Gift honors RPI, paves way for plaza construction


O’Connell’s long history with VCU began when he was a student at RPI, the university’s predecessor.

Fellow alumnus and current member of the RPI Advisory Council Joseph Lowenthal (B.F.A. ’55) recalls when he and O’Connell ran against each other for the president’s seat in the RPI Student Government Association.

“We had fun campaigning against each other because we were friends,” Lowenthal said. “After he won, I did everything I could to support him.”

In 1957, only two years after O’Connell earned his degree in music, he was hand-picked to serve as the first dean of men by RPI’s Dean of Students Margaret Johnson.

“He won over the administration,” said fellow RPI alumnus and former professor in the School of Medicine Ed Peeples (B.S. ’57). “His sterling performance as a student impressed [then-president Henry] Hibbs and Margaret Johnson because he had a presence that told you he was going somewhere.”

O’Connell earned a doctorate of education from Columbia University after his term as dean of men. He worked at the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta, and at the Association of American Colleges and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in Washington, D.C. In 1985, he became president of New England College in New Hampshire.

In 2007, he began a three-year term with the VCU Alumni Association board of directors and became an active member of the RPI Alumni Council, chairing its commemorative sculpture committee.

O’Connell invited Lowenthal to join the committee as it worked to commission and install the sculpture.

“Bill spearheaded the whole fundraising effort and worked with the artists to get some ideas,” Lowenthal said. “He was very happy about the sculpture’s completion.”

“... he had a presence that told you he was going somewhere.”

— Ed Peeples (B.S. ’57)
“Tableith,” created by artist Charles Ponticello (M.F.A. ’94), weighs more than 20 tons and includes 51 cast discs stacked atop one another in an upward spiral. Each disk is inscribed with historical information or key events from the years 1917-68. In 1968, the General Assembly created VCU using RPI and the Medical College of Virginia as its foundation.

The RPI commemorative sculpture committee also wanted to build a plaza around the sculpture using cobblestones unearthed from the alley behind Hibbs Hall. With his gift, O’Connell designated the area to honor RPI’s president and dean of students, naming it the Henry H. Hibbs and Margaret L. Johnson Plaza. The plaza will be dedicated April 24, during Reunion Weekend.

O’Connell saw the RPI group struggling to raise money for the plaza and decided to help by donating the remainder of funds needed for its construction, Peeples said.

“He thought of RPI just as the rest of us — [the college] took the working class and created academic achievers,” Peeples said. “Bill was a shining example.”

VCU Alumni Association Executive Director Diane Stout-Brown (B.S.W. ’80) said RPI alumni recognize the importance of integrating their history and memories into the future of VCU to ensure the foundation that VCU was built upon will never be lost.

“Although the name RPI no longer has an official recognition, they are loyal alumni who strive to see their great university flourish by giving generously of their time, talents and financial resources,” she said.

To make a gift to the VCU Alumni Association, contact Diane Stout-Brown, executive director, at (804) 828-2586 or dstout@vcu.edu.

Ginter House naming opportunities support scholarship fund

The Richmond Professional Institute Alumni Council has established the RPI Heritage Campaign to raise $200,000 for a scholarship.

Through this campaign, donors have the opportunity to name spaces in Ginter House, 901 W. Franklin St., which holds a special place in the hearts of RPI graduates. Ginter House, known as the “Ad Building” by many RPI alumni, was the administration and student life center for the institute.

Available spaces, referred to by their historic name, include:

- Dr. Hibbs’ Office: $50,000
- Foyer: $50,000
- Bursar’s Office: $25,000
- Dean of College Office: $25,000
- Dean’s Suite – Students, Men, Women: $25,000
- Student Lounge (“Slop Shop”): $25,000

Donors to each historical space will be recognized with a plaque mounted in Ginter House. All contributions are tax-deductible, and donor names will be added to the Book of Honor in the RPI archives.

To make a gift, contact Gordon A. McDougall, assistant vice president for university alumni relations, at (804) 828-8192 or gamcdougall@vcu.edu.

