A fulfilling career and a worthy cause

Many current, former, or retired employees of Virginia Tech are generous donors to the university. Between the July 2003 start of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future and the end of last year, current, former, and retired faculty and staff donated or pledged more than $56.6 million.

Teacher, researcher, philanthropist

Psychology Professor Scott Geller has brought millions in research funding to Virginia Tech. He’s mentored hundreds of students, founded a research center, delivered a keynote address at Commencement, and won just about every honor his school gives its faculty.

So it’s probably safe to say that through his hard work Geller has done more than his fair share for his field, his university, and his students. But he doesn’t see it that way.

Geller is not just an outstanding researcher and teacher; he’s also a major donor to Virginia Tech. By contributing to the Center for Applied Behavior Systems within the Department of Psychology in the College of Science, he helps to employ postdoctoral researchers and send students to research conferences. And Geller, a member of the university’s Ut Prosim Society of donors, recently created the Actively Caring for People Scholarship to provide $4,500 each semester to a student with financial need and a strong desire to make the world a more caring place.

The first recipient is Vincent Mirabella, a sophomore from Bloomsbury, N.J., majoring in biochemistry, chemistry, and psychology.

“Getting a scholarship like this really takes the financial pressures of attending school off of me and it’s allowed me to do so much more than I ever would have been able to do had I not received the scholarship,” says Mirabella, who plans to become a doctor and work in emergency medicine. “I’m now realizing my potential as a student, and I feel more confident that I’ll go on to do great things in the future.”

Among the many current and former staff members who have contributed is Tom Tucker, of Radford, Va., who is both an employee and an alumnus. Tucker earned his bachelor’s in architecture in 1984, has worked for the university since 1986, and now is an architectural planner for Facilities Information Systems, part of University Planning Design & Construction Services.

He regularly donates to support alumni programs. He also contributes toward scholarships for Virginia Tech employees’ spouses, children, or dependents. Tucker says he learned about the scholarships while serving on the Staff Senate and thought they were important to support.

“If we can grow the scholarship and make it even larger, it could become a real tool for recruiting and the retention of employees,” says Tucker, who became Staff Senate president in July 2008.

Tucker donates a portion of his salary each pay period to those causes.

“I made the right decision”

Bill Tyrell (veterinary medicine ’90) strongly urges others to also support the Employees’ Spouse and Dependent Scholarship in support of Virginia Tech employees’ spouses, children, or dependents.

“Tucker donates a portion of his salary each pay period to those causes while serving on the Staff Senate and thought they were important to support,” says Tucker, who became Staff Senate president in July 2008.

A generous gift to students in need

The Student Success Leadership Scholarship

Donors back an important project

at the Skelton 4-H center

New welcome center to open in 2011

Inspirational stories

Diane and Steve Terhune, of Blacksburg, have given more than $900,000 to the university in support of the College of Architecture and Planning, including a $500,000 gift to the Schilling Center for Design & Construction Services.

“People need to know that philanthropy is the right way to give back,” says Diane Terhune. “And I think it’s important for the dependents of or people who’ve served Virginia Tech to have the opportunity to attend the university,” he says.

News around the campus

Philanthropy at work

(Wall with Accounting and Information Systems Professor France Bélanger)

Lessons learned inspire giving back

Entrepreneur James Pearson credits Tech

Contents

A fulfilling career and a worthy cause

Tom Tucker and Scott Geller

Page 1

Broad giving is critical to Virginia Tech’s future

Elizabeth A. “Betsy” Flanagan, Vice President for Development and University Relations

Page 2

Our Hokie spirit makes us special

Bob Steele (architecture ’82)

Page 2

Entrepreneur James Pearson credits Tech

Page 3

Campaign Snapshot

Page 2

Donors back an important project

at the Skelton 4-H center

New welcome center to open in 2011

Page 3

A generous gift to students in need

The Student Success Leadership Scholarship

Page 4

Leading the future

Bill Tyrell (veterinary medicine ‘90) always knew that Tech was the right fit

Page 5

“I made the right decision”

