Dedicated father mobilizes support for autism research

Patrick Patterson organized a charity event to support the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute

A ‘huge step in the right direction’ for the College of Engineering

Alumnus whose father steered him to Virginia Tech now helps others to attend
Impact
A publication of the Virginia Tech
Office of University Development
Produced by the Office of University Relations for University Development

Vice president’s message
Elizabeth A. “Betsy” Flanagan, Vice President for Development and University Relations [4]

Where am I?
How well do you know Virginia Tech’s buildings? [5]

Dedicated father mobilizes support for autism research [6]

Taubman fund helps children have fun and learn at 4-H summer camp [9]

Seasoned entrepreneur makes a philanthropic investment in the arts [10]

James S. Tucker Professor Jason Lai advances energy-efficient technology [11]

Woolwine scholarship is a tremendous opportunity for its first recipient [14]

Specchio scholarship helps students to study abroad, like its namesake [16]

Alumnus whose father steered him to Virginia Tech now helps others to attend [18]

Women in Leadership and Philanthropy [20]

Cybersecurity partnership benefits all [22]

A ‘huge step in the right direction’ for the College of Engineering [24]

Alumnus gives back in gratitude for ‘the education and experience of a lifetime’ [26]

Ways to Give: Gifts that work for you and for Virginia Tech [26]

An extraordinarily strong family connection to Virginia Tech [30]

Alumnus who maximized his education helps others who want to do the same [34]

A scholarship fund created by the Black Alumni Committee helped its first three students [35]

In Memoriam: Charles Forbes [38]

Cover photo: Neuroscientists Read Montague (left) and Ken Kishida at work at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, which received money for autism research raised in a charity tournament organized by Patrick Patterson (inset), who is profiled on page 6.
This photo: In March, Virginia Tech students, faculty, and staff, as well as area residents, signed a steel beam that was due to be installed in the Center for the Arts under construction on campus. The $94 million project has drawn support from numerous donors, including Leon and Beverly Harris, of Roanoke, Va., who are profiled on page 10.
A true community of philanthropy

Why, among the vast array of very worthy causes, do thousands of donors choose Virginia Tech for their charitable giving? As prudent investors, they look at the return on their investment and they find distinct advantages. Their gift will reach a large number of people, whether it’s generations of scholarship recipients who benefit from an endowment far into the future, hundreds of students every day who study and do their research in a new building, or the population of an entire region that will benefit from an outreach program.

In addition, the wide variety of opportunities available at a comprehensive university ensures that, whatever one’s philanthropic objective may be, it can be realized through supporting a Virginia Tech program.

In this issue, you will meet donors to two of our major construction projects, the Signature Engineering Building and the Center for the Arts. In addition to a much-needed upgrade to our aging engineering facilities, the Signature Engineering Building will provide a unique learning environment, with instrumentation that will allow students to study things like the building’s energy usage and its structural performance in real time. The Center for the Arts, meanwhile, will bring a new dimension to a Virginia Tech education. The center will host world-class exhibitions and performances, and will be the site of groundbreaking research on the connections between creativity, technology, and education.

Within this issue, you will also find an inspiring story about how one dedicated and generous man whose daughter has autism is supporting autism research at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute. In other stories, you will meet several students who are maximizing their educational experience or realizing their dream of attending college, with support from donors.

Outcomes like these are possible for several reasons. Our donors see the impact their gifts can have; they realize the value of a gift to Virginia Tech; and they are extraordinarily enthusiastic and loyal.

Donors to Virginia Tech have become a true community of philanthropy, and their support has become an integral part of how this university excels. I am always pleased to have an opportunity to share the stories of our outstanding students, faculty, and programs. It’s also always a pleasure to feature our generous donors and their role in making this a great university. Thanks to all of you.

Elizabeth A. “Betsy” Flanagan, Vice President for Development and University Relations
Dedicated father mobilizes support for autism research

Denial. It’s the word Patrick Patterson uses to describe his reaction to hearing the news that his daughter, Brooke, had autism. He and his wife, Cherrie, began noticing changes in their daughter soon after she turned 2. Up until that point, her development had been completely normal. But then her talking regressed to babbling and she began to withdraw and keep to herself.

At first, they thought she was having speech problems, so they took her to speech therapy. It didn’t help. After several trips to her pediatrician over the next year, Brooke was finally diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in spring 2006.

The news was devastating for the Patterson family.

Continues on next page
“The main fear was for her, it wasn’t for me,” said Patterson, who has three daughters. “It wasn’t the fact that I was going to have a special needs child—I didn’t care about that one way or another. I’m going to love her and take care of her regardless.”

Patterson’s fear was more about the quality of life his daughter would have.

Brooke recently celebrated her ninth birthday and is doing as well as could be expected. She’s considered high-functioning. She can talk, but can’t carry on a conversation. Most of the time her parents understand what she says, but other times they cannot.

It took time for the family, which lives in Montvale, Va., to adjust to living with and caring for Brooke. And in the years that followed his daughter’s diagnosis, Patterson began thinking about a fundraiser to raise both awareness and money for autism research. Between his work and his family, however, he never seemed to have the time, until one day he was online, saw news of an autism-related fundraiser, and was inspired.

“A light bulb went off in my head and I said, ‘Hey, you can do that,’” he recalled. “So I did.”

Being an avid softball player, Patterson quickly decided on a charity softball tournament as his fundraiser. He then had to decide where the proceeds from the tournament would go, so he began looking around for a worthy recipient.

