The Power of Personal Philanthropy
Winter 2009
www.advancement.vcu.edu
The Massey Fundraising Challenge offers Ukrop’s Monument Avenue 10k participants the chance to walk or run in support of cancer research. In 2008, more than 1,800 people took the challenge and raised more than $500,000.

Massey team fights cancer, one step at a time

Dr. Jeff Blackburn (D.D.S ’85) will never forget the day he was diagnosed with cancer. Blackburn was at his Midlothian dental practice when his doctor called to tell him the lump he had discovered in his neck the previous week was malignant.

From that moment forward, Blackburn’s office staff, along with his patients, friends and family, has been by his side supporting him throughout his treatment.

When he first discovered the lump, Blackburn asked one of his dental patients, Dr. Bob Fischer, to check it out. When Fischer examined the lump, he was immediately concerned and directed Blackburn to Dr. Laurence DiNardo, an ear, nose and throat specialist at the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center.

DiNardo determined that Blackburn had a squamous cell carcinoma, the second-most common type of skin cancer, and he quickly began a course of treatment that included seven weeks of daily radiation treatments and weekly chemotherapy at the VCU Massey Cancer Center.

“During the diagnosis and treatment process, the doctors and nurses at Massey Cancer Center were wonderful. They worked out a treatment schedule for me that accommodated my work demands and allowed me to be treated at Massey’s Stony Point Medical Center, closer to my dental practice,” Blackburn said.

After his treatment ended in July 2007, Blackburn began running to get himself back in shape and competed in his first triathlon that August. In April 2008, he ran in the Ukrop’s Monument Avenue 10k and participated in the Massey Cancer Center Fundraising Challenge.

A charitable partner of the Ukrop’s Monument Avenue 10k, the Massey Cancer Center initiated the Massey Fundraising Challenge, which allows 10k participants to run for a cause — cancer survival. In 2008, 112 teams and 1,816 participants raised more than $500,000 to support the work performed at Massey.

This year, Massey hopes to raise $750,000 with at least 3,000 people participating in the 2009 Massey Fundraising Challenge.

People have different reasons for participating in the challenge. Some do it to honor a lost loved one. Others, like Blackburn, take part to celebrate their triumph over cancer.

“When I was diagnosed with cancer, I looked at it as an opportunity to overcome the biggest challenge one can face — life or death,” Blackburn said. “Even through all of the treatments, losing 21 pounds and the incredible pain in my throat, I kept telling myself that this was an opportunity to see what I was truly made of. I was going to meet this challenge.”

see Massey, continued on Page 5
The Power of Personal Philanthropy

When Danny Phillips finishes his studies at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing in spring 2009, he’ll leave a huge void.

“Obviously I knew when I hired Danny that he would be graduating this spring, but now the reality is setting in,” said Sandra K. Voll (M.S. ’94; Cert. ’97), director of the Clinical Learning Center at the VCU School of Nursing where Phillips plays a leadership role as a student worker. “Danny Phillips is the best student worker we have ever had.”

A football player in high school in Winchester, Va., Phillips knew he wanted to pursue a career in health care but didn’t have a clear direction. He started in premed at the University of Alabama. After two years, he decided to move home to Virginia to be closer to family and weighed his transfer options. He considered the University of Virginia and VCU, deciding VCU was a better fit. And, clearly, he made the right choice.

“VCU helped me really start focusing on my education,” Phillips said. “All I’m trying to accomplish now is directly because of VCU.”

Those goals include pursuing a master’s in nursing with a specialization in nursing administration and leadership, followed by a Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice, both at VCU.

After graduation, he hopes to work in the Surgical Trauma Intensive Care Unit at the VCU Medical Center. His wife, Aimee, graduated from the School of Nursing in December and now works in the medical center’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Both of them, he said, really like the patient population they encounter as nurses at the VCU Medical Center.

“You treat people who are having a tough time, either financially or socially, and you really make a difference,” Phillips said.

He also likes the atmosphere of teaching that is pervasive at the hospital. “I can spread what I know to others,” he said. “People are always passing down knowledge in this environment of learning.”

Voll touts Phillips’ ability to share his expertise, especially in the simulation laboratory, not only with students but also with faculty members.

“He is well liked, respected and sought out for his opinion, teaching and assistance by students and faculty,” she said. “Danny has a quiet, respectful way of caring that touches most every faculty member who interacts with him.”