D.D.S. alumni help School of Dentistry go digital

In addition to their senior cash gift of about $10,000, members of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry’s Class of 2008 pledged $125,000 to help digitize radiography practices in the school. A total of 62 students pledged $2,008 each to be paid over five years.

Alumnus Dr. David Turok (D.D.S. ’08), who spearheaded the effort and now specializes in general implant dentistry at A Center for Dental Implants in Chicago, says his classmates wanted to leave a legacy and considered radiology to be one of the biggest roadblocks to efficiency in the school’s dental clinics.

“Waiting for an X-ray took up most of our clinic time, leaving students and patients with a lot of wasted time during appointments,” Turok said. “We decided as a group that the biggest need for improvement was to go digital.”

Now that generosity is paying off with the multiyear implementation of digital radiography in the school.

Last spring, the School of Dentistry installed additional X-ray tube heads in the Lyons Clinic, Wood Clinic and Douglas Clinic. By fall 2009, all radiography in the School of Dentistry became digital. Students and faculty can instantly view images of a patient’s mouth — chairside on a computer monitor — instead of waiting for film to be developed. With the addition of the AxiUm electronic dental record system, these images automatically become part of the patient record and are filed in the clinic management system used to administer patient charting and scheduling.

Dr. Jim Burns (D.D.S. ’72; Ph.D. ’80), associate dean for clinical education for the School of Dentistry, said that working with digital radiographic techniques greatly decreases the amount of time necessary to create a diagnostic image and eliminates developing time for conventional film. Being able to provide digital radiography services fosters patient-centered care and provides a better educational experience to D.D.S. and dental hygiene students.

“Philanthropy acted as an accelerator to this worthwhile dream,” Burns said. “The vision of going paperless with an electronic dental record within the School of Dentistry could only have happened with the incorporation of digital radiography. This gift greatly assisted.”

Turok is thrilled that he and his classmates were able to help those students following in their footsteps. “I consider it $2,008 well spent,” he said.

The School of Dentistry agrees.

“In their new role as practicing dentists, the Class of 2008 set the bar high for all alumni, and with their pledge, they vowed to make the school a better experience for patients and students who followed them,” said Jim Doyle, director of alumni engagement for the School of Dentistry. “The foresight, professionalism and generosity of the D.D.S. Class of 2008 will make the school a better place for tomorrow’s students and patients.”

To make a gift to the School of Dentistry, contact Jim Doyle, director of alumni engagement, at (804) 828-1138 or jdoyle@vcu.edu.
Professor’s gift supports Brandcenter students

One day Brandcenter professor Peter Coughter came home from work and told his wife, C.F., he wanted to give back to Virginia Commonwealth University in some way.

“He is a natural teacher and has enjoyed teaching at VCU,” she said. “He has gotten so much from the students there and wanted to give back to them in a concrete way.”

In 2007, the couple made a $50,000 commitment to establish the Coughter Scholarships at the VCU Brandcenter. Two need- and merit-based scholarships in the amount of $5,000 are awarded each year to two second-year students to lessen the burden of tuition costs. The gift will fund scholarships for two students each year for five years.

While C.F. gives her husband all the credit for coming up with the idea for the gift, she looks forward to meeting the recipients when the couple hosts end-of-the-year graduation barbecues at their Richmond, Va.-area home.

“It’s fun for me because I can put face[s] to the names,” she said.

Like many VCU students, this year’s scholarship recipients, Whitney Martinez and Kendall Beveridge, planned to finance their entire graduate education in the creative brand management track through loans. With this scholarship help, their debt load after graduation in May will be lighter.

Soon, Martinez will search for employment at advertising agencies in California with hopes to land a position on the client-side of advertising. She said her parents are thrilled about the scholarship.

“It has helped a lot,” she said. “I definitely appreciate the generosity of the Coughters.”

