Impact

Virginia Tech

Winter 2011

Campaign for Virginia Tech Surpasses Goal

Gene Fife: Broadening horizons through the arts

Virginia Tech Student Engineers’ Council Passes $1 Million in Giving

Remembering Jean Shehan

Still Time in 2011 to Support Virginia Tech
Contents:
The classes of 1988 and 1989 provided funds to build the Duck Pond gazebo. In this lovely spot, Virginia Tech students, alumni, and visitors study, feed the birds, and take in the beauty of the pond throughout the seasons.

Rear Cover:
The closing celebration for The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future took place Nov. 12, 2011, in a temporary structure adjacent to the Holtzman Alumni Center.

Front Cover:
Dancers from The Ballet Project at Virginia Tech perform at the campaign closing event.
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We Did It!

I cannot adequately express how grateful I am to every one of you who has supported The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future. Together, we've raised $1.11 billion and ensured a bright future for this amazing university. Fewer than 50 universities have conducted campaigns of $1 billion or more, so we find ourselves in select company.

Our campaign volunteers—nearly 900 of you—provided invaluable counsel. I cannot thank you enough for all you have done to help us achieve this amazing accomplishment.

Virginia Tech's faculty and staff stepped up as well. Current, former, or retired employees committed more than $66 million combined to Virginia Tech during the campaign.

Though we recently celebrated our campaign's success, there is far more to our accomplishment than reaching and surpassing the overall goal. During the campaign, the value of Virginia Tech's endowment increased by just over 81 percent, thanks to gifts and investments. At the close of the campaign, the value of our endowment was more than $600 million—an accomplishment that also puts Virginia Tech on a new level. Such success means we have been able to increase our annual expenditures on student financial assistance from $11.47 million to $21.60 million during the campaign. Clearly, your support of Virginia Tech makes a profound difference to our students.

Our college and university units also have benefitted from your campaign gifts. Several colleges, including Architecture and Urban Studies, Engineering, Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and Natural Resources and Environment raised more than 130 percent of their goals. The W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake raised 225 percent of its goal. Both the Graduate School and Athletics raised more than 180 percent of their goals.

This campaign has literally transformed campus by helping to fund several projects that are already completed, including the Holtzman Alumni Center, the Hahn-Hurst Basketball Practice Center, and the second Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science building. The campaign has also made it possible for us to begin construction of the Center for the Arts and the Signature Engineering Building, two projects for which fundraising is ongoing.

Though the campaign has come to a close, the needs of our students and faculty are still real and we must work to sustain our successes. Together, we can continue to make a difference to our students, our faculty, and our university community.

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

Contact us
• Email impact@vt.edu
• Call 540-231-2805
• Send a note to:
  Impact Editor
  902 Prices Fork Road (0336)
  Blacksburg, VA 24061
Virginia Tech is privileged to have dedicated faculty and staff, who not only devote their time and talents on a daily basis, but who also generously give back to the university every year.

Thousands of faculty and staff have contributed to Virginia Tech through its Faculty/Staff Campaign, supporting scholarships, research, outreach and other programs. A flagship program of the Faculty/Staff Campaign is the Employees’ Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Fund, which provides partial tuition assistance to the spouses and dependents of university employees. To be eligible, an employee’s spouse or dependent must be an incoming freshman or first-year transfer student.

Beverly Williams, an academic research development assistant for the Department of Engineering Science and Mechanics, who has worked 30 years for the university, fully appreciates all that programs such as the Employees’ Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Fund do to mitigate the cost of higher education.

“When you’re looking at that bill and what you’ve got to come up with to pay, scholarships do make a difference,” said Williams, who also sent her sons Joshua and Justin to Virginia Tech.

The scholarship was initiated by the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs in 1999 and first awarded in 2000. The amount given has varied from $400 to this year’s record high, $750, depending on availability of funds.

Since 2000, the Employees’ Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Fund has awarded more than 120 scholarships thanks to the private donations that make possible this much-appreciated program.

This academic year, nine students are the recipients of Virginia Tech’s Employees’ Spouse and Dependent Scholarship, one of many programs supported by our Faculty/Staff Campaign. This year’s recipients include Spencer Lovegrove of Roanoke, Va. (pictured left, surrounded by his father Richard and mother Lisa), Chelsey Williams of Christiansburg, Va. (standing next to her mother Beverly), and Tiffany Farley (seated with mother Katherine). Not pictured: Alex Granata, Mai Ngo, Tanley Brown, Adam Richards, Sonia Amin, and Rebecca Williams.
Mary Osburn had always sat in the stands with her husband as the Hokies stormed the field at Lane Stadium. At the Miami game on Saturday, Oct. 8, 2011, however, she was on the field with the Marching Virginians, jumping furiously to the Hokies’ iconic entrance song, Metallica’s “Enter Sandman.” And she says she knows that’s what Chris would have wanted.

“Being on that field, I believe it was Chris’s way of letting me be a part of [Virginia] Tech football the way he was. It was so much more than I ever thought it would be.”

Chris Osburn, a two-time Virginia Tech alumnus, loved Virginia Tech and he loved the Marching Virginians, for whom he played trumpet during his years in Blacksburg. And when he met his wife, Mary, a Longwood University alumna, it was clear to her that to love Chris was to love his alma mater, its marching band, and Virginia Tech football.

Chris received his degree in environmental science and engineering from the College of Engineering in 1998 and his MBA from the Pamplin College of Business in 2000.
Chris caught a cold just after Christmas in 2010. It wouldn’t go away, so he went to the doctor and was diagnosed with bronchitis. His symptoms worsened into pneumonia, so he went to the emergency room with his wife and was admitted to the hospital.

“I was sitting there with him,” Mary recalled. “He told me to go home and get some rest and that he’d hopefully be able to come home the next day. His parents were with him, so I left around 7 p.m. that night and told him, ‘I love you!’"

Chris died unexpectedly around 2 a.m., on Jan. 21, 2011. He was only 35 years old.

His wife, his parents, and his friends celebrated Chris’s life the way they thought he would have wanted. At his memorial service, his friends played “Tech Triumph” and when it was over, his mother yelled, “Go Hokies!”

“I felt very honored to carry the trumpet in his honor. We [Marching Virginians] are all connected through music and when something happens to one of us, we need to respond.”

David Peterson

Chris’s family started a memorial fund through the university in his honor. They specifically wanted to do something with the Marching Virginians, so they contacted Dave McKee, senior instructor to the band since 1984, who suggested engraved trumpets.

With the help of Chris’s friends and fellow Hokies Chris Li, Mike Day, and Jason Mirick, the Osburn family agreed on the engraved trumpets, but with a little twist. To help them stand out from the rest, they had elements of the trumpets gold-plated.

At a ceremony before the Miami game on Oct. 8, current Marching Virginian trumpet section leaders Dakota Corbliss, a junior majoring in music within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and David Peterson, a senior majoring in civil engineering within the College of Engineering, were presented with new Yamaha Xeno, gold-plated trumpets engraved with the words:

Christopher Neal Osburn
1975 - 2011
Leader to Many
Friend to All
Hokie in Every Way

“It was such a touching ceremony,” she said. “I didn’t know all the parents would be there. I didn’t know that those trumpets would be played in the [Marching Virginians] forever and that future [members] would know who Chris was. It was so much more than I ever thought it would be.”