Phillips’ respectfulness also is clear when he talks about the scholarships he has received, which have helped him pursue his dreams with less financial pressure.

The School of Nursing awarded him the Theresa A. Thomas Scholarship for the 2006-07 academic year and the H. Vaughan and Margaret D. Belcher Scholarship for 2007-08 and 2008-09. But he’s most proud of being named a Eugene P. Trani Scholar, the highest honor bestowed on students at the university.
The Trani Scholars program was created in 2006 by an initial $1 million gift from longtime benefactors Dianne and C. Kenneth Wright. The Wrights wanted to honor the vision, leadership and accomplishments of VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., as he neared retirement. This past fall, 10 of the $5,000 scholarships were awarded.

When choosing recipients, the Wrights and a blue-ribbon selection committee look for areas of need, Dianne Wright said.

“As our society changes, so do our needs,” she explained. “We looked at nursing and biomedical engineering, for example, and really saw that we could make a difference. We found students who showed amazing promise in those areas.”

For Phillips, the honor is hard to wrap his head around.

“Anybody who knows VCU knows Dr. Trani. Having his name attached to the scholarship I earned … it just seems so prestigious,” he said. “I’ve done a lot to get to this point, but wow, I’m a Trani Scholar. Once you see his name, you have to feel proud about it.”

As for the Wrights, they hold a special place in Phillips’ heart.

“They are amazing people for the things they’ve done for VCU. Once I met them, I could tell how much they really care about VCU and about helping students get through school and making the best out of VCU,” he said. “I am very thankful to VCU and to the Wrights for what they’ve helped me accomplish.”

To make a gift to the Trani Scholars program, contact Anne Jacobson, associate vice president for university advancement, at (804) 828-1223 or adjacobson@vcu.edu. To make a gift to the School of Nursing, contact James Parrish, director of development, at (804) 828-5172 or jtparrish@vcu.edu.

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Blackburn’s fundraising team included friends, family and his office staff — the very people who had helped him get through his difficult diagnosis and treatment.

“After they saw what I went through, they were really interested in doing something,” Blackburn said.

In the end, Blackburn and his team raised $1,000 for cancer research. This year, he plans to raise even more money for the cause, getting the word out about the Massey Fundraising Challenge through his dental practice and local businesses as well as the ball teams he coaches.

“This year I’m trying to do it as big as I can,” he said. “Running in the 10k and being a part of the Massey Fundraising Challenge was one of the best experiences I have ever had.

“I want to do this every year. I will run or walk that thing as long as I am able — because I’m alive.”

To learn more about the 2009 Massey Fundraising Challenge, call (804) 828-0883 or visit www.run4massey.org.

Cancer survivor Dr. Jeff Blackburn challenges others to support cancer research through the Ukrop’s Monument Avenue 10k and the Massey Fundraising Challenge.
Jeff Hernandez is a proud member of the Virginia Commonwealth University men’s track team but acknowledges that his sport doesn’t draw a lot of attention or support.

“We’re a part of VCU Athletics and represent the school, but we don’t have an arena or the revenue,” said Hernandez, a junior majoring in business administration.

But that doesn’t squelch his enthusiasm; he just works harder to get the word out about the need to support student-athletes.

Recently, Hernandez and teammates Grant Matthews and Chris Derose helped the VCU Department of Intercollegiate Athletics kick off a new student-based fundraising initiative with a pizza night at the Stuart C. Siegel Center.

Created by VCU Athletics, the new Student Ram Athletic Fund allows current students to support their favorite VCU athletic teams by making a $25 donation. The money raised by the student fund will be used to support all athletic programs, to purchase equipment and to fund travel and recruiting.

With their donation, students become members of the Student Ram Athletic Fund, which gives them early entry to men’s home basketball games and discounts at local restaurants and vendors. More than 80 of the 250 students who attended the October event made a gift on the spot. Students could donate using RamBucks, which is a pre-paid, stored-value account that is part of students’ ID card.

Liane Barcelona, a junior majoring in biology, joined the Student Ram Athletic Fund at the Siegel Center pizza night and is eager to reap the benefits of her gift.

“I always liked going to basketball games, and there’s always a lot of people there — I’d love to get in early,” she said.

Other students were driven to join for different reasons. Dustin Dubois, a first-year student in the VCU SportsCenter graduate program, signed up because “I thought it’d be a good way to help out the school a bit. It’s a good way to give back.”