Beveridge looks forward to a career in nonprofit communications but said she is keeping her options open. Agency recruiters will visit the Brandcenter to meet students and see their work in April.

“A lot of [students] come here because the school has very good relationships in the industry,” Beveridge said. “But the professors know there is a big need for tuition assistance. It’s so nice to get this gift.”

Both scholarship recipients are enjoying taking their first class this semester with professor Coughter — a presentation-skills course, which both said is immensely popular among students.

“Peter Coughter has a big presence at the Brandcenter,” Martinez said.

“Although most students don’t have him until their final semesters, everyone knows who he is. I think it builds anticipation for his classes.”

Coughter said he and his wife made the gift to the Brandcenter because they believe it’s the right thing to do. “These students are trying to do something meaningful with their lives,” he said. “A lot of kids need the help.”

Scholarship support for students is among Brandcenter Director Rick Boyko’s highest priorities.

“Nothing is more important than the young people we teach,” Boyko said. “When faculty members support the school in a significant way, it sends a powerful message to our alumni, friends and students about the importance of giving back.”

To make a gift to the Brandcenter, contact Beth Harrington, senior director of development, at (804) 828-8384 or ekharrington@vcu.edu.

Professorship provides extra support for faculty

Jeffery S. Kreutzer, Ph.D., ABPP, FACRM, a longtime faculty member in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, was appointed to the Rosa Schwarz Cifu Professorship in recognition of his scholarship in the field of brain tumor rehabilitation.

The income generated from the endowment is used for supplemental salary support for the chair holder and can include funding for research, travel to scientific symposia and other activities.

The Rosa Schwarz Cifu Professorship honors the late mother of Dr. David X. Cifu, chair of the physical medicine and rehabilitation department, executive director of the VCU Center for Rehabilitation Sciences and Engineering and national director of PM&R services for the Veterans Health Administration. In 2004, Cifu joined his father, two brothers, his wife and her parents to make the initial gifts that established the professorship fund. Many of Cifu’s aunts, uncles and cousins also have contributed to the fund over the years.

After a 30-year career as an oncology nurse in Long Island, N.Y., Rosa Schwarz Cifu was diagnosed with cancer herself. She received care at the VCU Massey Cancer Center before her death in 1999.

“She was enamored by the care of the cancer rehab team,” Cifu said. “My family wanted to give back to promote the rehabilitation efforts that are often a part of cancer care.”

The endowment supports the rehabilitation mission of the department, with a specific emphasis on cancer-related disabilities. And that makes a good fit for Kreutzer.

As a professor of neurosurgery and psychiatry, Kreutzer’s work merges the arenas of clinical care, leadership and educating students and fellows.

“Many of the patients that I see have brain tumors and other neurological conditions,” Kreutzer said. “When a person has a tumor, it can affect their cognitive abilities, including memory and vision, and they can suffer from emotional and personality changes and depression.”

Kreutzer has enjoyed a decades-long collaboration with Kreutzer in co-writing papers and grants. And as department chair, he knows firsthand the prestige of being named the recipient of an endowed professorship.

“It’s a privilege to represent the person or a family who established the endowment, and the financial support allows you to expand your academic practice beyond what is typical for most faculty members to achieve,” Cifu says.

In January 2008, Cifu and his wife, Dr. Ingrid Prosser, established another professorship in the School of Medicine, the Helga and Ernst Prosser Professorship, in the name of Prosser’s parents. The professorship fund supports the general rehabilitation of patients with disabilities.

“Physical medicine and rehabilitation is one of our signature clinical and research programs,” says Dr. Jerome F. Strauss III, dean of the VCU School of Medicine. “[This kind of support] is critical to our efforts to improve quality of life across all ages and reduce the burden of chronic disease. Endowed positions like the Rosa Schwarz Cifu Professorship are the vehicles through which we attract and retain outstanding scholars.”