One of the places he was interested in was the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute in Roanoke, Va. A meeting was scheduled with Michael Friedlander, executive director of the institute, and that was all it took.

“We met with Dr. Friedlander and spoke with him a little bit,” said Patterson. “He was telling us what they do there, what the money goes toward, and that pretty much sealed the deal.”

Patterson toured the research institute in February 2011, which cemented his decision. Seven months later, he hosted the softball tournament. It was a huge success, and later that year he donated proceeds to the VTC Research Institute to support autism research.

Friedlander said he expects the money from Patterson’s softball tournament will go to support at least one of the post-doctoral researchers working on a project that studies what goes on in the brain of people with autism when they’re interacting with others.

“We’re using a variety of innovative technologies to come up with new ways to very accurately try to diagnose autism spectrum disorders as well as come up with potential new therapies,” Friedlander explained.

He said such research requires money, but can also benefit a great deal from community involvement.

“We have a really innovative group of investigators here that are doing things on the research side that are really not being done elsewhere,” said Friedlander. “So we want the community of Roanoke, Blacksburg, Virginia Tech, and the Carilion network to take ownership in this. We want everybody to feel like they’re a part of it.”

Patterson and his family are already part of that community, and he’s doing everything in his power to raise both awareness and money for autism research.

Should you ever meet Patterson, you might notice a highly visible tattoo of his daughter on his arm. Go ahead and ask him about it. That’s why he got it—to be a conversation starter so he can spread the word and help support the efforts of researchers like those at the VTC Research Institute.

Hayley Benson was one of more than 180 Roanoke, Va., area campers to benefit from donor-funded scholarships in 2011 at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake. She received another scholarship for camp this summer. Her scholarships were made possible by donors to the Arthur Taubman 4-H Scholarship Fund—a generous group that includes Garnett Smith, of Moneta, Va. “I know firsthand how important camp experiences can be in the development of young people, which is why I’m proud to support 4-H however I can,” said Smith, who is also a member of the 4-H center’s board of directors.
Leon Harris is a seasoned entrepreneur who has owned two successful companies in Southwest Virginia. He has mentored numerous start-up firms and serves on the Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties Board of Directors.

It’s safe to say that Harris cares a great deal about the health of his region’s economy, and that interest was a factor he and his wife, Beverly, cited when asked why they made a generous donation toward construction of the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, a $94 million facility scheduled to open in late 2013.

“What’s happening with the arts at Virginia Tech will have a huge impact on the region, including the Roanoke Valley,” said Leon Harris, who earned his bachelor’s of industrial engineering from Virginia Tech in 1964 and lives in Roanoke, Va.

“A lot of companies that are looking to relocate use cultural opportunities as a way of selecting where they would want to go, so economically [the center] is good for the area,” Beverly Harris added.

Of course, she explained, an interest in the economy was only one factor in her and her husband’s decision to get behind the center. They also look forward to the many outstanding events that will take place at the facility. The center will house a 1,260-seat performance hall, visual arts galleries, and the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology—a valuable resource for teachers and researchers who integrate the arts into their work.

“I’m a teacher, and so helping education is going to be a priority,” said Beverly Harris, who taught for many years in Augusta County, Va., after earning her bachelor’s in elementary education from James Madison University in 1968.

Leon Harris said it was only natural for him to support education, since he was able to attend Virginia Tech thanks to a scholarship from the textile manufacturer for which his mother worked.

Contributing toward the Center for the Arts is one of many ways the Harrises support Virginia Tech. They endowed a scholarship within the Corps of Cadets and a program fund in the College of Engineering. They also have given generously to athletics, 4-H, and other programs.

Although the Center for the Arts has not opened yet, its officials have already organized several programs, including a masterclass taught last school year by two of the world’s leading flute soloists, husband and wife Sir James and Lady Jeanne Galway.

Members of the general public were welcome to attend the masterclass. Among the students who participated was Deja Rasberry-Dickey, a sophomore music performance and music education double major, who said it was a thrill to meet two of the world’s leading flute players and perform in front of an audience.

“Just getting on that stage is great,” she said, “and being in the company of people who love the same things that you do is an amazing feeling.”

The masterclass Rasberry-Dickey participated in took place in the Squires Student Center, but is just the type of event that is likely to happen in spectacular spaces within the Center for the Arts, thanks to generous donors like Leon and Beverly Harris.

“The arts have always been a very uplifting experience for us,” Beverly Harris said. “I think we all are enriched by things that sort of take us beyond our daily lives.”

More online
Information on upcoming Center for the Arts programs and webcam footage of construction of the facility is at www.artscenter.vt.edu.
That 3 percent, multiplied by millions of electric cars plugged in for 10 hours a day in the future, could translate to saving the output of a few nuclear power plants, easily,” explained Virginia Tech electrical and computer engineering Professor Jason Lai.

The example he gave was not just theoretical. Lai was faculty advisor to his university’s student design team that won the 2011 Grand Prize Award in the International Future Energy Challenge by getting an on-board charger to operate at higher than 95 percent efficiency instead of the 92 percent that is currently common in the chargers in hybrid and electric cars.