Justin Jannuzzi (M.S. ’07), assistant director of ticketing and donor relations for athletics, hopes that the student fund will introduce students to giving and that their membership will be the beginning of strong relationships between VCU Athletics and these future alumni.

In that spirit of building relationships, Jannuzzi has teamed up with the Rowdy Rams, a VCU spirit club. Three of the group’s members, Kevin Woods, Mark Turner and Patrick Wood, also serve on the Student Ram Athletic Fund Advisory Board.

In many ways, the Student Ram Athletic Fund initiative, Woods said, is fulfilling one of the goals of the Rowdy Rams — to allow students to support their sports teams directly.

“We have a lot of student spirit and that’s what they wanted,” he added.

Count Hernandez among those student-athletes who are grateful for the support of the VCU student body.

“Not all sports generate money. This helps out the sports that don’t make as much money,” Hernandez said.

For more information about the Student Ram Athletic Fund, contact Justin Jannuzzi, assistant director for ticketing and donor relations, at (804) 828-2452 or jannuzzijd@vcu.edu.
Bob Scarpelli began his career as an advertising copywriter and rose through the ranks to become chairman and chief creative officer of DDB Worldwide.

“In 2009, I will celebrate my 32nd anniversary with our company. I started when I was 11,” Scarpelli joked.

As head of New York-based DDB, one of the highest-revenue advertising agencies in the world, Scarpelli has helped direct more than $150,000 in support to Virginia Commonwealth University’s Brandcenter, which has earned a reputation for training the best advertising talent of the future. In addition, Scarpelli and his wife, Janice, have supported the Brandcenter personally by naming a classroom in the center’s new building.

Scarpelli’s support for the center was spurred by his friendship with Rick Boyko, who took the helm of the Brandcenter in 2003 after a hugely successful advertising career.

The pair have been friends since 1997, when they served on the jury of the Chicago International Film Festival.

“I always admired his work, and we got to know each other, our wives got to know each other and we’ve been great friends since,” Scarpelli said. “I got involved with VCU when Rick decided to retire, if that’s the word, and move to VCU. He asked me to be a board member off the bat, and I was pleased and honored.”

Scarpelli has served on the center’s board of directors since 2003 and has visited the Brandcenter many times.

“Bob was one of the first to understand the significant value and purpose of the program. When I took over, I asked him to help out, and he’s been a great supporter,” Boyko said.

DDB Worldwide and the VCU Brandcenter have a “strong working relationship,” Scarpelli said. In addition to providing funding for the Brandcenter, DDB offers the Bill Burnbach Minority Scholarship to VCU students.

“I want DDB to be known as a company that’s attracting the most talented young people to our industry,” Scarpelli said. “It’s our obligation and responsibility to keep finding people with new ideas, people who can look at things in new and fresh ways. Young talents, people with ideas, are the lifeblood of our industry.

“Programs like VCU’s Brandcenter hone and direct those talents. Creativity on demand is what we do, and the Brandcenter is really preparing kids to come in, hit the ground running and really contribute right away.”

Gifts from DDB and other corporate donors allow the VCU Brandcenter to continue to reflect the evolutionary nature of the advertising and communications business by continuing its mission to be “navigators of change” for the industry. Financial support is crucial to enhance academic programs, facilities and student scholarship offerings, said Beth Harrington, senior director of development for the Brandcenter.

“Corporate philanthropy really makes a difference in our endowment campaign, in terms of dollars and as an endorsement that we are indeed supplying the industry with the future talents and leaders,” Harrington said. “We are grateful for the friendship of DDB Worldwide and the Scarpellis especially.”

To make a gift to the VCU Brandcenter, contact Beth Harrington, senior director of development, at (804) 828-8384 or ekharrington@vcu.edu.
This fall, Virginia Commonwealth University honored its most outstanding students and faculty members as well as donors who support endowed scholarships and faculty funds at three events.

**Investiture Dinner**

In October, the university held its first Investiture Dinner, which honored faculty members who hold endowed chairs and professorships.

About 65 faculty members were recognized by VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D.; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Stephen D. Gottfredson, Ph.D.; and Dr. Sheldon Retchin, vice president for health sciences. Each faculty member was awarded an engraved medallion. These medallions are symbols of the university’s most prestigious academic positions and are worn at academic gatherings and ceremonies.

“Gifts of chairs and professorships have a profound impact on the university: They help us to attract the best faculty in their fields, to support world-class research, to promote faculty development, to provide excellent patient care and ultimately to provide unique and challenging learning opportunities for our students,” Dr. Trani said.