To make a gift to the School of Medicine, contact Tom Holland, associate dean for development, at (804) 828-4800 or teholland@vcu.edu.
Alumna inspires lectureship in world studies school

Adjunct French instructor Marcia Powell (B.S. ’79) passed away Sept. 30, 2009, at the age of 93. A renowned French teacher at the Collegiate School for more than 20 years, Powell dedicated herself to Virginia Commonwealth University long into her retirement. Powell inspired her students, friends and family with her love of learning, teaching, and religion and the arts, colleagues say.

Powell, who remembered fondly her student days taking classes from Cliff Edwards, Ph.D., professor of philosophy and religious studies at VCU, established an endowed lecture series in religion and the arts in April 2009. The Powell-Edwards Lectures in Religion and the Arts give tribute to their shared cultural interests, passion and vision for cultural enrichment.

Edwards recalls meeting Powell in 1975 when she was a student in the first class he taught at VCU, a study of the New Testament.

“I was surprised to have a woman older than myself in the class and found that she had been educated in Switzerland, taught French and knew far more about French art and culture than I did,” Edwards said.

When Powell brought to Edwards’ class a set of slides featuring 70 14th-century tapestries from the French Chateau of Angers that depict the Book of Revelation scene by scene, he asked if she would give a lecture on the topic.

“She did a wonderful job, and we began our lifetime of conversations on art, literature, religion and family,” he said.

Powell was invited to lecture in a series of arts-and-biblical-studies courses taught by Edwards.

Then two years ago, Edwards said, the pair was reminiscing about the first lecture on religion and art Powell gave in Edwards’ classroom, and she said, “You invited me to lecture over 30 years ago. What would you say to having a lecture at VCU on religion and art every year?”

He thought it was a great idea. Powell and Edwards chose Elizabeth King, artist and VCU professor of sculpture, to inaugurate the lectureship.

A crowd flooded the Grace Street Theater and overflowed into the lobby, where students sat on the floor to witness King’s lecture on a TV screen.

The second lectureship is scheduled for this April and will feature Naresh Bajracharya, Ph.D., a visiting Fulbright Scholar from Nepal. Bajracharya is the founding director of the Department of Buddhist Studies at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu and an expert struggling to keep alive forms of Indian-Nepalese art and ritual that are in danger of being lost.

“This endowed fund provides programmatic support that would not otherwise be available,” said Lois Badey, director of development for the VCU College of Humanities and Sciences. “Through the Powell-Edwards Lectures, curricular and co-curricular programs offered by the School of World Studies and the religious studies program will be greatly enhanced — and most especially, the legacy of Marcia Powell will continue in perpetuity. We are grateful for the generosity of the Powell family and friends who established this lecture series.”

To make a gift to the Powell-Edwards Lectures in Religion and the Arts, contact Lois Badey, director of development for the College of Humanities and Sciences, at (804) 827-0856 or labadey@vcu.edu.

Event celebrates Massey founders and donors

In October, 250 donors and friends of the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center gathered for the annual Celebrating Massey event. Dr. Walter Lawrence Jr., Massey’s founding director, was honored. In addition, six founding members and 17 charter members of the Massey Cancer Center Advisory Board were recognized.

Judy S. Brown, Advisory Board member, and Dr. Peter W. Brown, who began his medical training and career with Lawrence, co-chaired the event.

Prestigious Gates grant furthers malaria research

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded Virginia Commonwealth University a $100,000 Grand Challenges Explorations grant.

The grant will support an innovative global health research project conducted by Luiz Shozo Ozaki, Ph.D., associate professor in VCU Life Sciences’ Center for the Study of Biological Complexity. The project is called “Bacterial viruses as tool for blocking transmission of the malaria parasite.”

Ozaki’s project is one of 76 grants announced in October by the Gates Foundation in the third funding round of Grand Challenges Explorations, an initiative to help scientists around the world explore bold and largely unproven ways to improve health in developing countries. The grants were provided to scientists in 16 countries on five continents.

To receive funding, Ozaki showed in a two-page application how his idea falls outside current scientific paradigms and might lead to significant advances in global health. The initiative is highly competitive, receiving almost 3,000 proposals in this round.

