Alumni Co-Chairs Share Expertise to Guide Unprecedented Capital Campaign

THE MOST AMBITIOUS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN IN SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY’S HISTORY will call on the steady guidance of three outstanding alumni with successful careers in the private sector. University Trustees Melanie Gray G’81, Deryck A. Palmer ’78, and Howie G. Phanstiel ’70, G’71 will serve as co-chairs for The Campaign for Syracuse University—a comprehensive capital campaign with an anticipated goal of $1 billion. As the public faces of the campaign, which kicks off on November 2, they will advocate for SU’s vision of Scholarship in Action, recruit volunteers, articulate funding priorities, and rally the support needed to reach the campaign’s unprecedented goal. Syracuse University Magazine contributing editor Christine Yackel posed the following questions to the co-chairs to learn more about how they envision their roles and what impact the campaign will have on the University’s future.
Meet the Campaign Co-Chairs

Howie Phanstiel led the successful restructuring of managed health care giant PacifiCare Systems as its president, CEO, and chairman. He retired after the 2005 PacifiCare merger with UnitedHealth Group Inc. and established Phanstiel Enterprises LLC. Phanstiel holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the College of Arts and Sciences and a master of public administration degree from the Maxwell School. He serves on the Maxwell School Advisory Board and the University's Board of Trustees. He and his wife, Louise McCrary Phanstiel, live in Los Angeles.

Melanie Gray is a partner in the law firm of Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP and co-chair of the firm's bankruptcy litigation practice group. She specializes in complex commercial disputes and bankruptcy litigation.

A graduate of the College of Law, she is a member of the University’s Board of Trustees and also serves on the College of Law's Board of Advisors. She and her husband, Mark Wawro, live in Houston. Their son, William, is a first-year student at the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Deryck A. Palmer is a partner in the law firm of Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP in the financial restructuring department. He concentrates his practice in the representation of debtors as well as creditors under chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code and has handled a wide variety of workout, corporate restructuring, and bankruptcy matters.

Palmer earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the College of Arts and Sciences and a J.D. degree from the University of Michigan Law School. He has served on the University’s Board of Trustees since 2004. Palmer and his wife, Carmen J. Lawrence-Palmer, live in Maplewood, New Jersey.

SU establishes the nation’s first college offering fine arts degrees (now the College of Visual and Performing Arts).

Erastus D. Haven is inaugurated as second Chancellor.

SU awards medical degree to Sarah Loguen Fraser, one of the first African American women to become a physician in the United States.
Why did you decide to accept a leadership role in this campaign?

**Howie Phanstiel:** I’m really excited about our vision and agenda for Scholarship in Action, and I have a strong sense of the University’s energy that has developed around it. Because life has been good to me, it’s time for me to give back to the institution that played such an important role in my personal development. SU taught me, first and foremost, to be a good citizen. As John F. Kennedy once said, “A single man can make a difference; every man should try.”

How do you see your role as a campaign co-chair?

**Melanie Gray:** I am humbled to be part of the campaign leadership. I’m bursting at the seams and incredibly proud and excited to tell SU’s compelling story and express the urgency and relevancy of our vision of Scholarship in Action to alumni, parents, and friends. I strongly believe my role as one of the co-chairs is to lead by example in terms of my own individual giving. The commitment that my husband and I have made to this campaign is the largest commitment we’ve ever made, and I hope to be able to further participate as the campaign goes along. I hope many, many others will follow my example and be inspired to give until it “feels good.”

As an alumni volunteer, you will play a crucial role in the campaign—how can your fellow alumni become involved?

**Deryck Palmer:** There are many ways our alumni can become involved in the campaign: First, alumni can donate their time and their talents. Second, alumni can donate funds to the University in a variety of ways. Annual gifts to the Fund for Syracuse have a tremendous impact on the University’s educational mission and are an important campaign priority. Planned gifts are also a wonderful way for people to participate in the campaign and leave a legacy for future generations. Finally, alumni can spread the word about the University’s Scholarship in Action initiative. This will have a tremendous impact on how this campaign is received by fellow alumni as well as the public at large. In my view, there is a part to be played by everyone.