**MCV Campus Endowed Scholarship Brunch**

In early November, about 270 donors, students, faculty and staff gathered for the fourth annual MCV Campus Endowed Scholarship Brunch at The Jefferson Hotel.

MCV Foundation President Bill Kotti thanked donors for their ongoing commitment to providing affordable higher education through scholarships and highlighted the number of student recipients who are following in the footsteps of their relatives as students on the MCV Campus.

“We’re proud to have so many alumni here with us...”
today who, through gifts to scholarship funds, are helping a new generation of students achieve their dreams of a career in the health sciences,” he said. “These legacies contribute a sense of tradition, heritage and continuity on the medical campus. Having children and grandchildren attend VCU is one of the strongest expressions of pride and confidence an alumnus can make.”

Nick Hall, who graduated in 2008 from the School of Pharmacy and who received the Henry Addington Academy of Independent Pharmacy Scholarship, and Risa Odum, a fourth-year student in the School of Dentistry and recipient of the Willie D. Crockett Scholarship, told the crowd how earning a scholarship has made a difference in their lives.

Monroe Park Campus Endowed Scholarship Dinner

About 330 student scholarship recipients, donors, faculty and staff enjoyed dinner at the Commonwealth Club for the 10th annual Monroe Park Campus Endowed Scholarship Dinner, which was co-sponsored by the School of Business Foundation, the School of Engineering Foundation and the VCU Foundation.

The November event featured remarks from Ian Bennett, a junior business major who won the Thalhimer Family Scholarship, and Stevara Haley-Clark, a senior majoring in social work who is the recipient of the Rita Schleuter Merit Scholarship.

Paul Rocheleau, president of the engineering foundation board, thanked the assembled donors and urged the students to get involved.

“There has never been a better time to be part of the VCU community,” he said.

Saks shopping raises money for cancer research

More than 200 shoppers headed to Saks Fifth Avenue in October to peruse the racks, view special trunk shows from Kay Unger and Roberto Coin and enjoy culinary delights and cocktails from local chefs as part of Saks Key to the Cure – The Charity Shopping Event of the Year. Saks donates a portion of all sales made through the charity shopping weekend to support women’s cancer research at the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center.
One day in 2000, Virginia Commonwealth University President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., noticed an unusual entry on his calendar for a meeting with Inger V. Rice. He had no idea why she would want to see him.

That afternoon she appeared in his office with a grand gift and, in her eyes, a conundrum.

First, Rice told Dr. Trani that she planned to donate the proceeds from a charitable trust to VCU. But, she said, she also owned 343 acres on the James River in Charles City County and she had no plan for the land. “Would you want that, too?” she asked.

Dr. Trani thought about it for a nanosecond and gave a resounding “Yes!”

Eight years later, the pair met once again, this time to dedicate the Walter L. Rice Education Building at the VCU Inger and Walter Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences. They each recounted parts of the story of the VCU Rice Center’s creation at the event in October.

The 4,900-square-foot Walter L. Rice Education Building, named for Rice’s late husband, houses lecture and laboratory rooms for classes, a conference room and administrative offices. The building was constructed with a goal of achieving the highest sustainability rating possible, LEED platinum.

“This is all because of the vision of one lady of Richmond who thought this land could become something more,” Dr. Trani said.

Rice, in turn, lauded Dr. Trani for his support that morning back in 2000. “With a dream I went to Dr. Trani and he immediately had imagination and then he had enthusiasm,” she said. “It is fantastic to see all the work that has been done. The building is practical, architecturally beautiful and it will last forever.”

The education building completes the first phase of development at the property, which VCU uses for research, education and outreach. The building will serve as an educational tool for faculty, students and the community at large to illustrate the benefits of sustainable building practices.

“This is one of the most impressive field stations in the country right now,” Dr. Trani said. “This beautiful, eco-friendly building will further enable VCU to establish itself as a leader in large-river ecosystem research.

“It also showcases VCU’s dedication to the environment and to the education of students, whether they are at VCU now or in the middle and high schools in the surrounding communities.”

In September, the VCU Rice Center saw the addition of the education pavilion, an outdoor classroom adjacent to the education building that VCU named for Drs. Richard J. and Carol L. Rezba and Dominion.