Lai heads the Future Energy Electronics Center, a research group within the College of Engineering that typically has two-dozen graduate students affiliated with it. While it may be hidden deep within engines or motors, technology that he has helped to develop is found in vehicles produced by Hyundai and Volkswagen, and his work also has the potential to lead to more efficient fuel cells and solar-power plants. His solar-power inverter has demonstrated a peak efficiency of 99.2 percent, allowing complete elimination of cooling fans and other moving parts.

Since 1996, when he arrived at Virginia Tech, Lai has helped to obtain more than $13.3 million in external funding for research, nearly $9.5 million of which was for projects for which he was principal investigator. In March, he was named the James S. Tucker Professor, which is likely to help him achieve even more.

Named professorships, which are created by donors, provide both recognition and discretionary money to extraordinary faculty members like Lai, who often use the extra funding they receive to hire graduate students or explore early-stage research.

“I think it’s a great honor,” said Lai, who explained that while the technology he works on may not be highly visible, it’s hardly insignificant.

“The technology we develop is not like a car, a computer, or a cell phone, which may be the product that consumers are very familiar with,” Lai said. “What we develop is part of the products that you are using, and it’s technology that we develop with super-high efficiency in mind.”
As Kristen Calhoun picked up the phone inside the Glenvar High School guidance office to call Virginia Tech’s Office of University Scholarships and Financial Aid, both she and the middle school principal, Juliette Myers, were nervous.

The university had emailed Calhoun a day earlier, asking the Salem, Va., resident to call about her scholarship application. Myers had helped her with the application, and had provided both academic advice and personal encouragement to Calhoun for several years. Myers and Calhoun made arrangements with the high school guidance office to return the call together.

“We were a little frustrated wondering what we had not done right,” said Myers. “All of a sudden, on the phone, Kristen became quiet and kept saying, ‘Yes, sir. Yes, sir.’ She was facing away from me, and when she turned around tears were streaming down her face.”

They were tears of joy.

“When I first called, I thought it was something bad, but he said, ‘You just got the Woolwine scholarship’ and [that] it covered tuition for four years if I kept good grades,” Calhoun said of her conversation with Virginia Tech Director of University Scholarships and Financial Aid Barry Simmons.

Immediately after learning the good news, Myers radioed Calhoun’s aunt, a custodian at the school, to come to the guidance office. “We all hugged, cried, and celebrated,” Myers said. “It was just incredible.”

Calhoun has never met her father and has limited contact with her mother. The aunt who works at the middle school is her guardian, and Calhoun said the scholarship news was especially welcome to her because “this just shows that even if you’ve been through a lot you can still get to college. I’ll be the first one to go to college in my family, or to actually graduate high school. When I started thinking about college, I wanted to show people in my family that it can be done.”

Myers said that despite Calhoun’s family situation, the young woman’s potential was obvious even in middle school, which is why “helping Kristen in her journey is one of the things I will always cherish.”

In addition to her abilities, Calhoun—who majored in education and enrolled in the Army ROTC program—now has considerable financial support for her education. She is the first recipient of a scholarship that Kelly Woolwine (marketing management ‘90) endowed in memory of his parents.

Woolwine, who founded and runs a financial services company with two locations in his hometown of Roanoke, Va., said his parents were passionate about two things, education for their children, and Virginia Tech football.

He had been a generous supporter of the football program for years when, following the death of his parents, he decided to honor them with an academic scholarship for students from the Roanoke area who might otherwise struggle to pay for college.

“Student life at Virginia Tech really opened my eyes to the world and changed my life forever,” Woolwine said. “I wanted to be able to help others who might not otherwise be able to have that experience. This is my way to honor my parents and help students who have excelled academically and done everything they can to maximize the hand they have been dealt.”

Myers, who will start the 2012-13 academic year in a new post as principal of Robious Middle School in Chesterfield, Va., said Calhoun was a perfect example of a student with an unstoppable drive to succeed.

“Kristen is a leader among her peers and her family,” Myers said. “Her guardians, Rod and Becky Austin, have done a wonderful job raising Kristen. She is an intelligent young lady who has the inner strength to be very successful.”

“I promised her in the eighth grade that if she would continue to make academics and leadership opportunities her focus, I would help her go to college. Through the generosity of Kelly Woolwine, Kristen will graduate from Virginia Tech with a very bright future.”

From left: Kelly Woolwine (marketing management ’90), who endowed a scholarship, stands with its first recipient, Kristen Calhoun, and Virginia Tech Director of University Scholarships and Financial Aid Barry Simmons.
With her bachelor’s of marketing management in hand and a place in one of her alma mater’s M.B.A. programs secured, Emily Specchio and her family had plenty to celebrate on May 13, 2006.

But joy and pride soon turned to shock and grief for the family. Two days after receiving her Virginia Tech degree with magna cum laude honors at the Pamplin College of Business Commencement, Emily Specchio suddenly died of a brain aneurysm.

Tragedy kept the New Jersey native from realizing her ambition of working in international marketing, but her hard work toward that goal, and her passion for helping others, inspired the Specchio family to create a scholarship that each year helps up to four Virginia Tech students study abroad in a program.

“I think, honestly, that my experience in Lugano was the best thing I did in college,” said Lashley (communication ’10), who is now a law student at American University Washington College of Law. “I think [studying abroad] is a way for people to really learn to be independent. You have to grow up. You have to be responsible if you’re traveling in another country, with a language barrier.”

Lashley added: “I’m not sure if I’d be in law school if I hadn’t gone [to Lugano] because that whole international experience started a chain of events that led me here.”