What do you believe are Syracuse University’s greatest strengths?

**MG:** I believe the University’s greatest strength is its interdisciplinary approach to education and its tradition of inclusiveness. A hallmark of an SU education is the ability and willingness to work across academic disciplines to transform what is learned in the classroom and laboratory into practical use for the public good. This strength is being championed by Chancellor Cantor’s extraordinary leadership. And the more I re-engage with the University as a member of the Board of Trustees and the College of Law’s Board of Advisors, the more I have come to realize that it is a place that is, and always has been, truly inclusive.

The capital campaign has an anticipated goal of $1 billion. Why do you think the campaign is so important to the University’s future—and why is now the right time to undertake such an ambitious fund-raising effort?

**DP:** Syracuse University is ready to have a campaign of this size. A number of forces are coming together, and we must take full advantage of this moment in time to secure our rightful place as one of the elite universities in the country. We have Nancy Cantor’s leadership, a wonderful vision for the University, interdisciplinary programs that continue to excel at a rapid pace, and a sufficient alumni base to support a campaign of this size—all of these factors make for a winning combination.

Can you share your thoughts with us on how the campaign will support Chancellor Cantor’s vision of Scholarship in Action and why it is important for the University to engage with the world to offer practical solutions to real-world issues?

**HP:** The campaign will allow us to continue to expand and upgrade our educational facilities, to develop the innovative interdisciplinary programs that are so crucial to real-world problem solving, and, finally, to recruit students and faculty who share the Chancellor’s passion for making the world a better place. To the extent that the University can help prepare students to become better world and U.S. citizens as well as engage in the discovery of truth and knowledge that is relevant to real-world problems, we all benefit. To the extent that the University can leverage previously untapped human capital, our society will become more enriched and accomplished as a whole.

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Syracuse University has a history of “taking chances” on non-traditional students, from World War II veterans to those today who are the first generation of their families to attend college. What kind of opportunities do you believe the campaign will create for such students?

**DP:** Because we have a substantial commitment in the campaign to increase financial assistance, the campaign has the potential to make SU more accessible to non-traditional students from all walks of life. These additional resources will help mitigate the prohibitive cost of a college education and increase access for those students who may come from backgrounds that are not typical of the average college student.

Approximately 66 percent of undergraduate students receive need-based financial aid from the University; overall, 78 percent receive some form of financial assistance. How do you see the campaign helping our students meet the rising cost of a college education?

**HP:** The reality is that most families in America need some help in supporting their children’s education, and the need is greatest in the private educational institutions. At SU, we need to build up our non-tuition sourced financial aid funds in order to both maintain the quality of our education and support services, as well as to create opportunities for those deserving students who lack the financial capacity to attend private schools.

**Why do you and our donors care so deeply about SU?**

**DP:** Many of our alumni, myself included, have been touched in profound ways by Syracuse University. On a personal note, I see the campaign as a wonderful opportunity to express my gratitude for the outstanding undergraduate education I received at SU. Without that excellent foundation, my career in law may have been very different. For every alumnus, the campaign is an opportunity to reach out and do something that is reflective of the chance SU took on each of us. By making a contribution—in whatever form or amount it may take—we are giving back to the University that gave so much to us.

**What do you anticipate the outcomes of the campaign will be?**

**HP:** I believe we will achieve all of our financial goals and position SU as one of the most prestigious and relevant universities in America today. By securing our future and jump-starting Scholarship in Action funding, we will quickly begin to see our vision take form. We will see ourselves as a leading, top-tier educational institution that is making a positive difference in people’s lives every day. Everyone likes to be part of a “winning team,” and our $1 billion giving campaign will put us over the top. I also feel that the energy and success that will be built around the campaign will help to bring our broader SU family and community closer together.

