposal in Shafer Court brick

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business alumnus Howard Rose was searching for a unique way to propose to his girlfriend, Melissa Reekes, also a VCU graduate, when he received a flier promoting the VCU Foundation’s Pathways Brick Campaign.

He was familiar with the concept as he had already purchased a brick in a pathway alongside the VCU Stuart C. Siegel Center.

“The minute I got the thing in the mail I thought of it,” Rose said.

He soon purchased a brick and requested his marriage proposal as the inscription.

On May 3, 2008, Rose asked Reekes if they could take their dog, a Labrador named Michaux, for a walk near campus. Reekes suspected something was up — they didn’t usually come to Shafer Court to walk the dog, and she said Rose was acting funny, making out-of-character comments.

Rose stopped near his proposal brick in the pathway of Shafer Court, but his smooth plan was foiled when a woman approached the pair and started asking questions about the couple’s dog. As the woman talked, Reekes said she looked down and saw the brick with the inscription, “HLR Loves MAR. Will You Marry Me?” She looked back up at Rose, who tried to speak but was again interrupted by the passer-by. He waited until she moved along and then officially popped the question.

The couple was married Oct. 18.

Although they didn’t meet in college, the couple said VCU is a special place to them and that attending the university is an experience they both share. Rose earned his M.B.A. from VCU in 1997, while Reekes received a bachelor’s degree in fashion from the School of the Arts in 2000 and a master’s degree in education five years later.

“We are both big Rams supporters,” Rose said.

The couple holds season tickets for men’s basketball, he’s a lifetime member of the VCU Alumni Association and she’s an adjunct instructor in the fashion department.

“When you go to college or you go to grad school, it’s a place of new beginnings. It can almost be seen as something like that. VCU means a lot to both of us. It’s signifying our new life together,” Reekes said.

For more information about the Pathways Brick Campaign, contact Ike Tucker, assistant director of the VCU Foundation, at (804) 828-6491 or witucker@vcu.edu. Bricks can be purchased online at www.givenow.vcu.edu/brickorder.

Pathways Brick Campaign

The Pathways Brick Campaign, established in 2002, encourages alumni and friends of VCU to purchase inscribable bricks to be placed along the pathway in Shafer Court. More than 500 alumni and friends have purchased 1,063 bricks. New bricks cost $150. Funds from this project help the VCU Foundation support the academic programs on the Monroe Park Campus and assist with the VCU Rice Center, the VCU Honors College and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.
The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education has received a $30,000 challenge grant from an anonymous local foundation. The foundation will match dollar for dollar all new, unrestricted gifts and pledges to the school made through June 30, 2009.

“The School of Education is grateful for the philanthropic support we have received to make this challenge possible,” said Dean Beverly Warren, Ph.D., Ed.D. “Each year, the annual fund serves a crucial role in our ability to respond to the needs of our students and faculty. Gifts that are unrestricted enable us to allocate funds where they are needed most — for scholarships, quality instruction, academic resources, new technology and more.”

The school’s annual fund provides a crucial source of unrestricted dollars that provide a margin of excellence in meeting the needs of students and faculty, said Magnus H. Johnsson, executive director of external affairs and development for the School of Education.

“This challenge grant will allow us to address the increasing need we have for unrestricted dollars and to encourage new support from our alumni,” he said, stressing that alumni participation will be crucial to the success of the challenge grant.

To learn more about the challenge grant or to make a gift to the School of Education, contact Magnus Johnson, executive director of external affairs and development, at (804) 827-1363 or johnssonm@vcu.edu. Gifts also can be made online at www.givenow.vcu.edu/education.

Grant spurs support for VCU School of Education

New staff members join advancement team

Sarah E. Amick
Development Associate
VCU Libraries
(804) 828-4640
samick@vcu.edu
Formerly executive assistant to the director of Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences

Ashley L. Dow
Assistant Director of Special Events
VCU Massey Cancer Center
(804) 828-0883
aldow@vcu.edu
Formerly media relations manager at Griffin & Company Inc. in Washington, D.C.

Justin P. Jannuzzi (M.S. ’07)
Assistant Director of Ticket Operations and Donor Relations
Department of Intercollegiate Athletics
(804) 828-2452
jannuzzijp@vcu.edu
Formerly development intern at the Wolfpack Club of North Carolina State University
The Power of Personal Philanthropy

The Department of Pastoral Care at the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center is celebrating quite a few anniversaries in 2008. This year marks the 65th anniversary of the program, with the first chaplain joining MCV Hospital in 1943. It is also the 50th anniversary of the clinical pastoral education training program, a component of VCU’s Program in Patient Counseling.