Ozaki and Gail Christie, Ph.D., professor in the VCU Department of Microbiology and Immunology, will genetically engineer bacterial viruses (phages) to express inhibitors of the malaria parasite in the mosquito gut upon phage infection of gut bacteria. They’ll then test the engineered phages as a biological tool for controlling the transmission of the disease.

“The award is important in that it will enable us to contribute one more gun for the arsenal to combat malaria, which at this moment is tiny,” Ozaki said.
Nearly 100 Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy alumni, faculty, students and friends gathered in November for the annual Galen Society dinner. The Galen Society recognizes benefactors who donate $500 or more annually.

Held at The Jefferson Hotel, a reception featuring a string quartet preceded the dinner, followed by remarks from Dean Victor A. Yanchick, Ph.D. The dinner also included the announcement of the creation of the Bertha and Norman Rolfe Pharmacy Scholarship in memory of Norman Rolfe and in honor of retired faculty member Bertha Rolfe (B.S. ’47). Bertha is a longtime MCV Campus volunteer, working with the School of Pharmacy and the Massey Cancer Center.

Ron Davis (B.S. ’73) helped lead the fundraising effort for the Rolfe scholarship, which was generated primarily through gifts from members of the pharmacy school’s National Advisory Council.

This past fall, Virginia Commonwealth University honored its most motivated students as well as donors who support endowed scholarship funds at two annual events.

First, the MCV Foundation hosted its fifth annual MCV Campus Endowed Scholarship Brunch on Nov. 1. The yearly event brings together scholarship recipients and their generous donors for an afternoon of conversation and appreciation.

More than 260 guests filled the Grand Ballroom at The Jefferson Hotel. Third-year School of Dentistry student David Herce and fourth-year School of Medicine student Asena Madison, both scholarship winners, shared their stories.

MCV Foundation President Bill Kotti recognized the donors to three new Board of Visitors-approved scholarship funds created since the last event, including brunch attendee Joyce Clement who established the S.B. “Jack” Clement Pharmacy Scholarship in memory of her late husband, a 1956 alumnus of the school.

Then on Nov. 19, the VCU Foundation, the School of Business Foundation and the School of Engineering Foundation sponsored the 11th annual Monroe Park Campus Scholarship Dinner at the Commonwealth Club. More than 300 donors and scholarship recipients attended and were treated to remarks from VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D., who spoke about the importance of scholarships for the future of the university.

In addition, engineering student Allison de Groot and English graduate student Daniel Goodman talked about how scholarships have changed their lives.

In October, Dr. Richard P. Wenzel stepped down as chair of the Department of Internal Medicine in the School of Medicine after 14 years of service.

He was honored by several hundred colleagues, family and friends with a roast-and-toast celebration on Oct. 16 at the Virginia Historical Society. The program featured 11 roasters telling stories of Wenzel as a teacher, friend and mentor and two videos, “The Power of the Tie” and “Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc.: Renaissance Man.”

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Altria makes scholarship gift in honor of Dr. Trani

In early December, Richmond, Va.-area company Altria Group Inc., contributed $300,000 in scholarship funding to Virginia Commonwealth University.

The gift from Altria, a longtime supporter of VCU, was made to the Eugene P. Trani Scholars program in honor of Dr. Trani’s recent retirement as university president.

“It was an honor and a pleasure to make this contribution in recognition of Dr. Trani’s distinguished leadership,” said Jennifer L. Hunter, Altria’s vice president of corporate affairs. “We believe that a focus on scholarships is especially appropriate in light of the increased need during tough economic times.”

The Trani Scholars program, created through a $1 million gift from benefactors Dianne and C. Kenneth Wright in 2005, awards scholarships to exceptional students hand-picked by a blue-ribbon selection committee.

In fall 2009, eight undergraduate Trani Scholars received $5,000 awards.

