

Gifts of a Lifetime

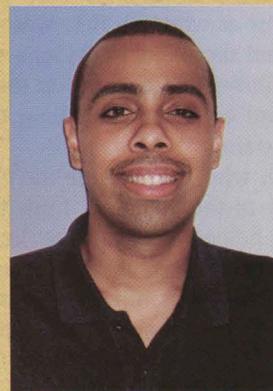
SU's alumni and friends share their good fortune for the benefit of today's students

By Christine Yackel

Charitable giving is a way of life for many Syracuse University alumni and friends. Their reasons for giving to Syracuse are as diverse as they are—some wish to leave behind a legacy, some are motivated by social conscience, and some simply want to say “thank you” to the University for helping them fulfill their dreams. But one thing all donors have in common is the joy of knowing they have helped others. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “It is one of the most

beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

Those who share their rewards with others understand that none of us lives in a world all our own. That is especially true of José Cruz, a 1999 graduate of the Martin J. Whitman School of Management. At a time in life when many young men spend their money on materialistic pursuits, Cruz established a scholarship fund for junior and senior minority accounting majors because he understands firsthand how important financial support can be to a cash-strapped college student. During his freshman year at SU, Cruz was selected as a GE Scholar, which included a renewable tuition scholarship. In addition, he received an Our Time Has Come Scholarship from the University. “I am grateful I didn’t have to struggle financially to get through school,” Cruz says. “Now it’s time to help someone else.”



José Cruz '99

Cruz made yearly donations to SU’s Annual Fund, but always knew he wanted to do more. When he saw his friends struggling to repay student loans, he realized how fortunate he had been to begin his accounting career at PriceWaterhouseCoopers in New York City without a heavy financial burden. So one day he picked up the telephone and called the University’s development office to find out how to set up a scholarship in his name. “It was so easy to establish the José Cruz Supported Scholarship Fund that I wondered why I hadn’t done it before,” says Cruz, who now works in the internal audit department at Deutsche Bank in New York City. “I’m looking forward to meeting my first scholarship recipient this year. My goal is to provide financial support for future generations by establishing an endowed scholarship fund.”

Individuals who give to SU are often the University’s best ambassadors. Cruz, for instance, now talks to his friends about supporting Syracuse. “We need to appreciate what





Illustration by Jessica Allen

Syracuse University did for us,” he says. “The scholarship fund is my way of giving something back and staying connected to SU.”

Dean Wolcott '50 and his wife, Betty Berger Wolcott '51, share that sentiment. They have been active in alumni affairs since the early '50s and give to Syracuse University on a regular basis. “At first our gifts were miniscule,” says Wolcott, who lives with his wife on a cattle ranch in Mancos, Colorado. Over the years the Wolcotts' generosity grew. During SU's Commitment to Learning campaign, they established an endowed Dean's Scholarship Fund that supports four Dean's Scholars simultaneously in the College of Arts and Sciences. “Betty got through school with scholarship support and by waiting tables,” says Wolcott, who enjoyed a 34-year career with Aetna Life & Casualty Company. “That motivated us to give money to SU. We want to help other young people have an opportunity to pursue a college education.”

One of their four children, Elizabeth, graduated from SU's School of Nursing in 1977. Following her death in 1999, the Wolcotts honored her memory by creating the Elizabeth G. Wolcott Dean's Scholarship for nursing students. With the closing of the nursing school, the scholarship will continue to support students in the College of Human Services and Health Professions. “We are great believers in SU,” Wolcott says. “Establishing a scholarship in Elizabeth's name was important to us.”

The Wolcotts' most recent commitment consists of two more endowed Dean's Scholarship Funds in their names—one in the Martin J. Whitman School of Management and the other in the College of Human Services and Health Professions. “It is our way of saying thank you,” Wolcott says.

Living Legacies

Oftentimes those who make the most generous gifts start out in life with the least. Dr. Kedar Karim Adour knows this journey well. The fifth of nine children of Syrian and Lebanese parents, Adour grew up on a farm in Clark Mills, a small town in upstate New York. He learned the value of a good education from his mother, Zina, who struggled all of her life to feed and clothe her children. “My mother drummed it into our heads that education is the pathway to a better life,” says Adour, a semi-retired surgeon from Oakland, California. “She couldn't read or write, but she knew the red mark on my report card meant I had brought home a failing grade. She was distraught and heartbroken, and I can tell you it never happened again. Unfortunately, my mother died while I was still in high school, but I know she would have been absolutely thrilled that I became a doctor.”

To honor his mother's memory—and her enduring belief in the transforming power of education—Adour set up a charitable gift annuity in 2002 to establish the Zina Adour Endowed



Dr. Kedar Karim Adour

Scholarship Fund at Syracuse University. Early on, Adour became aware that few, if any, scholarships were available to help Arab American children receive a higher education. “There was scholarship money for all ethnic groups, except Arabs,” says Adour, who worked his way through Hamilton College and studied medicine in Syracuse. “That is why I have designated my scholarship funds to give preference to Arab American children from the Clark Mills-Utica, New York, area.”