While Lashley’s scholarship-enabled trip to Europe was her first time out of the country, it was not her last. She later arranged an internship with an organization that worked with children in townships in South Africa. After completing her bachelor’s degree, she spent seven months volunteering at an orphanage in Bangkok.

Lashley said it was her passion for helping children, which she developed more fully abroad, that made her want to go to law school and become an effective advocate for children’s rights.

“I would never have been able to go to Lugano without the scholarship,” Lashley said. “I think that the Specchios’ ability to give people like me, and other students, the ability to go do something so amazing, and so unique, is absolutely life changing.”
Robert Priddy grew up on the north Texas plains, but as the son of an ardent Hokie, he knew early on that he was expected to attend college in the mountains of Southwest Virginia.

“My dad was in the Virginia Tech Class of 1905 and I graduated from high school in 1936,” said Priddy (accounting ’40). “Back in those days, if your parents were paying for college, they decided where you went. I was admitted to Virginia Tech; my father put me on a train; and that was that.

Decades later—after Priddy had earned an M.B.A. at Harvard, served in the military, returned to Texas, and retired from the company he co-founded, which operated oil rigs both on land and offshore—he wanted to honor his father’s memory by creating a scholarship.

Naturally, he endowed it at Virginia Tech.

“My father was so fond of the school,” said Priddy. “I set up scholarships at Virginia Tech because that’s where his interest was.”

Along with the Walter Mason Priddy Scholarship for students from Charlotte County, Va., Priddy created a scholarship and a leadership-education fund in the Corps of Cadets, and has given to other university initiatives as well.

Despite his generosity to the university, Priddy said he has returned to campus just twice since he graduated—one for a reunion and once, this year, for a trip during which he also visited his father’s hometown.

“I was impressed by how it’s grown, but also how it’s kept its architectural unity,” Priddy said of the university after his most recent visit. “The Drillfield is not that much different from how it was when I was there.”

For Priddy, attending Virginia Tech was a family expectation as opposed to a choice. Thanks to his generosity, studying in Blacksburg has become a much more affordable choice for numerous students over the years, which no doubt would please his father a great deal.

A family tradition of generosity

Robert Priddy’s uncle, Lawrence Priddy, was a member of the Class of 1897 and led several extraordinary fundraising drives on Virginia Tech’s behalf. He was profiled in the fall 2007 issue of Virginia Tech Magazine, available online at www.vtmagazine.vt.edu/fall07/philanthropy.html.
Dozens gathered in May at the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center for the 10th annual Women in Leadership and Philanthropy (WLP) Conference, one of several programs run over the years as part of an initiative to better recognize female graduates and friends for the impact they make on the university. To date, thanks to the initiative, dozens of mentoring relationships have been created, undergraduate and graduate students have been recognized for their achievements, and 16 nationally recognized speakers have appeared at events supported by the WLP Endowed Lecture Fund. Visit wlp.givingto.vt.edu for more information on the initiative, including upcoming sponsored lectures.
"They were designed to be open and flexible and to meet the demands of the commercial marketplace, and those are fundamentally different characteristics from a secure, military device,” explained Charles Clancy, director of the Ted and Karyn Hume Center for National Security and Technology at Virginia Tech.

Researchers at his center are working on technology that could help to make Android-software-powered smartphones more secure, which could lead to wider use of them by the military.

Their effort is just one of several projects at the Hume Center that will benefit from an innovative partnership, created late in 2011, with L-3 Communications, a major provider of intelligence, cybersecurity, and IT services.

As part of the arrangement between the university and the company, L-3 made one of the largest-ever commitments of philanthropic support by a corporation to Virginia Tech. Clancy, who is also an associate professor in Virginia Tech’s Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, said L-3’s generosity will benefit the Hume Center a great deal by providing funds to help recruit talented researchers and execute research programs of mutual interest and national importance.

The agreement offers considerable other benefits for both sides, Clancy added. L-3 has opened a national security solutions center in the Virginia Tech Research Center—Arlington, a building that opened in June 2011 and also houses the Hume Center. And the agreement makes it more efficient for university researchers to collaborate with a company whose prominence and resources can help get products and services to market.

“When it comes to going after federal research funding, the university brings research credibility to the proposal and L-3 brings the integration and technology transfer experience,” Clancy said. “They help make sure university research isn’t just resulting in an academic paper, but is going on to solve real problems.”

Les Rose, president of L-3 STRATIS, the division of the company that set up the solutions center in Arlington, has also described the partnership as benefitting both parties.

“We firmly believe that combining Virginia Tech’s and L-3’s expertise in cybersecurity research and development, technology, and services will lead to the development of advanced solutions that enhance security for our nation’s cyber capabilities across the federal government, defense, intelligence, and critical infrastructure communities,” he said when the partnership was announced. “Our goal is to not only develop advanced cyber solutions, but also speed the transfer of these solutions to our customers.”

Soldiers certainly could benefit from smartphones in the field due to the devices’ capacity to quickly download or upload all sorts of information, but there is a catch.
A ‘huge step in the right direction’ for the College of Engineering

When Fred Brothers returned to campus in 2003 to receive an award from the College of Engineering, it was his first time back since earning his Ph.D. in materials engineering science in 1968.

Recalling that visit, the retired oil company executive said several newer buildings impressed him, but “poor old Randolph Hall was still poor old Randolph Hall.”