“The Trani Scholars Selection Committee was thrilled to learn of Altria’s gift to the program honoring Dr. Trani,” said Anne D. Jacobson, assistant vice president for university advancement and staff liaison to the committee. “The Trani Scholars Selection Committee met in January. The group decided to expand the number of Trani Scholars from eight to 15 for the 2010-11 academic year and to increase the amount awarded commensurate with anticipated increases in tuition.”

The scholarship gift from Altria comes amid the recently launched Opportunity VCU campaign, which aims to raise $50 million in new scholarship and fellowship support.

College reception brings together students, donors

On Oct. 29, more than 90 students, donors and Virginia Commonwealth University faculty and staff gathered in the University Student Commons as the College of Humanities and Sciences thanked scholarship donors and recognized the 2009 student recipients.

Fred Hawkridge, Ph.D., interim dean of the college, welcomed the guests.

“Now more than ever, scholarships from private sources, such as gifts from alumni and friends, help to meet the ever-increasing financial need of our students,” Hawkridge said.

More than 100 scholarships are awarded through the College of Humanities and Sciences annually, providing more than $100,000 in support to students in the three schools and 13 departments within the college.

“I think it’s wonderful the way the college hosts this event, bringing the recipients and donors together for a chance to meet and to learn more about each other,” said alumna and donor Cindy Creasy Woolfolk (B.S. ’87). In 1999, Woolfolk established the Gene B. Creasy Scholarship to honor her father. It provides an annual scholarship of $1,000 for a rising junior or senior broadcast major from Virginia.

The afternoon program featured several of the college’s recipients who shared brief remarks and expressions of gratitude: Leah Baldwin, recipient of the Jeffrey S. Cribbs Sr. Endowed Scholarship in Philanthropy; Daniel Goodman and Daniel Grant, recipients of the Meadows L. Phillips and Thomas H. Weatherford Veterans Scholarships; and Ausim Chaghtai, recipient of the Miles F. Johnson Award in Biology.

Chaghtai concluded the event with his comments that through scholarships students become more motivated and prepared to succeed and, without such financial assistance, for him, a VCU education would not be possible.

Alumnus announces $823,000 gift for dental school

With a tip of his hat, Dr. Ron Hunt, then dean of the School of Dentistry at Virginia Commonwealth University, thanked Dr. John Philips (D.D.S. ’69) for his latest gift to the school at its annual Friends of Dental Education Dinner in October.

At the dinner, more than 250 guests crowded into the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts’ Marble Hall and tipped their own party-favor hats in celebration during an evening of music, awards and recognition. During the celebration, Philips presented a check for $823,000 to advance research in the VCU Philips Institute for Oral and Craniofacial Molecular Biology.

“The opening of the new W. Baxter Perkinson, Jr. Building positions the Philips Institute for expansion into new and exciting areas of research including tissue bioengineering,” Hunt said. “This incredibly generous gift from Dr. Philips provides a significant catalyst to create a critical mass to jump-start the growth.”

Golf tournament supports breast cancer research

Sixteen years ago, a group of enterprising women were inspired to start a golf tournament to raise money to combat breast cancer. The original golf tournament has transformed into a series of events called Pink Ribbons of Hope, which now benefit breast cancer research at the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center.

Each October, 14 tournaments, including golf, tennis, bridge, dominos and mah-jongg, occur at country and recreation clubs throughout the greater Richmond, Va., area and involve more than 1,000 participants. These events are managed by a dedicated group of volunteers whose lives have been touched by breast cancer.

New in 2009, the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond hosted a golf tournament or River’s Bend Golf Club and raised more than $2,000. In total, the 2009 Pink Ribbons of Hope events raised $171,000.

Massey was named the beneficiary of Pink Ribbons of Hope in 2007, and since then the events have contributed more than $500,000 to breast cancer research.

To learn more about Pink Ribbons of Hope events or to join an event committee, call (804) 828-0883 or visit www.pinkribbonsofhope.org.
Nurse anesthesia department celebrates 40 years

This past October, faculty members and students joined more than 100 alumni to celebrate the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Nurse Anesthesia’s 40th anniversary in the School of Allied Health Professions with a gala at the Crowne Plaza in Williamsburg, Va.