To make a gift to the VCU Rice Center, contact Catherine Dahl, director of development for VCU Life Sciences, at (804) 827-7372 or ccdahl@vcu.edu.
Catholic studies chair reiterates global message

After almost 30 years, the Most Rev. Walter F. Sullivan was nearing retirement as the 11th bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

Members of his congregation at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, near the Virginia Commonwealth University campus, wanted to give him a gift to mark the occasion.

VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., called together fellow parishioners to discuss the possibilities, recalled John Thomas West IV.

“We met with President Trani, and he relayed that he had spoken with Bishop Sullivan. Instead of a gift of an automobile or a vacation, Bishop Sullivan said what he would like to see come to fruition was a chair in Catholic studies established at VCU,” West said.

That idea thrilled West.

“But then Dr. Trani told me how much it would cost: $1 million!”

Despite the daunting goal, West was honored to assist in that effort and started making calls.

“I was pleasantly surprised … we ended up with 37 pledges and a little over $1 million,” he said. “A large number of those pledges came from individuals who were not Roman Catholics but just were friends of Bishop Sullivan. Everyone that I spoke with willingly participated.”

Now, the first holder of the Bishop Walter Sullivan Chair in Catholic Studies in VCU’s School of World Studies has arrived on campus.

R. Andrew Chesnut, Ph.D., is an internationally recognized expert on Latin American religious history and served as a professor of history at the University of Houston. Chesnut hopes to enlighten students about Catholicism and Christianity in general through his teaching and research.

“This was a great opportunity to develop Catholic studies in a global context and at a large public university. Catholic studies must not be confined to Catholic colleges,” he said.

That type of thinking is exactly what West envisioned when he started raising money for the chair.

“Regardless of what faith you practice, everyone is equal in God’s eyes, and I want to learn more about different religions. So if I do, I’m sure others do, too,” he said. “I appreciate the fact that VCU now offers Judaic studies, Catholic studies and Islamic studies. In world events, in politics and for your own knowledge, if you can listen to and understand what others believe … that’s so important in life, especially today in our world.”

Chesnut clearly admires Sullivan, is honored to be the first holder of this chair and is grateful to those who made it possible.

“This is an excellent opportunity to carry on the global and ecumenical perspective of Bishop Sullivan,” he said. “Faculty support funds are immeasurably important! They enable professors to disseminate research in their fields to wider sectors of the community and provide faculty with greater resources to further develop their own research.”

To make a gift to the Bishop Walter Sullivan Chair in Catholic Studies or the School of World Studies, contact Lois Badey, director of development for the College of Humanities and Sciences, at (804) 827-0856 or labadey@vcu.edu.
In the world of chemistry, Lidia M. Vallarino, Ph.D., is a pioneer. The Virginia Commonwealth University professor first moved to the U.S. from Milano, Italy, in the early 1960s to join her husband, James V. Quagliano, also a chemist.

After the move, Vallarino had a difficult time finding a teaching position. Her husband was a professor in chemistry at Florida State University at that time.

“I couldn’t get any kind of academic teaching or research appointment in Tallahassee, even though I had been an associate professor at the University of Milano, a high-level institution,” she said. “There were so few women in U.S. chemistry then.”

Because she couldn’t teach, Vallarino worked with her husband as an unpaid postdoctoral assistant and devoted herself to publishing in her subject of expertise: inorganic chemistry. Often writing with her husband, Vallarino made a name for herself that way. The couple’s first book, a general chemistry textbook, was well-regarded and generated income for the family. Instead of spending the money, Vallarino and Quagliano put it away to pay for college for their three children. To Vallarino, education and creative efforts have always been more valuable than material concerns.

When her husband left FSU to accept an endowed chair position at Auburn University in Alabama, he spoke so highly of his wife that she, too, was offered a position. She came to VCU after her husband retired.

“I have found the atmosphere here at VCU to be extraordinarily stimulating and satisfying — a challenge and a joy,” she said.

Vallarino was 50 when she arrived at VCU, and as she got older, it became more difficult to find grants to support her research, she said. So she answered the need for funding herself, allocating more than $100,000 of her own money to the Lidia Vallarino Research Fund in the VCU College of Humanities and Sciences.

“Money is of no great personal relevance to me at this time of my life. Most of the money I spend is for traveling and to support my research,” she said.

Vallarino also wanted to provide aid to chemistry students. She set up the James V. Quagliano Fellowship in Chemistry and, as she said, “I would have started my own, as well, but my children said ‘No, no, no, this is our responsibility.’”