Now the latest milestone is taking shape, and soon the department will have another reason to celebrate. The 34-foot-by-24-foot chapel at the VCU Medical Center, which has remained unchanged since the hospital opened in 1982, is undergoing renovations. Ken Faulkner (Cert. ’85), director of pastoral care, finds it fitting that the renovations have sprung up in the midst of these anniversaries, but he admits that it’s a happy coincidence, explaining, “It just happened that way.”

The chapel is currently a rectangular room with chairs arranged in rows facing an altar table and podium. Until recently, the chapel also featured a small piano and an organ. The combination of these elements, Faulkner said, “gave the feeling of entering a Protestant church building.”

With the renovations, Faulkner said, the aim is to create an interfaith chapel where people from a variety of backgrounds, philosophies and religions can all feel comfortable and welcome. Plans call for the renovated chapel to be round in shape and free of any religious icons, he said. Natural materials and earth tones will dominate, and the rows of chairs will be replaced with versatile seating that can be rearranged and even moved out of the space if necessary.

The result will be a space that can shift to accommodate the needs of people from all spiritual backgrounds, he said.

“We really wanted to create a more spiritually inviting atmosphere, a place of quiet and reflection,” Faulkner said.

Chaplain Ann Charlescraft (Cert. ’96), who also is manager of Bereavement Services for the VCU Medical Center, has been working since June 2007 with the pastoral care department and the 15-member Interfaith Chapel Renovation Committee to raise $100,000 through donations.

“The primary role of the committee was the design of the chapel, to ensure that the chapel would truly be a sacred space for all traditions,” she said. “This project began as a desire to bring together the health system and the community as a reminder that we are all connected through spirit and responsible to one another as human beings for the care of all of creation.”

The committee is made up of VCU Health System and university employees as well as community members, including Alan Jones, a minister at First Baptist Church, and Annette Kahn, president of the Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond.

Renovations began in August, when $50,000 had been raised, and are scheduled to be completed in December.

Jill Mercier (M.S. ’93), VCU Health System patient safety officer, believes having an interfaith space is especially important, and that’s part of the reason she decided to make a gift to support the renovations.
“When I think about it from a Christian perspective and how much chaplain support has helped with the Christian patients that I have seen — all patients have a need for this, which means a more interfaith venue is really needed,” Mercier said. “Our health system serves and encompasses so many denominations. The need is huge.”

Faulkner is thankful that donations have come in from sources throughout the community, including from hospital patients and their families, hospital staff members, individuals giving in memory of their loved ones, churches and businesses. That spirit of giving, he said, reflects the inclusive, open-to-all nature of the chapel.

“There should be ownership and participation with people we serve in the community,” he said.

A book in the renovated chapel will recognize all donors. In addition, a giving wall, honoring those who contributed $500 or more, went up in August but has room for more names.

Karen Gill (M.S.W. ’95), director of education and support for Nelsen Funeral Home, has worked with the pastoral care department. Having firsthand knowledge of the importance of the chapel and the people behind it, she personally chose to help fund the renovations.

“I would like to think that the donor wall would be filled with names, that the support would be very widespread, and if people enter the space to see how many people supported that effort, then it upholds a sense of community,” she said.

To make a donation to the VCU Medical Center chapel renovations, contact chaplain Ann Charlescraft at (804) 828-4661 or acharles@vcu.edu.

Versatile seating and rounded walls, as shown in renderings here, replace the previous rectangular configuration to provide a chapel space that can shift to accommodate the needs of people from all backgrounds.

Live from New York, it’s the VCU Brandcenter

The Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter welcomed more than 200 alumni, friends and donors to the Friars Club in New York City this past spring. At the “Get to know VCU Brandcenter” event, hosted by Yahoo! and the Interactive Advertising Bureau, Director Rick Boyko introduced the Brandcenter to the New York media, agency and marketing communities and discussed how the award-winning graduate advertising program is helping marketers, media and agencies reinvent their business.

Media and marketers turn out at the Friars Club in New York City for the “Get to know VCU Brandcenter” event.
The Power of Personal Philanthropy

Sculptor and painter Annie Rhodes Lee (B.F.A. ’75) values a quality education, and she attributes this to the teachings of her family.

“There was a saying that I heard in my family over and over: ‘There is one thing that we can give you that no one can take away from you — a good education,’” Lee said.