Can you name this famous VT campus building?
See page 47 for the answer.
In our summer issue, we asked you if you could identify a building that benefitted from private philanthropy by looking at a close-up photograph (at left). If you checked our Facebook page, you might already know the answer. If you didn’t, this is a picture of the keyhole on Solitude’s front door.

In April, Virginia Tech celebrated the restoration and reopening of Solitude (at right), its oldest structure.

Solitude had been vacant for many years prior to a $1 million restoration that began in July 2010 and lasted half-a-year. Much of the project was funded by the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation of Richmond, Va.

“As a land-grant university, part of our mission is to engage with the region,” said Sue Ott Rowlands, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. “Solitude represents our ability to connect to the past, to families that originally settled this area, and to families that currently are still living and working here.”

Solitude is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building is also a Virginia Historic Landmark. It was enlarged several times, but initially was a frontier-style log cabin.

Solitude served as a college infirmary from 1882 to 1886. Faculty members lived in it for about the next 60 years. It briefly was a clubhouse for returning World War II veterans who lived in trailers surrounding the building while attending what then was called Virginia Polytechnic Institute. At that time, dances regularly were held in Solitude’s two front parlors. In the 1960s and 1970s, Solitude was used by the Hokie Club.

Academic programs started using the building in 1974. For some time, Solitude housed a human nutrition and food laboratory and interior design studios and offices. Its last occupant was the Appalachian Studies Program, which has returned and is now housed on the second floor. Professor Bert Rodriguez of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, who specializes in historic preservation, also has an office there.

“Solitude stands as a material witness to many important chapters in the history of southwestern Virginia and of Appalachia in particular,” Rodriguez said.

3North, an architectural firm from Richmond that specializes in historic preservation, designed the restoration. South End Construction of Roanoke, Va., repaired the exterior. Snyder and Associates of Blacksburg handled the interior. Extensive repairs were made to the foundation. New electrical, plumbing, and heating systems were installed. Problems with the roof, chimney, and siding were addressed.

Elizabeth Fine, a professor and former director of the Appalachian Studies Program, worked on several grants and fundraising activities that provided restoration money. Her office was in Solitude in the mid-1990s, before the building was closed pending repairs.

“It’s a perfect place to foreground the Appalachian heritage of the region, and it’s so beautiful,” she said of Solitude.

This is another close up of a Virginia Tech building that has benefitted from private philanthropy. Can you guess where it is? To see the answer or submit a guess, visit our Facebook page (facebook.com/developmentsatatVT). We’ll also publish the answer in the next issue of Impact and tell you how philanthropy made a difference to the students who use this facility.
Virginia Tech Seniors and Veterinary Career

Emi Scott and Bailey West
They are both members of the Class of 2012. They both developed their love for animals while spending considerable time on dairy farms as young children. And they both plan to go on to become large animal veterinarians in order to address the strong need for such doctors in their home region of Southwest Virginia.

In addition, both Scott and West are recipients of an extraordinarily generous scholarship funded by the late Margaret Groseclose “Peggy” Skelton, a former associate professor at Virginia Tech who died in July 2010.

West, a senior majoring in dairy science, is from the Willis section of Floyd County. She was working as a summer intern at Silver Spoon Farm in Garrettsville, N.Y., when she learned she was one of the scholarship’s first two recipients.

“My mom called to tell me, and I was so happy,” West said. “She said it would basically pay for my tuition. To be able to help my parents out by getting this scholarship is really, really nice.”

When West was very young, her father, a milk truck driver, would take her along on his runs.

“I would get to go with him at night and see the baby cows, see the [dairy] operations behind the scenes,” she said. “I’ve wanted ever since I was seven to go to vet school and that still hasn’t changed.”

Katharine Knowlton, a professor who coordinates undergraduate programs for the dairy science department at Virginia Tech, said West stood out in classes for several reasons.

“She’s engaged, enthusiastic, and brings good questions,” said Knowlton. “She’s the one who’s always asking, ‘How is this going to affect farmers in my area?’”

Skelton grew up in Smyth County and named the scholarship for her parents, Roy E. and Thelma R. Groseclose, who had a dairy farm.

The scholarship is endowed so that it will provide thousands of dollars to two students each year. First preference is given to dairy-science students from Smyth County. If no such students are available, the scholarship can go to dairy-science majors from other counties in Southwest Virginia. Students from Smyth County who are majoring in different subjects within the agriculture- and life-sciences-college are eligible as well.

Scott, the other recipient for 2010-2011, is from Marion, a town in Smyth County. She is due to graduate in May with a degree in animal and poultry sciences.

Professor Dave Gerrard, who heads the Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences, said many students in his program are aspiring veterinarians, but most tend to be interested in the companion-animal side of the discipline, as opposed to the large-animal, food-production-based side that appeals to Scott.

“It’s not so much that people don’t like large animals like she does,” Gerrard said. “It’s just that they probably haven’t grown up around them. ... The bulk of our students today, they don’t grow up on farms.”

While Scott was a girl, however, she spent a good deal of time on her uncle’s dairy farm.

“I always liked working with the cows,” she said. “I know there’s more money in small animals, but there’s more of a need for large animal veterinarians, especially in this region, and I want to stay in Smyth County.”
Scott said she was unaware the scholarship Skelton created even existed until the day she learned it had been awarded to her. But she instantly recognized the name of the woman who endowed it.

Both Skelton and her husband—William E. Skelton, a former Virginia Tech dean of Extension who passed away in August 2008—were highly involved in the commonwealth’s 4-H program.

“I was involved in 4-H since I was nine, and it was a big deal for me,” Scott said. “Mrs. Skelton’s estate also endowed several thousands of dollars for my church [in Marion]. So with all that, and the scholarship, she’s really affected so many areas of my life.”

During her long association with the university, Skelton affected the lives of numerous students through her activities as both a faculty member and one of the university’s most generous donors. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is just one of many Virginia Tech programs to benefit from her generosity.

The university’s College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Athletic Department, and University Honors program also have scholarships created by Skelton. Though she technically was an alumna of James Madison University and the University of Tennessee, in 2001 the Virginia Tech Alumni Association made Skelton an honorary, lifetime member.

Even beyond her lifetime, Skelton created a legacy of helping Virginia Tech’s students that is ongoing, as can be seen in the stories of Bailey West and Emi Scott.

**VISIT THE UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE!**

Interested in how you can make a gift to support faculty, students, and programs at Virginia Tech? Wondering how private giving makes Virginia Tech’s excellence possible? Visit our website at www.givingto.vt.edu to find the answers to these questions and more.
Student Engineers’ Council Passes $1 Million in Giving

Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

You know the Virginia Tech motto. You know what an important part of the Virginia Tech experience it is. You know that Virginia Tech’s students are known for their philanthropic and community service efforts on behalf of communities all over the world.

But perhaps you don’t know about Virginia Tech’s Student Engineers’ Council. In 1985, the council announced it had raised $20,000 to establish the Paul E. Torgersen Leadership Scholarship in honor of the man who was, at the time, the dean of the College of Engineering and who went on to be Virginia Tech’s president from 1994 to 2000.