Bill Tyrell (veterinary medicine ‘90)

Page 5

Ways to give

Estate planning

Page 5

News around the campus

Page 6

Philanthropy at work

(Wall with Accounting and Information Systems Professor France Bélanger)

Page 7

Lessons learned inspire giving back

Entrepreneur James Pearson credits Tech

Page 8

SPRING 2010 EDITION

A PUBLICATION OF THE VIRGINIA TECH OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT, VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

PRODUCED BY UNIVERSITY RELATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

SPRING 2010 EDITION

IMPACT SPRING 2010 | Page 1

IMPACT Spring 2010 | Page 1

VirginiaTech

Invent the Future

IMPACT SPRING 2010 | Page 1

Did you know?

- That nearly 4,500 retired, current, and former faculty and staff have made a gift in support of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future?
- That 314 Ut Prosim Society members, 59 Caldwell Society members, and 129 Legacy Society members are retired, current, or former faculty and staff?
- That 83 current or retired faculty and staff have created named endowments in the last five years?
- That nearly 570 retired, current, and former faculty and staff households have given $25,000 or more to Virginia Tech and that more than 310 of those have given $50,000 or more?
Betsy Flanagan
National Campaign Steering Committee Co-Chairs

When we began planning for The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future, we engaged the services of Marts & Lundy, a 
www.martsandlundy.com/counsel/index.php

We ask that you make a commitment to the campaign. We encourage you to make regular annual gifts and to consider making the Virginia Tech Foundation part of your estate plans. cause they provide support for the university’s future needs. Deferred gifts have a combination of flexibility and financial advantages, because they often provide real benefits to you now, while at the same time benefiting the university at some point in the future. Furthermore, deferred gifts often enable you to make your possible charitable contribution.

Our Hokie spirit makes us special

John S. Lemos (right), president of the VT Alumni Association and of the Alumni Association’s National Campaign Steering Committee Co-Chair.

When we began planning for The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future, we engaged the services of Martha & Randy, a consulting firm, to ensure that we were on the path to success. Recently, the firm recognized Virginia Tech’s excellence in their newsletter counsel (www.martandlundy.com/counsel/index.php).

GET CONNECTED WITH THE CAMPAIGN! Want more ways to stay up-to-date on how your gifts are making a difference every day? Now we have more ways than ever to make that happen. Visit www.campaign.vt.edu/connect to find out more.

As we move through The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future, we remain incredibly optimistic about our continued success and the inevitability of reaching our $1 billion goal. The most obvious reason for that optimism is that our friends and alumni continue to support the university generously. As of March 31, 2010, we had raised $910,061,175. We are still ahead of schedule as we pursue our goal.

Every year thousands of young people attend programs at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Education Center at Smith Mountain Lake. The center also has a mission to use its annual fund accomplishments.

Donors back an important project at the Skelton 4-H center

The 4-H center is named for William E. Skelton, a former director of the common-wealth’s 4-H program and dean of Extension at Virginia Tech, who passed away in 1992. Skelton also served on the center’s board. Skelton’s 4-H center officials are able to charge comparable rates even though they are generally not as accessible to the public as the programs are.

Bart McAlister at (540) 231-6913.

Donors back an important project at the Skelton 4-H center

Accorded in the article by John Cash, one of the firm’s senior consultants, Virginia Tech “is one of the most innovative institutions of its type. They take pride in their proven past and in the fact that they are striving for excellence in all that they do.” In that regard, the new building has made it possible for thousands of young people to attend college, regardless of their background or financial circumstances. “This experience,” donors say, “instills an attitude of extraordinary gratitude and intense loyalty in its graduates. In whatever extent they feel well-prepared for success in their careers, they attribute it to Virginia Tech.”

It is wonderful to realize that the heart and spirit of the Hokie Nation is visible even to the people who are not Hokies.

When it opens in 2011, the new building will make the 4-H center even more attractive to officials looking to book conferences, retreats, or weddings.