Her family always stressed the importance of a solid formal education, yet also made a point to nurture her ability to appreciate the beauty and complexity of art and nature, she said. She wanted to pass along this enthusiasm for education and culture to a new generation. To foster that dream, in December 2007, Lee created the McLeod Scholarship in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts.

The McLeod Scholarship will provide $5,000 a year to a full-time undergraduate student enrolled in any department of the School of the Arts. The first award will be given to an incoming freshman in the fall semester of 2010.

“This generous gift from Ms. Lee, a talented artist and generous alumna, will help us to be as competitive as possible in attracting and retaining the most talented students to VCU Arts,” said Jayne Dolton Shaw, associate dean for development in the School of the Arts.

“Scholarships are among our highest priorities. We are very grateful for what she is making possible.”

Lee established the scholarship to recognize the influences of her grandparents, Julia and Lee McLeod, and her parents, Dorothy and Jack Rhodes, in her life.

“Their inquisitive and observant natures were always opening my eyes to some detail in nature that would shift my perspective or some thought that would challenge my perception of things,” she said.

Lee and her husband, Stuart (B.S. ’73; M.S. ’79), have been longtime supporters of their alma mater. Lee reflects with great fondness on her days in the sculpture department in VCU’s School of the Arts.

“There was a cooperative spirit in the department where people freely shared formulas and techniques and ideas, allowing a sense of experimentation to flourish,” she said.

Because she has recently returned to working with clay, Lee has been thinking back to her time spent working with sculptor Jack Earl, an associate professor of art at VCU from 1972 to 1978. Lee credits her experiences in the School of the Arts at VCU with laying the foundation for her to develop her own artistic voice. She hopes that this scholarship will help another promising young artist explore his or her own potential under the guidance of instructors like Earl.

“Hopefully, this scholarship will offer just enough opportunity for a young art student to gain an understanding of how their work could enrich our cultural experience of the world,” she said.

For more information about making a gift to the School of the Arts, contact Jayne Dolton Shaw, associate dean for development in the School of the Arts, at (804) 827-4676 or jdshaw@vcu.edu.
Scholarships help recruit star education student

Though she’s only 19 years old, Virginia Commonwealth University sophomore Samantha Jacobs has a clear sense of direction. She knew as a high school student in Bethesda, Md., that she wanted to pursue a career in community health education, and now she’s following that dream at VCU.

Jacobs’ passion for public health began when she got a job as an assistant in the Bethesda dental office of Dr. Usa Bunnag. Before long, Jacobs began tackling administrative tasks for the nonprofit organization that Bunnag founded, Smiles on Wings. The group was established in 2003 to fund and organize dental and medical humanitarian missions to Bunnag’s native Thailand. In the summer of 2006, Jacobs joined Bunnag on one of her medical and dental missions. Before leaving, Jacobs held a Beanie Baby drive at her high school, collecting more than 800 toys to take to the kids she would encounter in Thailand.

During her three weeks in Thailand, Jacobs saw firsthand how much of a difference she could make.

“It was really like something out of National Geographic — huts on a mountainside. I could not fathom that this was actually how someone else lives,” Jacobs said. “But it was an important realization for me.”

A standout in high school, Jacobs received the Deans’ Scholarship for the 2007-08 academic year as an incoming freshman. As an out-of-state student, that made VCU more appealing.

Both of Jacobs’ parents, Philip H. Jacobs (B.F.A. ’79) and Marjorie Lee Jacobs (B.F.A. ’78), are VCU graduates, and she said she has always loved Richmond and VCU’s urban campus. But the deciding factor in Jacobs’ choice to come to VCU was the community health education concentration in the School of Education’s health, physical education and exercise science degree program. After learning about the program, Jacobs called Joann Richardson, Ph.D., an associate professor in the school’s Department of Health and Human Performance, and became even more excited about the program.

Now Jacobs also has earned the School of Education Alumni Board Scholarship for the 2008-09 academic year.

“The School of Education Alumni Board is a committed group of alumni who work to help further the mission of the school through outreach and fundraising activities, including an annual golf tournament, grant-writing workshop and annual alumni awards event,” said Magnus H. Johnsson, executive director of external affairs and development for the School of Education.

The scholarship was created in 2000 to provide aid to deserving graduate and undergraduate education students, he said.

“Scholarships are such a motivating factor,” Jacobs said, explaining that earning a scholarship drives her to succeed — to show that the investment in her education was worthwhile. “VCU wants me to be an exceptional student here and has given me the chance to do that.”