To raise the money to establish the scholarship, the council asked members of the college’s Committee of 100 for donations. But these days, the council runs the Engineering Expo, an engineering career fair that has grown into one of the largest in the nation, to support its philanthropy. In the 26 years since it established the Torgersen scholarship, the council has given more than $1 million to the college’s students and faculty.

This impressive student organization has supported a wide range of projects, including the Frith Freshman Design Engineering Laboratory, mentoring programs, upgrades of classroom space, and the design and building of CHARLI, the world-famous humanoid robot made by students at the Robotics and Mechanisms Laboratory.

In 2006, the council created the Design Team Endowment. That endowment is now worth $500,000 and provides $40,000 per academic year in funding to engineering student organizations for equipment, conference attendance, and other essential needs. Not satisfied to rest on its laurels, during the 2010-11 academic year, the council pledged $100,000 to the new Signature Engineering Building and created the $1 million Lynn Nystrom Engineering Organization Fund, named in honor of the council’s long-time...
Jean Ellen duPont Shehan used to drive an old pickup from her Maryland home to Northern Virginia for volunteer council meetings at the Virginia Tech equine medical center named for her aunt, Marion duPont Scott.

“We’d have meetings, and then she’d load up with Southern States horse feed because it was 50 cents a bag cheaper in Leesburg than in Eastern Maryland,” recalled Dr. Peter Eyre, dean emeritus of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, for which the equine medical center is one of three campuses.

Such personal frugality from a member of one of America’s most storied families might be surprising, but according to Eyre it was perfectly in character for Shehan, who died in August at age 88.

“She wasn’t ostentatious at all,” Eyre said, “but she used her wealth in very positive, very productive ways.”

One of those ways was to help the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center, which opened in 1984. After serving on its founding committee, Shehan became the first chair of the facility’s council, an advisory and resource development organization.

Shehan also served on the board of the Virginia Tech Foundation and was a member of the President’s Circle within the Ut Prosim Society of major donors, as well as the Legacy Society of those who make planned gifts.

“Jean Ellen’s generosity was truly extraordinary,” said Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger. “Over the years, I came to know her well and admired her greatly. Both the resources and the wise advice she provided helped make it possible for our equine medical center to develop into the strong facility it is today. She was a true friend to Virginia Tech, and will indeed be missed.”

On the equine medical center council, Shehan was known for being a direct speaker who was never shy with an opinion.

“I witnessed contractors who realized immediately her prowess and decided to take proposals elsewhere,” said Shelley Duke, who succeeded Shehan as council chair in 1999 and still serves in that position. “With her scrutiny and craftiness, regardless of her diminutive physical size, she came out the victor.”

At one point 20 years ago, when the financial viability of the center was questioned, Shehan stepped...
forward with an extraordinarily generous challenge gift that is credited with saving the center.

“Very likely the equine medical center would have been closed in 1991 if not for Jean Ellen’s support and her challenge to maintain it as a center of excellence,” said the center’s director, Dr. Nathaniel White, who since 2004 has held the Jean Ellen Shehan Professor and Director title, which was established in 1996 through a gift Shehan made.

In a 1990 Virginia Tech Magazine profile, Shehan described the center as “an important component of the health services available to the equine community.”

Thanks in no small measure to her generosity, two decades later that is still the case.

“Her kindness, love of horses, and dedication to veterinary medicine will live on for generations,” said the veterinary college’s current dean, Dr. Gerhardt Schurig. “We are indebted to her for her tremendous support of the college and of our Marion du Pont Scott Equine Medical Center. Our condolences to Jean Ellen’s family and friends. Jean Ellen will not be forgotten.”

This story also ran in Vital Signs, the electronic newsletter of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.
faculty advisor. The council hopes to have that endowment fully funded by 2020.

However, not all Student Engineers’ Council awards are for large sums. Sometimes even a modest grant can make a big difference and help fellow students to serve. Recently, the Virginia Tech chapter of Bridges of Prosperity needed financial support to build concrete bridge foundations in Haiti. It solicited the council which gave $5,000 and became one of the chapter’s largest contributors.

“We were a brand-new group with the [council], and we did not expect the support,” said Matt Capelli, of Bridges to Prosperity. “They really stepped in and stepped up and we could not have completed the project on time without them.”

The council has similarly supported a project for the Virginia Tech chapter of Engineers Without Borders, also in Haiti, allowing the student members of that group to help a hospital to resolve its clean water and sanitation issues. The students also used their $1,000 in funding from the council to develop a maintenance-and-operations plan for a disinfection system for a free health clinic in the Dominican Republic.

For more than 30 years, the members of the Student Engineers’ Council have been developing a culture of philanthropy among the students in the College of Engineering, making Virginia Tech even more distinctive among its peers and preparing its students to live the value system that means so much to every Hokie.

COUNCIL continues

Bridges to Prosperity at Virginia Tech is a student-led service organization that seeks to empower communities in developing nations by building footbridges, thus improving community access to schools, medicine, jobs, and markets. The organization gives Virginia Tech engineering students the opportunity to broaden their cultural perspectives, gain hands-on professional experience, and use their own education to serve others who are less fortunate.

In 2009, the organization began helping to build a bridge over the Thomonde River in Haiti. This life-saving bridge now connects the remote mountain village of Ti Peligre with Casse, a community where a medical clinic and marketplace are available. With funding from the Student Engineers’ Council, the bridge was completed in March 2011, improving the lives of Ti Peligre’s residents, whose town previously was transformed into an island during the Caribbean nation’s rainy seasons.

For more information, visit www.b2p.org.vt.edu.
Eight years plus 169,519 contributors
The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future celebrated its successful conclusion on Nov. 12, 2011. The university beat its $1 billion goal, raising more than $1.11 billion.
Perhaps a little perspective is in order. Way back in 1998, Virginia Tech’s last campaign closed. That campaign was a seminal moment in the university’s history. Like this campaign, that one also surpassed its goal. The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Making a World of Difference had a $250 million goal, but raised more than $337 million. That is equivalent to about $470 million in today’s dollars, which puts in perspective just how amazing it is that we raised $1.11 billion.

More than three times the number of major gift donors gave in this campaign than in the previous one, and during this campaign the university’s endowment grew by 81 percent—due to gifts and wise investing. At the close of the campaign, the endowment was large enough to provide more than $21 million per year to student financial assistance and nearly $52 million in support to the university’s academic programs. Such success sets the stage for continued excellence at Virginia Tech for many years to come.

Our contributors provided more than $719 million in outright gifts, pledges, and irrevocable deferred support to the university. They also gave nearly $394 million in future support, strengthening the foundation for Virginia Tech’s future.

Our campaign priorities—academic excellence, the undergraduate experience, research facilities, Virginia Tech and the community, and the President’s Discovery Fund—met their goals as well. Donors generously supported students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Academic programs will continue to excel because of private philanthropy, and the university will be well-positioned to embrace the spirit of Ut Prosim and continue to be a positive force in the commonwealth, the nation, and the world.
Fundraising Unit Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Name</th>
<th>Total Raised (millions)</th>
<th>Goal (millions)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Life Sciences</td>
<td>$56.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture and Urban Studies</td>
<td>$47.67</td>
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<td>Pamplin College of Business</td>
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<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>$154.98</td>
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<td>Liberal Arts and Human Sciences</td>
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<td>Science</td>
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<td>$62.00</td>
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<td>Veterinary Medicine</td>
<td>$34.02</td>
<td>$31.23</td>
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<td>Arts</td>
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<td>Athletics</td>
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<td>$4.83</td>
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<td>University Libraries</td>
<td>$7.13</td>
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The rest of what was given was otherwise designated in accordance with donor wishes.

