

Phantastic!

Project P

Historic gift from Howard and Louise Phanstiel establishes a unique scholarship program for middle-class students

BY CHRISTINE YACKEL



Louise and Howie Phanstiel '70, G'71 arrive at the celebration on the Quad, honoring them for establishing a new scholarship program.

TWIRLING BATONS, HIGH-FLYING flags, and the foot-stomping beat of the Syracuse University Marching Band heralded the announcement of an historic \$20 million commitment from SU Trustee Howard "Howie" G. Phanstiel '70, G'71, and his wife, Louise, to support scholarships for middle-class students. The October 1 celebration on the Quad was attended by nearly 1,000 cheering students, faculty, and staff who greeted the Phanstiels with a standing ovation in gratitude for their remarkable generosity. "Louise and I have been very lucky in life," Phanstiel said. "When that happens, you have an obligation to give back to others."

The Phanstiels' gift—the second largest SU has ever received—will have an immediate impact on undergraduates. As America's middle-class families increasingly require assistance to finance their children's education, the Louise and Howard Phanstiel Scholars program will offer meaningful financial awards that make it possible for students of modest means to earn a degree from Syracuse. "We believe education is the key to unlocking the hopes and dreams that lie inside each of us to the betterment of our country and society," Louise Phanstiel says. "It is our sincere desire that the Phanstiel Scholars will realize their full potential and be productive and active citizens."

Professionally, Howie Phanstiel is a veteran health insurance executive, having led the successful restructuring of PacifiCare Health Systems as its president, CEO, and chairman. He retired in 2005 and, with his wife, established Phanstiel Enterprises, a private consulting and investment firm in Los Angeles. Louise Phanstiel received a bachelor's degree in accounting from Golden Gate University. She is a former partner of Coopers & Lybrand—now PriceWaterhouse Coopers—in its insurance practice and a former president of Specialty Products at WellPoint Inc. Retired in 2008, she currently serves as a director of Myriad Genetics Inc. and as a director and vice chair of Best Friends Animal Society.

Howie Phanstiel grew up in a typical middle-class family and held part-time jobs to help pay his way through school. He earned a degree in political science from the College of Arts and Sciences and an M.P.A. degree from the Maxwell School. In addition to his service on the Board of Trustees, Phanstiel's history of leadership with SU includes membership on the Maxwell School Advisory Board, and service as a co-chair of The Campaign for Syracuse University. As co-chair, Phanstiel advocates for SU's vision of Scholarship in Action, recruits volunteers, and rallies support for the University's priorities—such as



the campaign gift from the Dineen family to construct a new College of Law building (see page 42).

Phanstiel says his first contribution to SU was a check for \$50, but then he lost touch with the University for many years. Three decades later, after reconnecting with his alma mater, he and Louise made a \$5 million gift to the Maxwell School, creating the Phanstiel Chair in Strategic Management and Leadership to promote leadership in the public sector, and a \$1.2 million gift to help complete the Carmelo K. Anthony Basketball Center.

At the height of the national financial crisis in fall 2008 when many students and their families were adversely affected by economic forces beyond their control, Phanstiel spearheaded Syracuse Responds, a midyear fund-raising effort to assist students in danger of withdrawing from the University due to the declining economy. The program provided more than \$1 million in additional aid to more than 425 students, many of whom likely would not have returned to school. "Throughout the development of the Phanstiel Scholars program, Howie and Louise stressed the importance of 'creating a spirit of philanthropy' among the scholarship recipients," says John Chapple '75, chair of the Syracuse University

Board of Trustees. "I don't think there is a better example of such individuals than Howie and Louise."

Reflecting the Syracuse Responds initiative, the Phanstiel Scholars program aims to ensure that SU remains an option for talented students with leadership potential, both in the classroom and the community. "Syracuse University has long been a place of opportunity for students from all economic and social backgrounds," Chancellor Nancy Cantor says. "That is why we are so appreciative that the Phanstiels' gift will continue this tradition by helping to ensure that students who actively give of themselves to enrich the lives of others can be a part of the SU experience. This type of civic engagement is woven into SU's fabric and is at the heart of Scholarship in Action."

Phanstiel says his philanthropic spirit was ignited by Louise and the actor Paul Newman, whom he came to know when his company sponsored Newman's race car. "I had many opportunities to talk with Paul about his commitment to helping others and the importance of giving back," Phanstiel says. "He totally changed my life. And when I married Louise, she opened up my heart, and I have come to understand that the more you give, the more you get back."

SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY

THE PHANSTIEL SCHOLARS program—scheduled to commence in fall 2011—will award scholarship grants to middle-class students who are U.S. citizens and have demonstrated the potential for academic success and community leadership. The program is uniquely designed with the principles of Scholarship in Action in mind. By encouraging a spirit of philanthropy and supporting academic and personal development, students will come to understand the value—to others as well as to themselves—of giving back to their community.

The scholars will be supported by a Council of Mentors that will assist recipients in their academic and professional development. This council will create a pathway for the scholars to participate in service within the University and in their own communities, and, in conjunction with alumni, will provide opportunities to expand support. In addition to receiving financial assistance, Phanstiel Scholars will participate in three important activities:

- » The University's financial literacy program, "I Otto Know This!", which is designed to promote lifelong fiscal fitness (see page 9).
 - » An annual lecture that helps promote the value of giving back to one's individual community and the community at large.
 - » A one-page personal statement outlining the philanthropic efforts in which they have been involved throughout the year.
- Phanstiel Scholars also must maintain consistent academic achievement toward their degree at a full-time level and contribute to the health and vibrancy of the program. Upon graduation, they will be encouraged to serve on the Council of Mentors. "It is clear to me that Howie and Louise Phanstiel understand the power of education and want to ensure that students will make the most of their time at SU," says Youlonda Copeland-Morgan, associate vice president for enrollment management. "I want the Phanstiels to know that their generosity will yield dividends for individual students, and the world at large, for generations to come."