Brothers said many of the classrooms in that hall looked just the same as they had while he was earning his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in chemical engineering, which is why he was an early supporter of the project to build a showcase building worthy of one of the nation’s largest engineering programs.

In 2006, Brothers made one of the first gifts toward the Signature Engineering Building. In the years since, he has made additional contributions, and his support, along with that of numerous others, has helped make it possible for construction of this project to proceed.

When construction is complete in early 2014, the four-story building will contain nearly 155,000 gross square feet, providing eight new classrooms, more than 40 instructional or research laboratories, and more than 150 offices for faculty, staff, and graduate students.

“I think it’s a huge step in the right direction,” Brothers said of the project, which he expects to help the university maintain a top-tier faculty.

Brothers grew up in Huntington, W.Va., and his parents were close friends of Stuart Smith, who was president of what is now Marshall University. At the time, Smith’s school, located in Huntington, did not have an engineering program. So when he learned that Brothers wanted to become an engineer, he recommended the young man apply to Virginia Tech.

“What attracted me to chemical engineering were the salary opportunities,” Brothers said. “There was a mild shortage of chemical engineers and the salaries shot up, and I had enjoyed chemistry in high school.”

Brothers participated in a cooperative-education program and, after earning his bachelor’s, went to work for International Nickel, the company that had employed him while he was a student.

About a year later, he received a call from George Will, one of his former professors, who informed Brothers of an open position for a graduate fellow.

Brothers returned, completed his master’s degree, and then stayed on to complete his doctorate. Rather than focus exclusively on chemical engineering, he switched to materials engineering, a joint program between metallurgy and chemical engineering.

“Since I had worked for International Nickel in metallurgy and they were nice enough to help sponsor my Ph.D. research, I decided I really ought to be in materials engineering,” Brothers explained.

After completing his Ph.D., Brothers went to work for Ashland Oil, where he progressed through the company and was eventually sent to a management training program at Harvard University.

He was put in charge of Ashland’s chemical division, located in Columbus, Ohio. Eventually, he became senior vice president in charge of all the company’s operations, which included the Ashland gas stations, SuperAmerica convenience stores, and Valvoline motor oil.

Responding to consolidation in the industry, Brothers helped merge the company’s petroleum operations with Marathon Oil. He retired a year after that $30 billion deal was complete.

“I was tired of working 80 hours a week, and we had grandkids and travel plans, so I retired and have never looked back,” said Brothers, who maintains a home in Columbus but lives in Naples, Fla., for much of the year.

Brothers and his wife, Paula, are members of the university’s Ut Prosim Society of extraordinarily generous donors, as well as the Legacy Society, which honors those who make planned gifts.

Along with their support of the Signature Engineering Building, they have supported the Corps of Cadets, the Annual Fund, and the Department of Chemical Engineering.

“I owe a lot to Tech,” said Brothers, who is a member of the College of Engineering’s Academy of Engineering Excellence and Engineering Committee of 100. “It gave me a great education, and the Corps of Cadets taught me some manners.”

Brothers and his wife also support Connecticut College, where his wife went, and Marshall University, which is the alma mater of his sister, a Fullbright scholar who died in a car crash in 1963.

“We believe in charitable giving, period,” said Brothers. “We feel it’s our duty.”
Alumnus gives back in gratitude for ‘the education and experience of a lifetime’

Mahlon “Bud” Funk had been out of law school less than six years when his firm handed him the task of being lead attorney for a major malpractice case that was scheduled for a weeklong jury trial against two physicians represented by experienced, veteran members of the medical malpractice defense bar.

“Six years is not long in this business,” said Funk (aerospace engineering ’67, M.S. ’68). “I was still wet behind the ears and it was extremely intimidating. Medical malpractice trials involve battles of expert witnesses by the basketful, and this trial was a weeklong ordeal of experts. We were blessed to get a million dollar plaintiff’s verdict, back when such verdicts were virtually unheard of; however, every day I had the overwhelming fear I was in way over my head.”

Fortunately, Funk said, it was not the first time he faced the type of challenging situation that can make one doubt his or her abilities. During such times throughout his career, the Richmond, Va., resident said, he has often drawn on an inner strength and an ability to persevere, which he developed in the fall of 1963 as a freshman “rat” within the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets.

“There was a lot of hazing and to this day I vividly remember certain upperclassmen who picked on ‘rats,’” said Funk. “One of them unmercifully and for no cause whatsoever braced me up and harangued me almost every time he saw me. I just gritted my teeth and decided if I could get through that, then I could get through anything. It was a real maturation for me. I realized that if you want to reach a goal, you can get there if you discipline and apply yourself, because it is all about one simple thing: discipline wanted to.”

I continue to draw on that seminal experience. Little does that abuser upperclassman, whom I have not forgotten, know the role he played in my life.”

Through planned giving, Mahlon “Bud” Funk and his wife, Cindy, have enhanced the impact they can make on Virginia Tech. More information about planned giving options is available from the university’s Office of Gift Planning.

Ways to Give | Gifts that work for you and for Virginia Tech

Planned gifts can offer multiple benefits to donors, helping them address not only their charitable priorities, but also personal and family financial goals, such as retirement and estate planning.

Gifts that work for your retirement

Creating additional income often heads the list of retirement planning goals. Life income gifts, such as charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, are designed to provide a tax-wise lifetime income stream for the donor as well as a future gift for Virginia Tech.

Your life income gift to Virginia Tech can also provide lifetime income for your surviving spouse or other loved one.