Nearly every fundraising unit—colleges and programs—met or exceeded its campaign goal, and some raised close to or more than double that goal. The W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake raised nearly $10 million during the campaign, or 225 percent of its goal. The Graduate School raised nearly $7.5 million, or 187 percent of its goal. Several colleges were particularly successful, including Architecture and Urban Studies, which raised nearly $48 million, or 140 percent of its goal, and Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, which raised just over $29 million, or 135 percent of its goal. The College of Engineering and the College of Natural Resources and Environment also raised more than 130 percent of their goals.
Each of our 16 regional campaigns beat its campaign goal, collectively raising more than $580 million. Each of them beat its regional goal. The Bay Area of California, Raleigh/Durham area of North Carolina, and Tampa Bay/Orlando area of Florida more than doubled their goals.

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<th>Goal (millions)</th>
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Sources of Campaign Giving

- Corporations: $161.36
- Faculty/Staff: $25.03
- Friends: $301.67
- Parents: $21.30
- Foundations: $99.84
- Other Organizations: $29.26
- Alumni/Students: $474.25

Uses of Campaign Giving

- Private Grants: $43.63
- Capital Facilities: $163.67
- Endowments: $303.72
- Current Operations: $601.70

Dollars in millions. Due to rounding, figures add up to slightly more than the campaign total.
An ‘Extraordinary Initiative’

It has truly been an honor and a pleasure to serve as co-chairs of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future. Participating in this extraordinary initiative has provided us the opportunity to travel the world and meet hundreds of people who believe in this university as strongly as we do, which has been both fun and inspiring.

One of the reasons we support Virginia Tech is because, as businessmen, we know how important it is for our graduates to be able to contribute immediately to whatever company or industry they join. In order for them to be able to do that, they need a first-class education delivered by the very best faculty.

At the same time, the Virginia Tech experience is about more than what students learn in the classroom. It also includes many opportunities for hands-on learning, for volunteering, for expanding one's horizons.

Because of its comprehensive nature, this campaign has improved the overall experience for all our students, no matter their major. It has also helped ensure that Virginia Tech will continue to instill tomorrow's leaders with the skills—and the values—that enable them to make a positive impact on the world.

Many of you have joined us in supporting this amazing institution, which not only prepares leaders, but is an economic engine for the commonwealth and a base for researchers who are working on solutions to many of the world's most critical problems.

Throughout the eight years of this campaign, you've provided funding for outreach, research, and new facilities. You've enabled the university to recruit the nation's top faculty and students. You should be proud of the role you've played in bringing Virginia Tech to a new level of success and recognition. As you observe the success the university is sure to have in the future, know that you're a critical part of that success.

While we have come to the end of this campaign, we hope you will remember that there is still much that can be done to support this extraordinary institution. Despite—and perhaps because of—the success we've had, we still have work ahead of us in order to keep moving forward. We encourage you to keep an eye on Virginia Tech in the future and hope you will continue to support it and participate in its success.
From left: National Campaign Steering Committee Co-Chair David Calhoun, Quiet Phase Campaign Steering Committee Chair Gene Fife, Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger, Vice President for Development and University Relations Elizabeth A. Flanagan, and National Campaign Steering Committee Co-Chair John Lawson
Many of Gene Fife’s strongest memories from childhood have a classical soundtrack, courtesy of his mother, Ellen, a gifted pianist who graduated from what is now the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.

Gene Fife: Broadening

“My mother would practice the piano virtually every day,” said the Charlottesville, Va., resident, who earned his bachelor’s of business administration from Virginia Tech in 1962 and an M.B.A. from the University of Southern California in 1968. “You couldn’t be in the Fife household and not be aware of her love of classical music. It brought fun and joy to her life, and also to our family, and to many other people in our area. ... We lived in a little town in southern West Virginia, and people with that type of training were few and far between. When she would put on a recital in a local church somewhere, the place would be jammed. It was quite something.”

Fife, a retired chairman of Goldman Sachs International, said his appreciation for the arts has only increased with time. He played trumpet in the Highty-Tighties and was their captain his senior year, during which the band won honors for marching in John F. Kennedy’s inaugural parade. His wife, Anne, is a classically trained opera singer. Gene Fife said he and his wife strongly believe that exposure to the arts is an essential component of a 21st century education because the arts serve as a “common language that everyone can get engaged in,” regardless of their culture.

That belief, along with a desire to see Virginia Tech students excel in all areas, motivated the Fifes to make an extraordinary commitment of $4 million toward construction of the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, a $94 million project that includes a 1,260-seat theater that has been named in honor of both Fife’s wife and his mother.

The center is under construction on campus near the corner of Alumni Mall and North Main Street. Performances in the Anne and Ellen Fife Performance Hall Theatre will take place in 2013.

“I believe that the Center for the Arts is an important part of Virginia Tech’s mission to educate the whole person,” said Anne Fife, a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music. “The arts, in all their various forms, will inspire students to be more creative, expose them to other cultures, and broaden their horizons beyond their academic discipline.”

Gene Fife added, “This is a complicated world in which we live—one that is globally connected, where our students will face exciting new opportunities and challenges. Anne and I share the belief that exposure to the arts will help students expand their thinking well beyond their academic specialty and help them begin their careers fully confident that they will be successful.”

More about the Center for the Arts on page 43
Gene Fife is a former member of the Virginia Tech Foundation Board; chaired the steering committee for the quiet phase of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future; and in 2009 was awarded the William H. Ruffner Medal, Virginia Tech’s highest honor. He also chairs the governing council of the University of Virginia’s Miller Center for Public Affairs. His father, C. Edward Fife, was a member of Virginia Tech’s Class of 1927.

Anne Fife is president of the Ash Lawn Opera Festival Foundation Board of Directors and is a founding member of the board of both the Paramount Theater and the Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival. She and her husband also have a family foundation that has provided scholarships to students at several schools, including Virginia Tech.
Researchers are at a major point in their understanding of human health and in their approach to disease. Engineers and computer scientists are now leading the way to new and exciting medical research and discovery. At Virginia Tech, the legacy of a technology pioneer is supporting groundbreaking medical research and the development of new technologies.
A career at the center of the technological revolution

The mid 20th century was marked by an explosion in information technology, as computers became increasingly sophisticated and entered nearly every aspect of life. Grant A. Dove was there for all of it.

After graduating from Virginia Tech in 1951 with a bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering, he spent most of his career working for Texas Instruments, one of the best-known names in technology. There, he helped develop computers for the oil and gas industries and successfully promoted several of the company’s premier defense-related products. He also served as founder, investor, or director of a number of IT companies, including Comcast, formerly Media One, which was a spin-off of US West.

Despite his busy career, Dove, who passed away in 2003, never forgot Virginia Tech. He and his wife Margaret, members of the Ut Prosim Society, generously supported the College of Engineering with scholarship contributions and future support.