Vallarino’s children, John R. Quagliano, Peter V. Quagliano and Mary L. Blunt, created the Lidia M. Vallarino Scholarship in 2007 to honor their mother.

“There are some students who want to work hard and are very motivated, but they don’t have enough money and have to work and study less. The idea of the scholarship was to provide at least one student with some help — they get some money rather than having to deliver pizzas.”

Farah Radwan (B.S. ’05), the 2008 recipient of the Lidia M. Vallarino Scholarship, considers Vallarino her “chemistry grandmother.”

“Just the thought of having an award that carries Dr. V’s name is an inspiration in and of itself,” Radwan said. “Since I have worked as an undergraduate in her laboratory, I have learned so many things about chemistry, research, teaching and about life. … That is why she is one of my favorite professors, and that’s how she has shaped my academic path — because she worked really hard to shape her own, especially as a female chemist.”

To make a gift to the Department of Chemistry or the College of Humanities and Sciences, contact Lois Badey, director of development, at (804) 827-0856 or labadey@vcu.edu.
The Glen Allen, Va.-based Lind Lawrence Foundation made a $135,000 grant to the VCU School of Medicine’s Harold F. Young Neurosurgery Fund. A longtime supporter of neurosurgery research at VCU, the foundation has given almost $3 million to the school over the years. The Harold F. Young Neurosurgery Center at the VCU Medical Center uses the latest techniques to provide top-notch care while training new physicians for clinical and operative excellence.

The Virginia Moose Association Inc. donated more than $23,000 to support cancer research at the VCU Massey Cancer Center. The group, which generally makes two major, annual commitments to Massey, has given about $500,000 to the cancer center since 1991.

Thomas D. Eilerson, chairman of EDC, a local commercial general contracting and development-management company, has made a $145,000 pledge, in addition to his annual Battering Ram-level contribution, to VCU Athletics. Eilerson, who serves as a trustee of the School of Engineering Foundation board and is a member of the Ram Athletic Fund board, has a history of generously supporting student-athletes and athletic programs at VCU as well as the School of Engineering. Private support of the Ram Athletic Fund helps provide scholarship aid, which allows student-athletes to enjoy their sport while focusing on their studies.

Robert “Red” Blount (front), a longtime Massey advocate within the Virginia Moose Association, joins (from left) Jarold Langley, Massey Advisory Board member and a past Virginia Moose Association president, current President Ken Emerson, Dr. Gordon D. Ginder, director of the Massey Cancer Center, Paul Dent, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and molecular biology in the School of Medicine, and Ivan Nester, immediate past president of the association.

In other giving news . . .

Massey Cancer Center friends win AFP awards

On National Philanthropy Day in November, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Central Virginia Chapter honored individuals and groups who have enhanced philanthropy, their communities and the world. Two award recipients from the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center were recognized. Rebecca C. “Becky” Massey was named Volunteer of the Year. Massey plays an instrumental role in fundraising and awareness-raising for the VCU Massey Cancer Center. She spearheaded the effort to create Becky’s Garden at the Goodwin Research Laboratory and gives generously of her time.

Another Massey Advisory Board member and donor was honored with the Spirit of Giving Award. James T. Napier, president of Napier Realtors ERA, not only supports Massey personally but has also encouraged his company’s team to do the same. He launched the annual Music for Massey benefit concert, organized a golf tournament and is a participating sponsor in other Massey events.

Volunteer of the Year Becky Massey (left) joins Spirit of Giving Award honorees Jim Napier; David Lyons, chairman of the Massey Advisory Board; and Lois Trani, VCU’s first lady.
The Power of Personal Philanthropy

To many Virginia Commonwealth University students, Wallace R. Johnston, D.B.A., was their favorite School of Business professor and mentor. After his death in 2007, former students, colleagues and friends of “Dr. Wally” collectively raised $30,000 to name a room in the new School of Business building, Snead Hall, in his memory.

In November, about 30 of those friends and family members gathered at Snead Hall for a reception and a visit to the Dr. Wally Breakout Room, which is used regularly by students working and studying.

At the event, several former students, including Garland Taylor (B.S. ’87), owner of Home Team Grill, recalled how Dr. Wally continued as a trusted mentor as they established their careers.

Tom Silvestri (M.B.A. ’86), president and publisher of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, said his newspaper readers still miss Dr. Wally’s weekly comments and no other columnist has come close to providing the insightful information Johnston’s readers enjoyed.