Gifts that work for your estate plan

Estate gifts are simple, flexible, and sometimes offer tax advantages. During your lifetime, you continue to fully own the assets you have decided to donate, and can change your gift if necessary.

The nature of a first-year student’s experience in the corps has changed a great deal since 1963, but it’s still a challenge, with mandatory time in study hall and an emphasis on self-discipline, leadership, and academic achievement.

Funk said he believes the corps “is an even better opportunity now for young men and young women.”

He has established a scholarship for future corps members, along with his wife, Cindy, who earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Lynchburg College, but still considers herself a Hokie in every sense. She and her husband are proud that their youngest son, Ashly (economics ’03), is also an avid Hokie.

Along with the Corps of Cadets, the Funks support several other Virginia Tech programs, including athletics, the German Club, and University Libraries. They were inducted this year into the university’s Ut Prosim Society of donors, and also belong to the Legacy Society—a recognition for those who make planned gifts to Virginia Tech.

The Funks have earmarked a large amount of their planned giving for the College of Engineering, where Funk earned his aerospace degrees. When he first enrolled, he majored in biology because he thought he wanted to be a dentist, but like many of his generation, he was inspired by President John F. Kennedy’s call to send a man to the moon, so he changed his major to aerospace engineering.

After earning his master’s degree in that subject, Funk spent almost four years in the Air Force, where he worked as an aerospace engineer at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Aero Propulsion Laboratory. After leaving the military, he decided to shift careers and become an attorney. He earned his law degree at the College of William & Mary’s Marshall-Wythe School of Law, finishing in the top of his class. Funk then joined Hirschler Fleischer P.C., of Richmond, where he has been a partner for almost 35 years and “has had the opportunity to handle a large variety of lawsuits and travel to all corners and nooks of our great commonwealth and country.”

Funk said his time spent at Virginia Tech was special, and that is why the university has been a focus of philanthropy for his wife and him.

“Through the education and the absolutely unique and special place that is Virginia Tech, I had the education and experience of a lifetime and met my beautiful bride,” Funk said. “If Cindy and I can give that experience to just one other person—but hopefully more—by the philanthropy that we have been able to bestow on Virginia Tech, we will be pleased beyond measure.”
you wish. After your lifetime, your will, trust, beneficiary designation, or other estate document directs the distribution of assets as you have instructed.

To create a bequest, your attorney adds a few words to your will or trust document. To create a beneficiary designation, you sign a form provided by the firm that manages the asset you wish to donate.

Examples of assets governed by a beneficiary designation are retirement account balances, certificates of deposit, and life insurance policy proceeds.

You may find you can maximize your family’s inheritance and minimize the cost of your charitable gift by donating a highly taxed asset, such as your retirement account balance, and passing more tax-advantaged assets to your heirs—a choice that can benefit both your loved ones and the university.

Gifts that work for your charitable priorities

Donors often cite two charitable giving priorities that seem mutually exclusive: the desire to see the impact of their generosity during their lifetime, and the desire to make a larger gift that will be possible only after their lifetime. The Office of Gift Planning can suggest ways to combine these priorities, perhaps with an outright gift during your lifetime and added support through an estate gift.

Making a gift that fits both your charitable and personal priorities is one of the most satisfying and enjoyable ways to create a meaningful legacy at Virginia Tech—and you may find that it provides tangible benefits to you and your loved ones as well.

Learn more.

Phone the Office of Gift Planning at 800-533-1144 or 540-231-2813, or email giftplanning@vt.edu.

The Eggleston archway on the campus at Virginia Tech
An extraordinarily strong family connection to Virginia Tech
The fact that Scimeca has held onto such a seemingly ephemeral keepsake illustrates how strong her connection to her native town’s university has remained despite the passage of time and the fact that she now lives in Reston, Va.

Scimeca earned her bachelor’s of secondary education in recreation, with a therapeutic option, in 1982. Both she and her younger brother, Doug Stewart, who earned his bachelor’s of marketing management in 1983, said they have felt tied to the university since their childhood. While much of that has to do with having grown up in Blacksburg, they both said they inherited a lot of their love for the university from their father, Jeffrey R. Stewart Jr. (business administration ’53, M.S. secondary education ’57), who was on the business education faculty for 35 years. Stewart, who remained involved in the university as a professor emeritus, died in June 2011.

“He loved the university,” said Doug Stewart, of Fredericksburg, Va., who is managing director of the Cary Street Partners financial advising firm. “He loved the students. He loved the sports. He loved everything about Virginia Tech.” Scimeca, who works as a therapeutic recreation specialist at the National Institutes of Health, said it was common for their father to invite his students to their home. While Jeffrey Stewart did not discuss his charitable giving with his children in detail, both his son and daughter said they were aware of, and inspired by, their father’s generosity.

“Dad was never really one to talk a lot about what he did,” said Doug Stewart, who has supported athletics, the Pamplin College of Business, Student Affairs, and other programs—and like his father has been inducted into the Ut Prosim Society of donors to Virginia Tech. “He was very humble, but we understood what he did.”

Jeffrey Stewart donated to multiple programs at Virginia Tech, but the Department of Teaching and Learning was a particular focus of his.

“I think it gave him a lot of pleasure to be able to help the kids who went through the university,” said Scimeca, who, along with her husband, Craig (biology ’82), has supported the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, athletics, and the College of Engineering.