A memorial gift

Not long after Dove passed away, Comcast established the Grant A. Dove Professorship in Electrical and Computer Engineering. Comcast wanted to honor Dove’s contributions as a board member by providing the college with the means to attract or retain an eminent faculty member in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Endowed professorships are the foundation of a strong and vibrant faculty. They are awarded to outstanding faculty members who contribute substantially to the advancement of their discipline, their college, and the university. Income from the endowment provides the holder of the professorship with resources for many things, including new research, writing books, publishing in journals, going to conferences or traveling to meet with collaborators.

In 2009, the college awarded the Grant A. Dove Professorship in Electrical and Computer Engineering to Yue Joseph Wang in recognition of his pioneering research accomplishments in the field of bioinformatics, medical imaging, and statistical signal processing. Wang represents the next generation of engineers that Grant Dove and his contemporaries are likely to have imagined as the future of their profession.

Computer Engineering: The future of medical research

Electrical and Computer Engineering in the early 21st century is every bit as exciting as it was when computers themselves were in their infancy. Entirely new fields of research have emerged, bringing the vast computational power of modern computers to bear on vexing medical problems. Biomedical engineering, bioinformatics, and systems biology are exponentially expanding our understanding of human health and disease.

Wang is the director of the Computational Bioinformatics and Bio-imaging Laboratory, which is located in the Virginia Tech Research Center, located in Arlington. The lab applies advanced methods of computer analysis and imaging to investigate human diseases such as cancer, muscular dystrophy, lung and heart disease, and neuronal degeneration.

Wang credits his success in attracting collaborators in part to the fact that he holds a named professorship. He says, “When potential collaborators do not already know you, they look at your title. A named professorship certainly helps enhance the chance of inter-institutional collaborations.”

Wang believes that an interdisciplinary and data-driven approach to biomedicine will increasingly

PIONEER continues on 35
Supporting the Future of Veterinary Medicine

Given the opportunity, Drs. Gary Knipling and Locke “Joe” Taylor probably would have attended the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. They both grew up in Virginia and earned their undergraduate degrees in animal science at Virginia Tech with an eye toward becoming veterinarians. But that was in the mid-1960s, more than a decade before the veterinary college opened in Blacksburg. So Taylor and Knipling earned their doctor of veterinary medicine degrees at the University of Georgia, both in the class of 1969, under a program that allowed some Virginians to pay in-state tuition.

Though they had to leave their home state to complete their educations, both returned to Virginia to set up successful veterinary practices. And while they technically are not alumni of the veterinary college, they have donated generously to it. They also promoted the college while serving as volunteers for The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future.

One of the veterinary college’s major goals in the campaign was to raise money for a new research facility, the Translational Medicine Building. Taylor and Knipling have both made generous pledges toward that project.

“I loved my four years at Virginia Tech and I still consider Tech my favorite alma mater, although I’m proud to have graduated from the University of Georgia,” said Knipling, who lives in Fairfax County and is associated with two animal hospitals in Woodbridge and one in Alexandria.

“I think all veterinarians in the state of Virginia are so fortunate to have the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine nearby,” he added. “There’s a great connection, even for veterinarians who graduated from schools other than Tech.”

Taylor lives in Glen Allen and employs two graduates of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.

A version of this story originally appeared in Vital Signs, the electronic newsletter of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.
What is Translational Medicine?

As part of its goal for The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future, the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine has started raising money for a new Translational Medicine Building.

Translational medicine describes the transition from basic research to practical application of cutting-edge treatments. Often, that transition happens on veterinary subjects more quickly than on human subjects.

For this reason, the presence of a leading veterinary college with a teaching hospital presents a rare opportunity for Virginia Tech researchers and clinicians who are looking to stop diseases like cancer and diabetes, which occur naturally in both animals and humans. Because of the hospital and the reputation of the veterinary college that draws clients to it, researchers are likely to have access to animal subjects whose owners bring them to the hospital in search of new and potentially groundbreaking treatments.

Researchers in the veterinary college and several other colleges on campus will be able to take advantage of this opportunity to even greater degree once the new facility is built.

Dr. John Rossmeisl, an assistant professor in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, is just one of many who stand to benefit. He has partnered with Wake Forest University to develop improved therapeutic approaches for managing gliomas, the type of brain tumor that gained notoriety...
Recently, the couple made a significant contribution to Virginia Tech Athletics as part of their support of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future. The gift will support the renovation of several locker rooms and a training room, which will then be named in memory of Nick’s parents, Mae M. and W.A. Street. The senior Streets were adamant that their eight children seek college educations. So adamant, in fact, that there were five children in college at the same time as Nick was attending Virginia Tech.

Nick’s siblings, sister Gaynell S. Fowler and brothers H.A. Street and Dr. Russell Street, also contributed to the athletics gift.

Both Nick (business ‘53) and Fay (finance ‘77) grew up in Southwest Virginia, Nick in Grundy and Fay in Wise. Both had relatives and friends who had attended Virginia Tech, so perhaps it was not surprising that both of them enrolled as well. The Streets both graduated from Pamplin and the University of Richmond Law School, and practiced law in Grundy, Va.

Following his graduation, Nick, who had been a member of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, spent four years in the United States Air Force. After his service, he continued to fly in a private and corporate capacity for 35 years. In addition to his law practice and his work as a pilot, Nick was involved in the energy industry.

The couple believes in the mission of the university and they want to contribute to its future success. “Virginia Tech provided a solid academic foundation for us both,” Fay said. “We are proud of Virginia Tech for many reasons—its academic quality, its innovative research, the Corps of Cadets, and the success of its students in and out of the athletic arena.”

The couple also recently made a significant gift to support the Center for the Arts. “We support different causes at Virginia Tech,” Nick said, “because we believe exposure to the arts and athletics, along with strong academics, provide a well-rounded, quality college experience.”

Asked what advice they would give to others, they said, “Contribute to Virginia Tech if you can afford to do so, at whatever level. It will be money well spent.”
Football and basketball may draw the largest crowds, but Virginia Tech has a long tradition of excellence in many other sports, and the Hokie teams in several of them will benefit from a generous gift made in memory of Mae M. and W.A. Street. When all is said and done, nearly 200 student athletes, representing numerous teams, will benefit.

The largest part of the gift will go to support a spacious new weight room, which will be created by renovating a practice gym in Cassell Coliseum into a multilevel training space that is more than twice as large as the one now used by many athletes. The new facility will benefit several teams that now share a single, 2,500-square-foot training space that is big enough for only one team to use at a time. Such tight quarters created complex scheduling issues for the athletic department, but the renovation will allow several teams to train at once in a more-than-6,000-square-foot facility featuring a mezzanine level and new equipment.

Associate Director of Athletics Tom Gabbard, who is overseeing construction, said the improvements the Street family is funding will help recruiting and allow the university’s athletes to more fully enjoy their collegiate experience. And those improvements extend beyond the new weight room, to include renovations of several locker rooms. Three women’s teams—soccer, lacrosse, and softball—will benefit from this aspect of the project. The renovations provide new showers, lounges, computer stations, and audio-visual equipment. The women’s soccer team is already occupying its locker room and the other two spaces should be ready by the end of 2011.