For more information about making a donation to the School of Education, contact Magnus H. Johnsson, executive director of external affairs and development, at (804) 827-1363 or johnssonm@vcu.edu.
World tennis pro James Blake visited the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center before playing in the AnthemLIVE! charity tournament Sept. 12 at the VCU Siegel Center. Blake, who lost his father to cancer in 2004, donates his time for the event, which is sponsored by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia and has raised more than $2.5 million for cancer research.

Dr. Gordon D. Ginder, director of the VCU Massey Cancer Center, greets tennis star James Blake and Scott Golden, director of public relations for Anthem, during a visit to Massey.

Reception honors university’s most loyal donors

Virginia Commonwealth University President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., welcomed more than 450 members of the President’s Club, the Founders’ Society, the VCU Heritage Society and the MCV Society to a September reception at the Country Club of Virginia. He thanked them for their generosity and devotion to the university, its programs and its students.

“I said 18 years ago that community partnerships would be a hallmark of my presidency — strong collaboration with business partners, our neighbors, our alumni and city, state and local governments. I am extremely proud of what we have all achieved together,” Dr. Trani said.

VCU Board of Visitors Rector Tom Rosenthal emphasized the role private philanthropy has played in the evolution of the university and recognized the outstanding leadership provided by Dr. Trani during his tenure.

“All of this could not have been done without building relationships with community members. Today, [Dr. Trani] leads a better and stronger VCU, and along the way he built an even stronger VCU family,” he said.

This event marked the last President’s Reception hosted by Dr. Trani, who will retire July 1, 2009.

The VCU President’s Club recognizes the university’s most loyal, annual supporters. Individuals whose gifts total $5,000 or more or organizations whose gifts total $10,000 or more during one fiscal year are offered membership in the President’s Club. The Founders’ Society honors those generous individuals, corporations and foundations who have made cumulative commitments of $100,000 or more to the university or associated foundations. The MCV Society and the VCU Heritage Society recognize donors who have made provisions for the university or the VCU Medical Center in their estate plans.
New nursing group helps young alumni reconnect

In late August, about 25 alumni from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing gathered at the Capital Ale House in downtown Richmond to catch up with one another and talk about their profession.

The gathering was the first event for a new group in the school, Nursing GOLD (Graduates of the Last Decade). The GOLD group is geared toward baccalaureate graduates of the past decade and offers periodic, brief, informal events. Next up: plans to attend a VCU basketball game in the winter, with more events to come.

“Young alumni are often so busy launching their careers, getting married and starting families, for example, that it is difficult to get them to come back for a weekend class reunion,” said Kelly Gotschalk, assistant director of development in the School of Nursing. “We try to hold events either on or close to campus to bring these alumni back together for fun and socializing. We hope that the GOLD group will keep our more recent alumni better connected to the VCU School of Nursing.”

Governor makes appointments to VCU boards

Gov. Tim Kaine recently appointed several new members and reappointed others to the Virginia Commonwealth University Board of Visitors and the VCU Health System Authority Board of Directors.

Reappointed to the BOV:
• J. Alfred Broaddus Jr. of Richmond, retired former president of the Federal Reserve of Richmond
• Brian K. Jackson (B.A. ’84) of Richmond, vice president and general counsel of Ukrop’s Super Market Inc.
• Thomas G. Snead Jr. (B.S. ’76) of Richmond, retired

New to the BOV:
• Thomas W. McCandlish of Richmond, chairman of McCandlish Holton PC

Reappointed to the VCU Health System Authority board:
• The Rev. Leonard L. Edloe of Hanover County, president and CEO of Edloe’s Pharmacy

New to the VCU Health System Authority board:
• Dr. PonJola Coney of Richmond, senior associate dean of faculty affairs at the VCU School of Medicine
• Mark R. Merhige of Richmond, president of Shockoe Properties Inc.
The Power of Personal Philanthropy

The four-story atrium in Snead Hall looked a lot like a pep rally when about 75 alumni and friends of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business gathered in September to meet the Rams’ basketball coaches and get an early shot at purchasing tickets for the upcoming season.

For many alumni, this was their first visit to the state-of-the-art building, which opened in January and was named for Tom and Vickie Snead, 1976 graduates of the business school.

The highlight of the event, which was co-sponsored by the VCU Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and the School of Business, was question-and-answer sessions with Beth Cunningham, women’s head basketball coach, and Anthony Grant, men’s head basketball coach.

Business alumni go one-on-one with coaches

The four-story atrium in Snead Hall looked a lot like a pep rally when about 75 alumni and friends of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business gathered in September to meet the Rams’ basketball coaches and get an early shot at purchasing tickets for the upcoming season.