Scimeca said that while growing up in Blacksburg, it seemed that “Virginia Tech was always such a part of the community, not some separate entity. I just always felt like I was a part of it and it was a part of me.”

Despite living in Northern Virginia, she has not only managed to maintain the enthusiasm for the university she developed as a child, she has passed it along to her own children, Ryan and Jonathan. They are both enrolled at Virginia Tech, and each of them applied for early-decision admission. Doug Stewart’s son, Coleman, is at Virginia Tech as well.

Linda Scimeca and Doug Stewart have two siblings, Charlotte Chess and Caroline Mullins, who did not attend Virginia Tech but are passionate about the university and frequently attend its football games. With another eight of his grandchildren eligible to apply to Virginia Tech down the road, it’s a safe bet that Jeffrey Stewart’s family’s connection to the university will live on for many years to come.
Alumnus who maximized his education helps others who want to do the same

During his first year at Virginia Tech, Benjamin Z. Stallings listened as an older schoolmate complained about how hard it was to get into medical school. Stallings was still deciding on his path of study at the time, but rather than scare him away from medicine, the knowledge that it was one of the toughest fields to enter actually attracted him.

“It piqued my interest in terms of trying to do something that was considered impossible,” said Stallings, who earned his bachelor’s degree from the Medical College of Virginia, part of Virginia Commonwealth University, and lives in Silver Spring, Md. He grew up in Petersburg, Va., and said he came to Virginia Tech largely because it was one of the few colleges that bothered to reach out to students from his high school at the time.

Stallings earned his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia, part of Virginia Commonwealth University, and lives in Silver Spring, Md. He grew up in Petersburg, Va., and said he came to Virginia Tech largely because it was one of the few colleges that bothered to reach out to students from his high school at the time.

Calvin Jamison—an alumnus who worked in general admissions and minority recruitment, later becoming assistant to the university president—encouraged Stallings and his best friend, Kenneth Southall, to come to Virginia Tech. Southall also enrolled, and is now an attorney. Despite the success in high school that led to his being recruited, Stallings soon realized that he would have to work extremely hard to succeed at the next level of education.

“When I went to Virginia Tech, I was extremely raw in the sense that I didn’t have great academic skills and was not very good in English or math or any of the subjects I thought I was good at. Virginia Tech was hugely instrumental in my developing those skills. I had to work hard, but meanwhile there was enough of a support system that—through hard work—I was able to increase my aptitude in those areas.”

Within a couple years, Stallings not only was thriving in class, but had actually become part of the university’s support system for students who were not. Stallings became a volunteer tutor in a program organized by Barbara Pendergrass, a university administrator who later became dean of students.

“Some of the upperclassmen who were doing fairly well in school would hold huge tutoring sessions with 50-to-60 people. I would usually tutor in science and math.”

Though he no longer tutors, Stallings is still passionate about helping students at his alma mater and has made that a focus of his philanthropy. Along with his wife, Kim, he is a member of the Ut Prosim Society, a select group of the university’s most generous donors. The couple endowed a scholarship for students who are interested in the medical field, and have supported other initiatives at the university.

One of those initiatives is a scholarship program, created by the Black Alumni Committee, to support students who contribute to the diversity of campus. The university defines diversity broadly, to include a variety of individual backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics. Students from all backgrounds are eligible to apply for the scholarship. Applicants provide written statements highlighting how they would add to campus diversity.

“There are more than 6,000 black alumni from Virginia Tech,” said Stallings, who serves on the committee that established the scholarship. “Many of us have received aid from the school and subsequently have graduated and gone on to do well in life. I think it’s important that we alumni get together and pool resources and give even more kids an opportunity to pursue their education.”

Considering that he chose a career by seeking out the most challenging course of study he could think of, Stallings’ answer when asked what he enjoys most about helping young people is not surprising.

“It’s the level of dedication in certain children—those who want success,” he said. “You can see it in their eyes. Those are the kids you want to give the world to, because you know that when they get an opportunity they’re going to take it as far as they can.”

A scholarship fund created by the Black Alumni Committee helped its first three students

Virginia Tech wasn’t even on her radar, but after Jamaica Sykes visited the campus at the urging of her high school guidance counselor, she knew she had to rethink her decision on where to attend college.

“When I came here, the community attracted me,” said Sykes, a sophomore majoring in biochemistry in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. “The campus was nice, the food was good, everybody was just encouraging and nice to me, and they basically just reeled me right on in.”

Continues on next page
Sykes, a native of Portsmouth, Va., had her pick of colleges, having been accepted to all eight to which she applied. In the end, she chose Virginia Tech.

As did Monique Weldon, another sophomore, who is double majoring in psychology and philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. Like Sykes, Weldon didn’t really have Virginia Tech on her list of potential colleges until she set foot on campus.

“It just kind of felt right when I came here,” said Weldon, who is from Richmond, Va. “A lot of other colleges have psychology and philosophy as majors, but I just felt like Tech had the most to offer me.”

Sykes received a scholarship from the fund in addition to a Pamplin Leader Award, a merit-based, one-year scholarship from the Pamplin Scholars Program for Virginians. As the first member of her family to attend college, she said these scholarships were very important to her and her family.

“As an alumna, I would hope that I would be able to give back as much as the alumni have given back to me,” Weldon said. “I’m really grateful that they’re keeping up with relations with Virginia Tech after they’ve graduated, and that they’ve started this scholarship, because I think it’s really helpful.”