Gabbard said the changes are wonderful from a Title IX perspective and provide much-needed support for Virginia Tech’s female athletes. Several men’s teams will receive new locker rooms as well. When the football team moved into its new space in the Montgomery Center, its old locker room was left open, and the Street family gift will fund a renovation of that space, giving the baseball, men’s soccer, and men’s track teams similar upgrades to the ones the women’s teams are receiving.

“The Streets have done a really good thing for Virginia Tech’s student athletes,” Gabbard said.
Scholarships Help Students Realize their Ambitions

The need to spend fewer hours working to cover the cost of school is one benefit many students cite when asked how a donor’s scholarship gift helped them.

But when Meredith Thompson learned she was among the first group of Hokies to receive scholarships set up by the Harry Bramhall Gilbert Charitable Trust, she had zero interest in leaving her job.

Ever since she was a sophomore, Thompson—a senior from Chesapeake, Va., who is majoring in human development within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences—has worked to help young adults who have special needs and live in the county surrounding Virginia Tech.

She is one of 14 university students employed by Montgomery County Public Schools through the Virginia Tech On-Campus Transition Program, which is run by Wayne Zellers, a coordinator for the school system. The program’s aim is to help people with special needs develop skills to live more independently, he said.

And Thompson, Zellers said, has been “an integral part of the success of our students meeting their targeted behavior goals. Overall, she’s an excellent worker who’s able to think independently, and you don’t have to worry about too much direct supervision with her.”

Thompson said her job helped cement her ambition to work in the human-development field. It also provides experience she will be able to draw on one day, should she realize her aim of becoming a counselor or social worker.

“I love my job,” Thompson said. “It’s very rewarding. I feel like I’m helping people with their lives, so it brings joy to me to do something like this.”

As much as she enjoys her work, Thompson also relies on the paychecks it brings. She comes from a single-parent family and is considering graduate school, so finding ways to finance her education are critical for her.

“It’s nice to have money from my job, because it helps cover my expenses this senior year and puts me in a better financial position should I have to find a way to pay for graduate school down the road,” Thompson said.

This summer, she was happily surprised to receive an email from the university’s financial aid office stating that students like her, who met certain academic criteria and had graduated from one of the seven public high schools in Chesapeake, automatically qualified for a Harry Bramhall Gilbert Meritorious Scholarship that would provide thousands of dollars toward senior year tuition.

When I got the email, I was really excited,” Thompson said. “My mom was really excited, too, and she was really proud of me, and it was very special. … I’m still going to have to take out loans for grad school or there’s no way that I’d be able to pay for it, but the scholarship definitely reduces the burden because I don’t have to take out as much in loans to cover what I have to pay for now.”
transform the discipline from disease-driven and reactive to health-driven and predictive, leading to advances in preventative medicine. Currently, research projects underway in Wang's laboratory include studies that will help diagnose Muscular Dystrophy, improve therapies for breast cancer, and develop a complex model for the study of prostate cancer.

Grant Dove was an alumnus who achieved great things in his life and career—and was a generous donor in his own right. Comcast recognized his outstanding service as a board member by creating the Grant A. Dove Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering in his name. Today, Yue Joseph Wang is leveraging that professorship to help bring together engineers, biologists, doctors, and data analysts to develop entirely new approaches to human health and the understanding of disease—a clear example of how Virginia Tech is inventing the future.

As both an innovator and a dedicated Hokie, Grant Dove surely would be proud.
Celebrating a Milestone

The capstone event of The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future took place on Saturday, Nov. 12, 2011, when approximately 1,000 extraordinarily generous supporters gathered in a temporary structure located adjacent to the Holtzman Alumni Center to celebrate this significant milestone.

The event was one of several that took place during the weekend. On Friday, new and advancing members of the Ut Prosim Society were honored. On Saturday morning, Legacy Society members were celebrated at breakfast. And for much of Saturday, the university opened its doors and invited the entire community to explore the campus and interact with students and faculty.

A. Student presenter and member of the Corps of Cadets Christine Barry (right), chats with Madeline Scholl and Doug Fahl at Saturday night’s celebration

B. Anne Hahn Hurst, John Arnold, Jean Hahn, T. Marshall Hahn, Betty Hahn, and Doug Chancey

C. Sonny Merryman chats with President Charles W. Steger

D. Renée and Bryan Cloyd

E. Mary Ann Johnson and Anita Bost talk at the Legacy Society breakfast

F. Jeannie Chang, Susan Levy, and Susan Quisenberry


H. Carolyn and Norm Bush with Becky and Greg Porter

I. Nick and Nancy Moga celebrate with Irene and Randy Leech

J. Angie and Joe King with Stephanie and William T. Lewis, Virginia Tech’s vice president for Diversity and Inclusion

K. John and Sue Cahoon with Katherine and Hollis “Skeets” Cahoon
A. Elaine Tyrrell
B. The HokieBird
C. Saturday night’s guests were serenaded by the Tech Men (men’s chorus) and the University Chamber Singers
D. The Ballet Project at Virginia Tech brings the campaign watercolor to life
E. Justin Tanner, a postdoctoral associate at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute (VTCRI), explains the work of Deborah Kelly, an associate professor at VTCRI, who uses cryo-electron microscopy to study cancer.
F. Kee and Peggy Lee
G. Nikki Giovanni and Virginia Fowler
H. A juggler in front of Theatre 101 during the university open house on Saturday
I. Women in Leadership and Philanthropy (WLP) Council members Nancy Brittle and Sarah Hayes talk to student Emily Wilkinson at the WLP booth in Squires.
Quillen made a mark on Virginia Tech almost immediately, joining the cheerleading squad in her second year on campus. "I loved cheerleading," she says. "It was hard work, but we had a lot of fun and it was cool to go to away games. There's nothing more exciting than cheering in Lane Stadium."

But her support of the cheerleading program isn't the only way she's making a difference at Virginia Tech. Quillen is also a member of the Women in Leadership and Philanthropy (WLP) Council. Furthermore, her council membership led her to serve on the advisory board for the School of Education in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

"The WLP program has a very welcoming atmosphere," she says. "It's wonderful to get together a few times a year to share great ideas for engaging women in the life of the university. The WLP isn't just for alumnae. Women who want to make a difference at Virginia Tech have an opportunity to serve through the WLP."

Perhaps the best part of the WLP initiative, from Quillen's perspective, is the mentorship program, which began in 2008. Through the program, Quillen had the opportunity to mentor Tameka Byrd, a Virginia Tech graduate student. "She's an amazing woman," Quillen says of her protégé, who last year moved to South Carolina.

Quillen has a happy life, full of time spent with her three children and three granddaughters. She enjoys traveling, working in her amazing garden, and supporting the charities that are important to her. She knows she's been fortunate in her life, and she wants to give to others so that they may also benefit from her good fortune.

Furthermore, her council membership led her to serve on the advisory board for the School of Education in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.
Sherwood “Sherry” Payne Quillen (health and physical education ’71) came to Virginia Tech in 1968 to study health and physical education after having spent a year going to school near her home in Virginia’s Tidewater region. Part of what drew her to Blacksburg was a family connection—her uncle was a Virginia Tech graduate who worked for the university.

to complete a double Ph.D. in the medical and health fields.