In another tribute, former students Vickie (B.S. ’76) and Tom (B.S. ’76) Snead contributed $120,000 to endow a scholarship in Johnston’s name.

Donors gather to remember beloved ‘Dr. Wally’

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Student’s call encourages alumna to give back

Heba Abbassy, a senior in the clinical laboratory sciences program in the School of Allied Health Professions, helped reconnect an alumna with classmates and current students when making a fundraising call.

Talking with Marie Castore (B.S. ’78), worldwide market manager for Johnson & Johnson’s Ortho Clinical Diagnostics, Abbassy was impressed with Castore’s career and thought she could share valuable information with current students. She invited Castore to visit campus during National Medical Laboratory Week.

Castore spent 24 hours in Richmond, first sharing dinner with Abbassy and three friends from the Class of 1978. The next day, Castore talked to students about career possibilities.

“Marie’s presentation increased the clinical laboratory sciences students’ appreciation for the opportunities in industry and sales for clinical laboratory scientists,” said Teresa Shibley Nadder, chair of the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, who was a member of the Class of 1978 with Castore.

Audrey E. Mosher (B.S. ’85; M.S. ’93) (left), Wallace Johnston’s daughter, and her mother, Sigrid, thank family friend Benjamin Y. Brown (B.S. ’75; M.S. ’76), who spearheaded the campaign to raise funds to name a room in Snead Hall in memory of “Dr. Wally.”

Alumna Marie Castore (right) enjoys dinner with Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences Chair Teresa Shibley Nadder (B.S. ’78; M.S. ’89; Ph.D. ’98) (left), Suzette Lyon (B.S. ’78), student Heba Abbassy and Patricia Hart Harrill (B.S. ’78).

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“Marie’s presentation increased the clinical laboratory sciences students’ appreciation for the opportunities in industry and sales for clinical laboratory scientists,” said Teresa Shibley Nadder, chair of the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, who was a member of the Class of 1978 with Castore.

Audrey E. Mosher (B.S. ’85; M.S. ’93) (left), Wallace Johnston’s daughter, and her mother, Sigrid, thank family friend Benjamin Y. Brown (B.S. ’75; M.S. ’76), who spearheaded the campaign to raise funds to name a room in Snead Hall in memory of “Dr. Wally.”
Throughout the fall semester, Virginia Commonwealth University marked its 40th anniversary with special events and commemorations.

As part of the celebration, about 70 alumni, donors, students, parents and VCU Alumni Association board members gathered at the Scott House in October to present the RPI Commemorative Sculpture to the university.

“Tableith,” a stone sculpture that pays tribute to VCU’s predecessor, Richmond Professional Institute, is located next to Ginter House on the Monroe Park Campus. The piece, which was designed by Charles Ponticello (M.F.A. ’94), stands 14½ feet tall and weighs more than 20 tons.

It consists of 51 cast discs stacked atop one another. Each disc represents a year in RPI’s history and is inscribed on the edge with a significant phrase from the corresponding year at the institution.

The RPI Sculpture Committee raised $40,000 to partially fund the project and plans to continue fundraising for a memorial terrace and RPI scholarship.

William O’Connell Jr., D.Ed. (B.M.E. ’55), a member of the RPI Sculpture Committee, said the sculpture will serve as a prominent physical reminder of RPI’s legacy at VCU.

After the presentation, the crowd headed to the Monroe Park Festival to enjoy a “birthday” cake reproduction of the sculpture.

Another sculpture was also dedicated during the 40th anniversary celebration. “Truth and Beauty” — a work by Lester Van Winkle, VCU professor emeritus of sculpture, and Ross Caudill, VCU adjunct professor of sculpture — features two oversized wooden winged desks made of bronze and stainless steel, which face a large easel with a sketch of RPI Provost Henry H. Hibbs. The sculpture is located in the courtyard between Hibbs Hall and the Anderson Gallery in the Shafer Court area of campus.

More than 200 friends and alumni of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry showed their support at the third annual Friends of Dental Education Dinner at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

The late-October event featured a “Vote for Dentistry” theme and included music, dance and comedy performed by talented dental and dental hygiene students.

During the annual dinner, the school honors and thanks its donors while providing them with an update about the progress on campus.

“Our annual dinner gives us a great opportunity to say thanks and to connect some of our students with our many donors. This, I think, is most important,” said Edward G. Kardos, senior director of advancement for the School of Dentistry.