The night began with cocktails and music played by a quartet of VCU string students. Guests dined while they watched a video of the department’s history.

Michael D. Fallacaro, D.N.S., CRNA, chairman of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, spoke about current and future endeavors of the department and the importance of utilizing distance education. As a thank you to alumni, he announced that they could participate in two free complimentary continuing-education courses hosted by the department in March and November 2010.

The event raised more than $10,000 for the Herbert T. Watson Professorship, named in honor of Col. Herbert T. Watson, CRNA, former department chairman.

“The award will recognize sustained excellence in scholarship including research, teaching and service,” said Elizabeth Howell, the department’s director of professional development. “Securing educational opportunities for registered nurse anesthesia students ultimately widens the university’s breadth of talent.”

Watson, now professor emeritus, served as chairman of and associate professor in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia from 1977-93. During his first year, he transitioned the nurse anesthesia certificate program to the graduate level. The first master’s program student graduated in 1981.

Other honored guests included Bernie Kuzava, CRNA, the first chairman of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, and Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., CRNA, FAAN, dean of the School of Allied Health Professions and former director of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia.

Sponsors included the MCV Alumni Association of VCU, Commonwealth Anesthesia Associates, Hanover Anesthesia Group, West End Anesthesia Group, Virginia Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Sentara and VCU Health System.

Family endows cancer research chair at Massey

In November, members of the Richmond, Va.-based Charles S. Luck III family made a commitment to endow a $1.5 million chair in cancer research at the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center.

The Harrigan, Haw and Luck Families Chair in Cancer Research is named in honor of the eight family members supporting the chair: Charles S. Luck III and his wife, True Luck, and their children and spouses, Terrell Luck Harrigan (B.F.A. ’87) and Elliott Harrigan; Lisa Petty Luck and Charles Luck IV; and Cynthia Luck Haw and J. Sheppard Haw III.

True Luck and daughter Terrell Harrigan battled different types of cancer in the past few years and sought treatment at Massey, Richmond’s only National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center. Through their experiences, they met other patients and learned more about Massey’s research mission. Harrigan enrolled in two clinical trials. She also joined Massey’s Advisory Board in July 2008.

“While fighting cancer, we realized that we were standing on the shoulders of countless people before us who invested in cures at Massey, whether they participated in clinical trials or funded cancer research that led to improved treatments that we received,” Harrigan said.

The Harrigan, Haw and Luck Families Chair in Cancer Research will allow Massey to recruit a highly accomplished researcher from the top of his or her field. Such highly sought recruits usually bring significant research dollars and well-trained teams with them.

“We are honored by this generous gift that enables us to recruit and retain more world-class researchers and ensure the resources needed to make breakthrough discoveries,” said Dr. Gordon Ginder, director of Massey Cancer Center.

In other giving news …

- Yahoo recently accelerated payment of its five-year $500,000 pledge for the Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter. The gift named the Big Idea Yahoo Student Lounge at the Brandcenter. Brandcenter board members and then-Yahoo executives Jerry Shershesky and Matt Scheckner helped secure the pledge, one of the first major gifts received in support of the Brandcenter Campaign for Change. The company had been involved with the graduate advertising program in the past by hiring students, sponsoring executive education seminars and providing real-world student projects.

- Family and friends recently established the James O. Hodges Scholarship in Education. Hodges served the VCU School of Education from 1974-95, preparing teachers in elementary education. He was awarded emeritus status upon retirement in 1995.

- Duc T. and Hang N. Nguyen have established the Nguyen-Ninh Scholarship in Biology in recognition of teaching excellence by the VCU Department of Biology. The Nguyens’ sons both graduated from the department and have matriculated to the VCU School of Medicine. The purpose of the scholarship is to support an outstanding undergraduate student majoring in biology.