Quillen recently made a significant gift to Virginia Tech’s Center for the Arts. She directed her support to the reception area outside the visual arts gallery on the second floor of the building.

More than just serving Virginia Tech, Quillen supports a wide variety of charities through her Carriage House Charities. Two years ago, Quillen, who had been living in Abingdon, Va., moved permanently back to Blacksburg and purchased an historic home. She did extensive remodeling on the home, its gardens, and its carriage house.

Quillen feels she has been blessed with friendship, good health, family, and the ability to travel. To her, the house represents those blessings and she is paying those blessings forward.

Today, the carriage house supports Carriage House Charities. The renovated carriage house serves as a not-for-profit short term rental. Guests who stay there agree to a per-night fee that is paid to a single Carriage House Charity of their choice. The fee is tax deductible for the guest. The charities are as diverse as providing scholarships for underprivileged students in Tanzania and Up with People, a group of young people that travel the world and use music to spread a message of goodwill, to supporting the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the March of Dimes. Each charity has a connection to Quillen or her family. The carriage house opened for business in 2008, and since then, Carriage House Charities has donated more than $8,000 to its charities.

Quillen has a happy life, full of time spent with her three children and three granddaughters. She enjoys traveling, working in her amazing garden, and supporting the charities that are important to her. She knows she’s been fortunate in her life, and she wants to give to others so that they may also benefit from her good fortune. She truly is paying it forward.
Still Time in 2011 to Support Virginia Tech

At this time of year, many of you are thinking about the best way to spend your charitable giving dollars. We hope you’ll consider Virginia Tech. Your gifts create opportunities for the university and its faculty, staff, and students to make a difference.

Here’s how to complete your 2011 gift to Virginia Tech by year end.

If you’re making a gift by check, a check dated and envelope postmarked on or before Dec. 31, 2011, will ensure your donation is counted for 2011 even if received at Virginia Tech early the following year. Gift checks not sent by U.S. Postal Service are effective as of date received at Virginia Tech.

If you’d like to make a donation using a credit card, your gift must be received in University Development’s Office of Gift Accounting by 5 p.m., Dec. 29, 2011, in order to be charged. After Dec. 16, 2011, you may prefer to make your gift online or by telephone to avoid mailing or shipping delays and help ensure your credit card gift is processed in time to count for 2011 tax purposes.

You may also make a donation by calling our office at 800-533-1144 or 540-231-2829 by 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 29, 2011, or by completing your transaction via our online secure giving form by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on Friday, Dec. 30, 2011.

If you have questions about making your gift online, by credit card, or by check, please email the Office of Gift Accounting at give.to.vt@vt.edu or call 800-533-1144.

There are a number of other ways to support Virginia Tech as well, including gifts of securities, real estate, and IRA charitable rollovers. For information on these methods, visit our website or contact the Office of Gift Planning at 800-533-1144 or 540-231-2813. You can also email giftplanning@vt.edu.

Our address is:
University Development, Virginia Tech (0336), Attn: Gift Accounting
902 Prices Fork Road, Blacksburg, VA 24061
www.givingto.vt.edu
Building bridges between disciplines

Fine arts programs such as theater, visual arts, or music seem to be obvious beneficiaries from Virginia Tech building a facility like the Center for the Arts on its campus. However, many other types of programs will also benefit, said Ruth Waalkes, the center’s executive director, who formerly directed artistic initiatives at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland.

“An overarching goal for our work is to create connections across campus among the arts and other areas of study. In my experience at the University of Maryland, we were able to develop meaningful intersections with programs in journalism, public policy, environmental science, women’s studies, and physics. There was just an incredible range of possibilities to engage students and communities in arts and ideas. We also can realize that here at Virginia Tech.”

Select company

When the Center for the Arts opens, Virginia Tech will be one of the few Atlantic Coast Conference Schools, and the only major research university in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with both a major arts facility and a significant arts presenting program on its campus. Within the ACC, only the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland and Carolina Performing Arts, which the University of North Carolina operates, are members of the nationally recognized, by-invitation-only Major University Presenters group.

Across the nation, the 20 facilities recognized by this group provide some of the most forward thinking programs on their respective campuses. They also have produced groundbreaking research on the value and impact of the arts. Major University Presenters group institutions receive a significant share of national grants for arts initiatives in higher education.

Fueled by philanthropy

Financing plans for Center for the Arts construction include $28 million in private donations. Fundraising for the project is ongoing. To find out how you can help, contact Sherri Mylott at 540-231-7223.
Alice Mae Presley retired more than a decade before Marco Leung and Maria Shaffron were even born.
In fact, she passed away before either of them graduated from Graham High School, in Bluefield, Va.,
where Presley had taught math, English, and art for more than 30 years.
Nevertheless, both young adults have something in common with the thousands of students Presley did
teach. Their education has been enhanced because of her.
Presley's dedication to her students inspired her son, Bill Presley, to create a scholarship at Virginia Tech
for alumni of Graham High School who have strong grades and are enrolled in programs within the
College of Engineering, College of Science, or Pamplin College of Business.
He said it was a natural way to honor her memory, since he, his two brothers, a niece, and nephew all
graduated from both Graham High School and Virginia Tech.

William and Francia

Remembering a dedicated teacher
Presley: and mother
“She got great satisfaction out of helping students out, but my dad was not a high-income type person—when they were first married he was a clerk in a drugstore and he eventually became an insurance salesman—so one reason she taught was for that dual income for the family,” said Bill Presley, who lives in Bristol, Tenn. “She helped me and my brothers through college and we paid her some of the money back after we graduated, but we were able to get through without having had to borrow money. This scholarship was a bit of recognition for all the help she gave us getting started, and was a way to help Tech, which of course gave all of us the foundation to make good careers.”

Bill Presley earned his bachelor’s in geological sciences in 1957 and worked 37 years as a geophysicist with Exxon Mobil Corp. His brother, Gordon Presley, earned a bachelor’s in geosciences in 1958. Another brother, Charles Presley, earned a bachelor’s in mining engineering in 1975.

Bill Presley and his wife Francia Presley had already created a scholarship in 2003 for students in the geosciences department, then in 2006, about six months after his mother died, they created another scholarship, named for both his father and mother.

The Alice Mae and Walter Charles Presley Memorial Scholarship can benefit Graham High School alumni who are studying in any of the Virginia Tech colleges in which members of the Presley family have been enrolled, Bill Presley explained.

Pamplin was included, he said, because a niece, Lena Presley Gott, earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting and information systems.

The first recipient of the Alice Mae and Walter Charles Presley Memorial Scholarship, Marco Leung, is due to graduate in May with a bachelor’s in computer science and a minor in general business. Born in Hong Kong, he had limited command of English when he moved to Bluefield at age 12, but was taking advanced placement courses in computer science by the end of high school.

Leung, the vice president of the Class of 2012, said Virginia Tech’s ability to offer a strong financial aid package was one factor in his decision to enroll, because “I just can’t imagine getting $20,000 a year in loans.” He planned to eventually work in the information technology industry after graduating, possibly consulting or doing project management. He also was interested in the Teach for America program, which recruits high-achieving college graduates to teach in low-income communities for at least two years. Without the financial flexibility granted him by the scholarship, Teach for America would not have been an option, Leung said.