Adour uses the income generated by his charitable gift annuity to help support his extended family. Following his death, the income will support the scholarship fund he established in his mother's name in perpetuity. Single with no children of his own, he says he didn't want his money “frittered away” after he is gone. “I feel strongly that we should not provide children with luxuries,” Adour says. “We should educate children to make their own way in the world. Here in the United States, education is what takes you ahead. If people want to leave something of importance behind when they die, they should leave a legacy of education.”

That was Anita and Lionel Grossman's intention when they used tax-free bonds in 1990 to set up a charitable remainder trust to provide them with lifetime income. The trust specified that following their deaths, the trust assets would be used to support law students and general University students. “It is a wonderful way to give,” says Anita Grossman, whose late husband, Lionel, graduated from the College of Law in 1916. “It gave us income during our lifetimes and allowed the University to plan on the money after our deaths. I just wish it could have been more.”

At the time, the Grossmans relied on income from the trust. Recently however, Anita Grossman decided to terminate the trust and distribute the assets to SU now. “There came a time this past year when I realized I didn't need the income from the trust anymore, so I said to myself, ‘You know what? I'll give my gift to SU right now,’” says Grossman, who lives in Boca Raton, Florida. “I was very happy that we could make a gift to Syracuse University years ago, and now it is time to smell the roses. It makes me happy to know that deserving young people will benefit right away from our gift.”

Although not an SU alumnus, Alan Mirken now makes gifts to Syracuse University because he knows it was important to his late wife, Barbara “Bobby” Richman Mirken '51. Before her death, they endowed a Chancellor's Scholarship in the College of Arts and Sciences and created the Barbara Richman Mirken Student Internship Award Fund in the School of Social Work in honor of Bernie Wohl '51, a classmate and friend who is the former executive director of Goddard Riverside Community Center in New York City. The fund provides partial internship support



Anita and Lionel Grossman '16



Alan Mirken, second from left, and Bernie Wohl '51, right, meet with Shaneeva Benjamin '04, left, and Alexis Schonfield '05 at a Lubin House reception this fall for a group of social work students and faculty from the College of Human Services and Health Professions. In memory of his wife, Mirken sponsors a field trip to New York City, so students can learn about the history of social work.



Courtesy of the College of Human Services and Health Professions

for an undergraduate or graduate student in social work.

Barbara Mirken also sponsored a field trip to New York City so students from the College of Human Services and Health Professions could learn about the origins and growth of social work in the United States. During their three-day stay, the students toured Bellevue Hospital, UNICEF House, the United Nations, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, and the Goddard Riverside Community Center, on whose board Barbara Mirken had served for 15 years.

Continuing to honor his wife's affection for SU, Mirken sponsored the social work field trip again this year. He also sponsored a similar trip for fine arts students who met behind the scenes with museum professionals, gallery directors, collectors, and publishing executives. "Bobby and I were grateful for what we had achieved and felt we should share our good fortune with others," says Mirken, who is also an active supporter of his alma mater, Colby College.

Lucky in Life

JoAnn Heffernan Heisen '72 is also keenly aware of her good fortune. As vice president, CIO, and a member of the executive committee of Johnson & Johnson, she has risen to the top of the business world. But, when she arrived on campus on a cool, rainy September day in 1968, she had no idea what "business" was all about. Raised in a working-class neighborhood of Washington, D.C., by her widowed mother, Heisen was only able to attend college because SU offered her a good financial aid package of scholarships and loans. "I treasured the opportunity to go to SU even though I had to work as a bartender to make ends meet," Heisen says. "I know a lot of people my age who didn't go to college, and they are



JoAnn Heffernan Heisen '72

in a very different place—socially, economically, and globally."

One of Heisen's first professors was Melvin A. Eggers, who went on to become Syracuse University's ninth Chancellor. He gave her an A+ on her first economics test and told her, "You've really mastered this topic." After that class, Heisen says she "skipped all the way down the hill and never looked back." She went on to a successful career in banking, and in 1991 became the first woman treasurer of Johnson & Johnson, which is headquartered in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and has 208 subsidiaries worldwide. "Without question, Syracuse University changed my life," says Heisen, who is a member of the Maxwell School Advisory Board. "In particular, the opportunity to study in Florence, Italy, through the Division of International Programs Abroad was a real eye-opener. Studying in Europe gave me a whole new perspective on the world. That is why I established a scholarship that helps students from single-parent families have an international experience. Such an experience should be for everyone—not just for students whose parents can afford it."

Heisen says we all have moments when we look life squarely in the face and wonder how long we will be on this planet. "We must step back and ask ourselves, 'How much money do I really need to live on, and how much can I afford to give to others?'" she says. "I realize how lucky I am in life. I have four beautiful children and a great job—I feel strongly about giving back." Summarizing her abiding belief in our obligation to

help others, Heisen quotes Marion Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, who said, "Service is the rent we pay to be living."



For information on how to make a gift to Syracuse University, go to giving.syr.edu on the Internet or contact the Office of Development at 315-443-2865.