**How do you think establishing endowed chairs for faculty through the campaign will strengthen SU? How will this affect the overall quality of an SU education?**

**HP:** The field of education is becoming increasingly competitive and schools cannot obtain or maintain their top-tier rankings without creating good long-term career opportunities for faculty. Building a school with great faculty members is all part of advancing our brand and aspirations for continued academic excellence.

**How do you envision the campaign changing the culture of giving at SU?**

**MG:** I am confident the campaign will significantly impact the level of giving from our alumni and friends. Change is happening at SU, and the campaign is a critical part of that change—generating even more excitement about Scholarship in Action and inspiring donors to fully embrace and support SU. People give because they want to create, and be a part of, change; they want to make a real difference in the world. The campaign is an incredible opportunity for them to make a difference in a big way.

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**MINT YOUR INTERESTS**

There are several ways you can support the University’s vision and contribute to its future. Following are some options:

- **Annual gifts** to the Fund for Syracuse provide a vital and immediate financial resource that can be directed wherever support is needed most.
- **Outright gifts** support program initiatives, scholarships, research projects, and capital improvements.
- **Endowment gifts** generate income to advance the University’s goals and priorities for future generations.
- **Gift annuities** offer donors a fixed annual income and a charitable income-tax deduction for part of the gift.
- **Bequests** are made by a will or living trust through which a donor names SU as recipient of all or part of an estate.

For more information, contact the SU Office of Development at 315-443-2865 or visit campaign.syr.edu.

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ENDOWMENT GIFTS
WHAT THEY ARE—WHY THEY MATTER

AS THE CAMPAIGN FOR SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR, YOU will undoubtedly be hearing about the importance of endowment gifts. But what are endowment gifts and why do they matter?

Simply put, endowment gifts give forever. Because they provide income from permanently invested funds, endowment gifts keep on giving from one generation to the next, thus providing the University with the financial foundation on which its future depends. The following STEP-BY-STEP illustration is representative of how an endowment gift works.

1. A College of Visual and Performing Arts alumna makes a $50,000 gift to the Setnor School of Music to establish a named endowed scholarship in memory of her father.

2. A gift agreement is drawn up between Syracuse University and the donor, guaranteeing that her gift will be added to the general endowment fund to be used solely for its stated purpose.

3. The donor’s named scholarship fund buys units in the University’s larger endowment pool, much as one buys shares in a mutual fund.

4. The Board of Trustees Investment and Endowment Committee prudently invests the donor’s gift across major assets in the University’s portfolio to maximize return.

Myer Prinstein ’01 wins gold medals in long jump and triple jump on same day at the St. Louis Olympics—the only athlete ever to win both events at the same Olympics.

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie donates $150,000 to erect library on campus bearing his name.

The Daily Orange—the nation’s first collegiate newspaper to feature cartoons—is launched.

College of Engineering (now the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science) is founded.

School of Education is founded.
CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

As predetermined by the Investment and Endowment Committee, a portion of the annual income generated by the named fund’s investments is used to provide a scholarship for one music student per year—the fund’s principal remains intact and is never spent.

The remainder of the earned income—minus the payout—is returned to the named fund’s principal as a hedge against inflation and to ensure for growth.

The named fund continues to grow, thereby ensuring that the current scholarship support is the same or greater in the future.

* $50,000 is the minimum amount required to establish an endowment.

The advantages of this endowment gift are clear: Year after year, a talented young musician receives financial support; the Setnor School of Music uses the scholarship as a recruiting tool to attract and retain top students; a steady revenue stream allows the school to plan for future needs; and the donor has created a living legacy in memory of her father.

This is just one example of how an endowment gift to Syracuse University can have a lasting impact on many levels. In addition to scholarships, donors have a wide range of options for endowment gifts. They can endow faculty chairs and professorships, academic programs, student activities, or initiatives of the library, athletics, or other programs or departments. Whether given as an outright gift, pledge, or bequest, an endowment gift is a win-win for all concerned.

—Christine Yackel

Visit campaign.syr.edu to learn more about how your gift to The Campaign for Syracuse University can support Scholarship in Action and incite change as never before.