The planned welcome center’s rustic appearance will blend in beautifully with the largely forested grounds along Smith Mountain Lake. The new building was designed in a hybrid American Craftsman style with a heavy timber frame central core. The grand entrance hall will feature a large Hokie Barn Replica.

Architecturally, this will be a dynamic space,” says building architect Bill Hennes (archi-tect #071), president of Roanoke-based Interactive Group Design.

The 4-H center is named for William E. Skelton, a former director of the common-wealth’s 4-H program and dean of Extension at Virginia Tech, who passed away in 2008. Much of the cost of the new building will be covered by an estate gift he made.

£ten of thousands of people from this region have benefitted from participating in 4-H programs at this center – including my daughter, Wendy,” says Skelton, an Ut Prosim Society member who also is in the Legacy Society of donors who have included Virginia Tech in their estate plans. “I am excited about this project because it will help to visibly support this center even more for the region.”

Ut Prosim Society members John Montague and Jane Skelton Montague, the son-in-law and daughter of William E. Skelton, also contributed generously. John Montague also serves on the center’s board.

“Don’t pass up the opportunity to be part of something that will impact the future of this region,” Montague says. 

The conference business allows us to stay true to why we are here, which is to help 4-H campers,” apologizes Rogers Bowles, the center’s executive director.

Now that business is poised to grow, thanks to donors who have contributed more than $1.4 million toward construction of a 2,300-square-foot welcome center. When it opens in 2011, the new building will make the 4-H center even more attractive to people looking to book conferences, retreats, or weddings.

Deflected gifts, such as bequests, retirement account gifts, beneficiary designations, and life estate gifts, are equally critical to the future of Virginia Tech because they provide support to the university’s future needs. Deflected gifts have a combination of flexibility and financial advantages, because they often provide real benefits to you now, while at the same time benefiting the university at some point in the future. Furthermore, deflected gifts often enable you to make your possible charitable contribution.

Each year, thousands of young people attend programs at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Education- al Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake.

One reason they come is obvious. Who wouldn’t want to spend time on a beautiful, 120-acre property that offers boating, horseback riding, rock climbing, and other exciting activities? But another reason is that the programs are affordable.

Skelton 4-H center officials are able to charge comp- etitively low rates of what actually costs to provide camp programs, because the center also has revenue from a donor-supported endowment and from groups that book conferences at the facility when camp is in session.

“Because the business allows us to stay true to why we are here, which is to help 4-H campers,” explains Rogers Bowles, the center’s executive director.
A generous gift to students in need

Paula Robichaud says her Virginia Tech education was an exhilarating experience and that she believes higher education is an essential springboard into the world for the young.

By making an extraordinarily generous donation to establish the Robichaud Family Presidential Scholarship, she is helping ensure students of limited means will continue to have access to that “springboard” at Virginia Tech.

Robichaud’s gift, like the university, continues its effort to bring higher education accessible to the commonwealth’s brightest students, a program called the Presidential Scholarship Initiative.

Through the initiative, up to 50 Virginia students each year can receive scholarship support to combine with other aid options in order to fully pay for their undergraduate education.

The first students to benefit from the program enrolled in August 2009. Students who maintain good grades can renew their scholarships for up to four years. The Presidential Scholarship Initiative fund, so that bright, motivated students from less-privileged backgrounds to Virginia Tech also appealed to her.

Robichaud earned her bachelor’s in health and physical education in 1977 and went on to work in financial services in Baltimore and on Wall Street before moving to California, changing fields, and earning a master’s in counseling psychology from Santa Clara University. She lives in Palo Alto and a marriage and family therapist, but traces her interest in philanthropy to her days on Wall Street.

“During the course of my business career, there were times when individuals of wealth either did not or did not choose to use their considerable resources for philanthropic ends,” says Robichaud, one of seven siblings who moved often because their father was in the military.

“I often thought how wonderful it was when I observed, read, or heard of someone good fortune to support others with less. It pleases me to be so fortunate as to be able to choose to add some support to those who have hope and hunger for higher education. While as strong as our weakest link, let those of us who have means strengthen the foundation of our society with a better educated population.”