This school year, a second student began receiving the scholarship. Maria Shaffron, a member of the Class of 2015, said she would like to become a forensic psychologist and work in the court system. Her father is a retired gym and health teacher and her mother teaches in the special education program at Bluefield High School, which is located in Bluefield, W.Va., just a couple miles across the state line from Graham High School.

“I think it’s a great thing that they opened this opportunity to Graham High School students. A lot of us don’t get the opportunity to pursue bigger things because we’re from a smaller town. This really helps me, because my parents are both teachers and it’s hard to afford college, so I really appreciate this.”

Maria Shaffron
Virginia Tech Trivia

If you guessed Squires Student Center, you’re correct. The center, a fixture on Virginia Tech’s campus, was named in honor of John Squires, who came to Virginia Tech from North Carolina A&M (now North Carolina State). Squires graduated from Virginia Tech in 1905 and became one of the university’s most loyal alumni. At his death, he left a bequest to the university, $10,000 of which was used for the construction of the building. As a result, the building was named in his honor in 1949.

The original Squires Hall was completed in May 1937. Civilian students had their dining hall in the building from September 1937 to September 1939. The original building was closed in 1966 for the first of two renovations. The new building reopened in 1969 but was not completed until winter 1970. It was renamed Squires Student Center and dedicated May 12, 1970. Another renovation was completed in 1991.
“I felt like Randolph Hall and other buildings were dated when I was there, and we’re still using them nearly 40 years later,” said Goodson (civil engineering ’77), a second-generation Hokie who is president of Warwick Plumbing & Heating Corporation, one of Virginia’s largest mechanical contractors. “When the idea of a new engineering building came up, my feeling was, ‘Yeah, it’s about time.’ Given the national stature of our College of Engineering, you realize that we are attracting some of the best students in the country. And when we bring these kids in, we have to show them that, in addition to our faculty, our facilities are second to none.”

Thanks to Goodson and many other generous supporters, including his father George R. Goodson Jr., construction is underway for a Signature Engineering Building. The four-story building will contain nearly 155,000 square feet, and will serve as a true showcase for a college that is one the nation’s top producers of new engineers.

As of mid-November, dozens of contributors had committed to provide more than $31 million combined to the project, while fundraising for an additional $15 million was underway. The commonwealth is expected to ultimately provide about half of the construction costs, and has already provided significant funds to advance the project.

College of Engineering Dean Richard Benson has said the building “will help us in our efforts to continue to provide our recruiters with the nation’s best and brightest engineers;” and “will contain highly specialized instructional laboratories that will support our hands-on, minds-on learning in the engineering disciplines.”

Goodson said his experience at Virginia Tech provided him with technical knowledge, but also an opportunity to learn leadership skills by participating in organizations like Student Alumni Associates and the Student Engineers’ Council, which kindled his in-
Interest in management. He went on to earn an M.B.A. at the Amos Tuck School at Dartmouth College.

During his time at Virginia Tech, Goodson had a work-study job overseen by George “Bud” Devens, who headed the engineering fundamentals program and became a mentor. Through his work-study job, Goodson regularly interacted with Paul Torgersen, the engineering dean who later became university president, and Associate Dean Leo Padis.

“Not only did they teach me how to use a slide rule—a skill that has since eluded me—the engineering staff and faculty, from the dean to the associate professors, always went the extra mile for us,” said Goodson. “You could go in and talk to any of them and they always had time.”

As alumni, both Goodson and his father, who earned his bachelor’s in mechanical engineering in 1949, have gone the extra mile for their alma mater. Both are members of the Ut Prosim Society. The College of Engineering has a scholarship named for the elder Goodson, who in 2003 was inducted into its Academy of Engineering Excellence.

Together, the Goodsons have directed hundreds of thousands of dollars in support toward the Signature Engineering Building.

“In today’s world, it’s so important to have good engineers and scientists coming out of the colleges,” said George Goodson Jr., who ran Warwick Plumbing & Heating for decades before retiring in the early 1990s. “I think it’s very important that Virginia Tech keep up with its peers in engineering. There’s a lot of competition and you have to work to keep up. I think we’re doing a good job of that, but should always continue to improve.”

For the College of Engineering, the Signature Engineering Building epitomizes that effort to improve, which is why it was such an appealing project to him and his son, he added.

For more on the Signature Engineering Building, including access to webcam footage of the construction site, visit www.eng.vt.edu/signaturebuilding.
Emerging Leader Scholarship Program Has Helped Corps of Cadets Enrollment to Grow

In 1992, the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets saw its enrollment drop to about 400, the lowest since 1980. In 1995, the corps introduced the Emerging Leader Scholarship program, and enrollment has been on the rise ever since.

When cadets arrived on campus for the fall 2011 semester, the corps welcomed 383 freshmen, the largest incoming class since 1969. The corps began the fall semester with 949 cadets, and is nearing the university’s goal of 1,000. The Emerging Leader Scholarship program has played a significant role in that success.

“The Emerging Leader Scholarship program recognizes the importance and value of the growing leaders of our nation,” said Maj. Gen. Randal Fullhart, commandant of the Corps of Cadets. “It is a primary resource for us to attract and reward the types of emerging leaders that we would like to have as part of the corps.”

“I know how hard it is to go to college; I know the sacrifices they have to make; I know what it costs,” Ray Thrift said. “We’re just really pleased to help some young people go through Virginia Tech. The Emerging Leader Scholarship is something we really believe in, we support, and we are glad to be a part of.”

Ray Thrift, a member of the Class of 1960, and his wife, Ellen Thrift, sponsor one of the scholarships. Thrift, who was in the Corps of Cadets and served in the U.S. Army, spent more than 30 years working in higher education and sympathizes with the challenges facing young people today.

Sean Grindlay of Chesapeake, Va., a senior majoring in economics within the Pamplin College of Business, is the third cadet the Thrifts have sponsored through the program.

He has known the Thrifts since his first year on campus, and counts them among his family. Grindlay said he has grown especially fond of the “Cowboy Cookies” Ellen Thrift has baked for him over the years.

“I love my ‘donor parents,’” said Grindlay with a broad smile. “They write me encouraging letters and we email back and forth. Mrs. Thrift will often send me a box of cookies or bring me some, and those things disappear so fast when I bring them back to the dorms.”

Relationships like those between Grindlay and his sponsors illustrate how the Emerging Leader Scholarship program has not only inspired donors to support their alma mater, it has created a bridge across generations of Hokies.
Meet Emily Love (English ’11), who presented a research paper at the English department’s Undergraduate Research Conference last spring. She also traveled to the University of Miami in April to present her research at the Atlantic Coast Conference Meeting of the Minds. Emily says one of the great things about Virginia Tech is that research can be part of any major.

Gifts to the Department of English helped pay for her travel to Miami and for the department’s research conference, which gave more than 45 Virginia Tech students the chance to present papers to an audience of faculty and peers.

Whether providing funds for conferences, special events, or research opportunities that will broaden educational horizons, your gift makes a difference to the students at Virginia Tech. These experiences help make a Virginia Tech education truly special. Visit www.givingto.vt.edu to make a gift or to learn more.

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