For many alumni, this was their first visit to the state-of-the-art building, which opened in January and was named for Tom and Vickie Snead, 1976 graduates of the business school.

The highlight of the event, which was co-sponsored by the VCU Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and the School of Business, was question-and-answer sessions with Beth Cunningham, women’s head basketball coach, and Anthony Grant, men’s head basketball coach.

George E. Hoffer, Ph.D., had about 50 alumni and friends of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business on the edge of their seats as he spoke about the drastic effects today’s economic turmoil, cascading fuel prices and changes in consumer behavior have wrought on the U.S. automobile industry. Hoffer, a professor of economics at the business school, spoke in September for the Investors’ Circle Forum.

Hoffer is beloved by his students, especially for his enthusiastic teaching style, and is frequently quoted in the national media because of his in-depth knowledge and expertise on the transportation industries.

Many who attended the forum, such as William M. Ginther (B.S. ’69; M.S. ’74), had studied under Hoffer.

“Dr. Hoffer is the instructor who best held my attention when I attended evening classes at VCU and, just like tonight, I looked forward to hearing what he had to say and never grow tired of hearing him share his insights,” said Ginther, chairman of the VCU School of Business Advancement Advisory Committee.

The Investors’ Circle includes donors and friends who support the annual fund of the School of Business with gifts of $500 or more. The annual fund provides vital unrestricted funding for the dean and the school.

Professor shares economic insights with donors

George E. Hoffer, Ph.D., had about 50 alumni and friends of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business on the edge of their seats as he spoke about the drastic effects today’s economic turmoil, cascading fuel prices and changes in consumer behavior have wrought on the U.S. automobile industry. Hoffer, a professor of economics at the business school, spoke in September for the Investors’ Circle Forum.

Hoffer is beloved by his students, especially for his enthusiastic teaching style, and is frequently quoted in the national media because of his in-depth knowledge and expertise on the transportation industries.

Many who attended the forum, such as William M. Ginther (B.S. ’69; M.S. ’74), had studied under Hoffer.

“For the first time, I looked forward to hearing what he had to say and never grow tired of hearing him share his insights,” said Ginther, chairman of the VCU School of Business Advancement Advisory Committee.

The Investors’ Circle includes donors and friends who support the annual fund of the School of Business with gifts of $500 or more. The annual fund provides vital unrestricted funding for the dean and the school.
**In other giving news**

- Dr. Ralph S. Riffenburgh (M.D. ’47) has pledged $250,000 to Virginia Commonwealth University to establish an endowed professorship in his name in the School of Medicine’s Department of Ophthalmology. His ultimate goal is to enhance the department that helped shape his career by attracting top-notch professors now and in years to come. Endowed professorships help attract and retain outstanding scholars and researchers by providing supplemental salary funding, support for faculty projects and other initiatives.

- The VCU College of Humanities and Sciences received a $50,000 gift from Golde L. Feldman to establish the Melvin V. Lubman Scholarship, in memory of her husband. The Lubman Scholarship is the first undergraduate scholarship established in the Department of Psychology. Lubman taught in the department for many years and was dedicated to his undergraduate students, helping them not only with their studies, but also in some cases providing financial support — buying groceries or books — when he could. The first scholarship was awarded this fall.

- Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph H. Bunzl donated $25,000 to establish the Murry DePillars Piano Scholarship in the VCU School of the Arts. DePillars served as dean of the arts school for almost 20 years and died in June. Through this gift, the Bunzls cement the legacy of excellence in teaching and mentorship DePillars exhibited during his tenure. The Department of Music hopes the scholarship, the first endowed award in the piano program, will help attract accomplished students.

**Ram Spirit Walk excites incoming freshman class**

More than a thousand Virginia Commonwealth University freshmen gathered in Monroe Park on Aug. 19 for a pep rally and the first Ram Spirit Walk into the New Student Convocation to kick off the 2008-09 academic year.

The pep rally, emceed by Aaron Gilchrist (B.S. ’03), co-anchor of NBC-12 Today and member of the VCU Alumni Association board, featured the VCU cheerleading squad and the Clover Hill High School marching band. Gilchrist taught the new students the VCU fight song, and the band led the crowd through Monroe Park to the Landmark Theater.

The rally, co-sponsored by the VCU Office of Alumni Relations and Barnes & Noble @ VCU, was part of a week-long series of Welcome Week activities that helps students get acclimated to the college environment before the start of classes.