Robichaud endowed a scholarship in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences in 2006 and has helped several students pay private high school tuition in the Palo Alto region. She has also been generous to the alma mater with her time as a volunteer. She serves on the Virginia Tech Foundation board and is on a Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invest the Future committee focused on the greater San Francisco area.

When deciding whether to offer an incoming student financial assistance through the Presidential Scholarship Initiative, university offices weigh candidates’ financial need, high school grade point average, family size, whether they come from a single-parent household, and whether their parents are college graduates.

Robichaud says that when she learned about the initiative it seemed to match her philanthropic goal of helping others to realize the benefits of higher education, which she has found so valuable in her own life.

Robichaud’s gift is the largest to date in support of the initiative.

“I really think that a bright, fine, inquisitive person can be in a case a case you can never be in a castle,” Robichaud said. “One never knows how or where creativity or genius may be sparked. For that reason, I encourage and invite other donors to help build the Presidential Scholarship Initiative fund, so that motivated students from un-conventional situations have support in reaching their fullest potential. Where there’s a will, there is a way.”

Any Virginia student is eligible for Presidential Scholarship Initiative assistance if they meet financial and academic criteria. Nonetheless, the initiative is likely to help the university maintain a diverse student body by reducing the cost of higher education for students from groups that are underrepresented for financial reasons. Robichaud said the initiative’s potential to bring students from many different backgrounds to Virginia Tech also appealed to her.

“During my time at the university, aside from the natural enthusiasm that goes on from 11:00-12:00, one thing that really struck me was hearing diversified voices,” Robichaud said. “It opened my mind. I think that experience was exhilarating.”

A generous gift to students in need

Many students start college without knowing what they want to do for a living. Bob Steele entered high school planning to be an architect.

As a freshman at Lake Budd College in Fairlawn County, Va., he took advantage of athenew curriculum in mechanical and architectural drawing. By his sophomore year, he was even more certain he would want to be an architect. All that remained was to persuade his father – a Cornell alumnus – that Virginia Tech was a better fit.

“I felt that given the type of architecture that interested me, I would receive the best education from the faculty at Virginia Tech, and I have complete confidence that I made the right decision,” says Steele (architecture ’82, friend and president of Richmond-based RGB BeyondOrdinaryArchitecture).“I liked the European influence of Virginia Tech, the international style. I was a way of thinking and a new way of creating that was very intriging to me.”

Admitting to his mistake, Steele says Virginia Tech encourages students to focus on the process of designing a suitable building, as opposed to creating some preconceived design that may not be appropriate. “Architecture doesn’t have a mandate,” he says.

It’s a philosophy that Steele and his associates follow to this day. RGB Architecture does not have a signature look, but engages clients in conversations about architecture “that lead to ‘suitable’ buildings,” Steele says.

Bob Steele: “I made the right decision”

Many students start college without knowing what they want to do for a living. Bob Steele entered high school planning to be an architect.

As a freshman at Lake Budd College in Fairlawn County, Va., he took advantage of athenew curriculum in mechanical and architectural drawing. By his sophomore year, he was even more certain he would want to be an architect. All that remained was to persuade his father – a Cornell alumnus – that Virginia Tech was a better fit.

“I felt that given the type of architecture that interested me, I would receive the best education from the faculty at Virginia Tech, and I have complete confidence that I made the right decision,” says Steele (architecture ’82, friend and president of Richmond-based RGB BeyondOrdinaryArchitecture).“I liked the European influence of Virginia Tech, the international style. I was a way of thinking and a new way of creating that was very intriging to me.”

Admitting to his mistake, Steele says Virginia Tech encourages students to focus on the process of designing a suitable building, as opposed to creating some preconceived design that may not be appropriate. “Architecture doesn’t have a mandate,” he says.

It’s a philosophy that Steele and his associates follow to this day. RGB Architecture does not have a signature look, but engages clients in conversations about architecture “that lead to ‘suitable’ buildings,” Steele says.

Bob Steele: “I made the right decision”

Many students start college without knowing what they want to do for a living. Bob Steele entered high school planning to be an architect.

As a freshman at Lake Budd College in Fairlawn County, Va., he took advantage of athenew curriculum in mechanical and architectural drawing. By his sophomore year, he was even more certain he would want to be an architect. All that remained was to persuade his father – a Cornell alumnus – that Virginia Tech was a better fit.

“I felt that given the type of architecture that interested me, I would receive the best education from the faculty at Virginia Tech, and I have complete confidence that I made the right decision,” says Steele (architecture ’82, friend and president of Richmond-based RGB BeyondOrdinaryArchitecture).“I liked the European influence of Virginia Tech, the international style. I was a way of thinking and a new way of creating that was very intriging to me.”

Admitting to his mistake, Steele says Virginia Tech encourages students to focus on the process of designing a suitable building, as opposed to creating some preconceived design that may not be appropriate. “Architecture doesn’t have a mandate,” he says.

It’s a philosophy that Steele and his associates follow to this day. RGB Architecture does not have a signature look, but engages clients in conversations about architecture “that lead to ‘suitable’ buildings,” Steele says.

“Bob Steele: “I made the right decision”

Many students start college without knowing what they want to do for a living. Bob Steele entered high school planning to be an architect.

As a freshman at Lake Budd College in Fairlawn County, Va., he took advantage of athenew curriculum in mechanical and architectural drawing. By his sophomore year, he was even more certain he would want to be an architect. All that remained was to persuade his father – a Cornell alumnus – that Virginia Tech was a better fit.

“I felt that given the type of architecture that interested me, I would receive the best education from the faculty at Virginia Tech, and I have complete confidence that I made the right decision,” says Steele (architecture ’82, friend and president of Richmond-based RGB BeyondOrdinaryArchitecture).“I liked the European influence of Virginia Tech, the international style. I was a way of thinking and a new way of creating that was very intriging to me.”

Admitting to his mistake, Steele says Virginia Tech encourages students to focus on the process of designing a suitable building, as opposed to creating some preconceived design that may not be appropriate. “Architecture doesn’t have a mandate,” he says.

It’s a philosophy that Steele and his associates follow to this day. RGB Architecture does not have a signature look, but engages clients in conversations about architecture “that lead to ‘suitable’ buildings,” Steele says.

“Bob Steele: “I made the right decision”

Many students start college without knowing what they want to do for a living. Bob Steele entered high school planning to be an architect.

As a freshman at Lake Budd College in Fairlawn County, Va., he took advantage of athenew curriculum in mechanical and architectural drawing. By his sophomore year, he was even more certain he would want to be an architect. All that remained was to persuade his father – a Cornell alumnus – that Virginia Tech was a better fit.

“I felt that given the type of architecture that interested me, I would receive the best education from the faculty at Virginia Tech, and I have complete confidence that I made the right decision,” says Steele (architecture ’82, friend and president of Richmond-based RGB BeyondOrdinaryArchitecture).“I liked the European influence of Virginia Tech, the international style. I was a way of thinking and a new way of creating that was very intriging to me.”

Admitting to his mistake, Steele says Virginia Tech encourages students to focus on the process of designing a suitable building, as opposed to creating some preconceived design that may not be appropriate. “Architecture doesn’t have a mandate,” he says.

It’s a philosophy that Steele and his associates follow to this day. RGB Architecture does not have a signature look, but engages clients in conversations about architecture “that lead to ‘suitable’ buildings,” Steele says.
This is the 14th consecutive year that the UPS Foundation continues support of engineering program this particular grant to the College of Engineering, to recognize some of its best young faculty members. Based in Atlanta, the UPS Foundation identifies specific named fellowships are a great way for Virginia Tech to be both a fulfilling place to work and a worthy cause to donate to. To meet other employees and use that as an inspiration to help others in the same way, they care. We are always looking for ways to improve Impact and the best way to do that is to ask you. Please take just a few seconds to go online and let us know what you think. Thank you! Visit us at www.campaign.vt.edu/impact.

Continuing a 14-year tradition, the United Parcel Ser­vice (UPS) Foundation has awarded a $14,000 grant to Virginia Tech’s College of Industrial and Systems Engineering. Funds will be used to support doctoral students in the College’s departmental human factors engineering/ergonomics graduate program. Awarded for research this year will focus on package handling and delivery ergonomics for drivers, improvement of hand-held data entry devices, such as scanners and PDAs, and road vehicle design safety factors, and personal protective equipment design and application.

The 14th consecutive year that the UPS Foundation has supported the College of Industrial and Systems Engineering, Crucell made his first proposal for the UPS grant in 1995, and since has served as the foundation’s director at UPS.

UPS has awarded approximately $700,000 under similar campus initiatives to the College of Engineering, therefore funding nine of the 25 doctoral students. Crucell’s relationship with UPS also has resulted from other IT educators, I decided to create a program that would allow students to experience IT before learning about. It results in a book that provides a learner-centered approach to teaching technical skills to information systems.

We were recently named the Byrd Senior Fellow. How does that affect your research and/or teaching?

I was honored to receive this recognition. The foundation backed Byrd and Davey Byrd provides me with financial support that encourages me to continue to focus my efforts on high-impact and high-quality research and teaching. Importantly, the fact that I was a W. S. Byrd Fellow was acknowledged by colleagues and administrators worldwide, from Canada, to France, to New Zealand, and of course by colleagues in business and academics in the United States. This undoubtedly enhances the reputation of the ACIS department, the Pamplin College of Business, and Virginia Tech as a whole.
Lessons Learned Inspire Pearsons to Give Back

James Pearson says the agriculture and business classes he took at Virginia Tech enabled him to succeed as an entrepreneur. Getting up early to shine his shoes also helped.

The classes "enabled me to look objectively at business opportunities and plan accordingly," explains Pearson, who goes by his first initial, J. "And I was also in the Army ROTC in the corps of cadets. I disliked getting up early, shining shoes and such, but it all taught me a lot of valuable lessons. Receiving a commission in the Army, along with the leadership skills and professionalism I gained, has served me well."

Today Pearson (agricultural and applied economics '87) is president of Carry-on Trailer Inc., the nation’s largest manufacturer of trailers, trailer parts, and related accessories.

He founded the firm in 1996 and initially was one of two office staff – the other being his wife, Renae Pearson. (family and child development '90). The firm has grown tremendously and now has seven locations and 900 employees. Its 1-millionth trailer rolled off the line in 2008.

J. Pearson credits both the corps of cadets and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) with providing him a foundation for success, and he and Renae give back generously to both programs.

The Pearsons live in Lavinia, Ga., with their two children, Anna Kate and Will. Last year, J. and Renae Pearson were inducted into the university’s Ut Prosim Society, a select group of extraordinarily generous supporters. They are also in Virginia Tech’s Pylon Society, which is a group that recognizes donors who make annual gifts.

“We were always brought up to remember the people who do good things for you,” Renae Pearson says. “Tech was a great foundation for both of us, so we like to do what we can to give back.”

In her case, giving back also includes tutoring math students and serving on the council at her children’s school. Her husband’s volunteer activities include serving on the corps of cadets board of directors and the Virginia Tech campaign committees for the corps and the Atlanta region. J. Pearson also gives guest lectures in the university’s agricultural economics department.

Members of the corps of cadets who major in a CALS program are eligible to apply for a J. & Renae Pearson Endowed Scholarship, and the Pearsons recently made a generous gift and pledge to help create the Kohl Agribusiness Centre.

The center is named for Professor Emeritus of Agricultural and Applied Economics David Kohl. Its mission is to provide students with practical learning experiences that also assist Virginia agribusinesses and related rural industries.

J. Pearson says Kohl was “one professor that really stood out for me, I use his teachings everyday.”

“Dr. Kohl’s problem sets are legendary for those of us who had to do them,” he adds. “But they were great at preparing you for actual business.”