Continued from previous page

“My dream of being a doctor probably wouldn’t even be possible without the aid of scholarship money.” Jamaica Sykes

Helpful indeed. Sykes has finished one year in college and is already inspiring others—namely her 7-year-old sister. “She’s been making all A’s on her report cards because she looks at me and says, ‘I want to be like you when I grow up,’” Sykes said.

Visit www.givingto.vt.edu for more stories about philanthropy’s impact on Virginia Tech students.

Get connected with developments at Virginia Tech.

Want 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.givingto.vt.edu to find out more.
Say hello to the future.

Meet Kyle Simmons, a senior majoring in wood science and forest products who plans to work in sales. In job interviews, Kyle will be able to cite his experience designing, manufacturing, and marketing the wood products he developed alongside classmates in a program supported by donors to the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

The hands-on learning initiative Kyle benefited from is just one of many extraordinary student experiences that you can support with a gift to Virginia Tech. Please visit www.givingto.vt.edu to make your gift or learn more.

In Memoriam: Charles Forbes

Virginia Tech’s first vice president for development and university relations, who established fundraising as a major driver of new initiatives at his alma mater, died March 7 in Wilmington, Del., at age 84.

Charles Forbes was the architect of The Campaign for Excellence, Virginia Tech’s first national fundraising campaign, which generated $188 million and helped increase the value of assets held by the Virginia Tech Foundation from less than $8 million to more than $123 million.

He earned his bachelor’s of industrial engineering and operations research in 1949. After working as an engineer for DuPont, Forbes entered the fundraising and communications business.

“Charlie Forbes had an infectious passion for improving his alma mater, and he was a master at sharing that with our alumni and friends,” Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger said. “During his time here, philanthropy truly became a major driver of our success. Whether it was helping to ensure our financial security by increasing the Virginia Tech Foundation endowment, or helping to finance new initiatives, Charlie made great things happen. We will miss him a great deal.”

Forbes was vice president for development and public affairs for the Memorial-Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York before Virginia Tech President William Lavery convinced him to return to his alma mater in 1979. In 1983, the university launched The Campaign for Excellence, which raised more than double its $50 million goal.

“Charlie Forbes was the architect of national fundraising at Virginia Tech,” said the university’s current vice president for development and university relations, Elizabeth “Betsy” Flanagan. “All of us who knew him will miss him, and he left an unforgettable legacy at this institution.”

Forbes served as vice president until 1992, when he became vice president for development and alumni relations at the University of Delaware. In that position, he oversaw four campaigns for individual building projects.

During his tenure at Virginia Tech, major new initiatives for which he oversaw fundraising included the public radio station WVTF and the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Forbes also was the driving force in creating the Ut Prosim Society, which recognizes extraordinary support of and service to Virginia Tech.

His own extraordinary service was recognized during University Commencement in 2001, when he was presented Virginia Tech’s University Distinguished Achievement Award.

More online

Visit http://bit.ly/charles-forbes to watch Charles Forbes discuss his longtime love for his alma mater in a video made after the Class of 2012 selected him as its ring collection namesake.

Meet Kyle Simmons, a senior majoring in wood science and forest products who plans to work in sales. In job interviews, Kyle will be able to cite his experience designing, manufacturing, and marketing the wood products he developed alongside classmates in a program supported by donors to the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

The hands-on learning initiative Kyle benefited from is just one of many extraordinary student experiences that you can support with a gift to Virginia Tech. Please visit www.givingto.vt.edu to make your gift or learn more.

Virginia Tech’s first vice president for development and university relations, who established fundraising as a major driver of new initiatives at his alma mater, died March 7 in Wilmington, Del., at age 84.

Charles Forbes was the architect of The Campaign for Excellence, Virginia Tech’s first national fundraising campaign, which generated $188 million and helped increase the value of assets held by the Virginia Tech Foundation from less than $8 million to more than $123 million.

He earned his bachelor’s of industrial engineering and operations research in 1949. After working as an engineer for DuPont, Forbes entered the fundraising and communications business.

“Charlie Forbes had an infectious passion for improving his alma mater, and he was a master at sharing that with our alumni and friends,” Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger said. “During his time here, philanthropy truly became a major driver of our success. Whether it was helping to ensure our financial security by increasing the Virginia Tech Foundation endowment, or helping to finance new initiatives, Charlie made great things happen. We will miss him a great deal.”

Forbes was vice president for development and public affairs for the Memorial-Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York before Virginia Tech President William Lavery convinced him to return to his alma mater in 1979. In 1983, the university launched The Campaign for Excellence, which raised more than double its $50 million goal.

“Charlie Forbes was the architect of national fundraising at Virginia Tech,” said the university’s current vice president for development and university relations, Elizabeth “Betsy” Flanagan. “All of us who knew him will miss him, and he left an unforgettable legacy at this institution.”

Forbes served as vice president until 1992, when he became vice president for development and alumni relations at the University of Delaware. In that position, he oversaw four campaigns for individual building projects.

During his tenure at Virginia Tech, major new initiatives for which he oversaw fundraising included the public radio station WVTF and the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Forbes also was the driving force in creating the Ut Prosim Society, which recognizes extraordinary support of and service to Virginia Tech.

His own extraordinary service was recognized during University Commencement in 2001, when he was presented Virginia Tech’s University Distinguished Achievement Award.

More online

Visit http://bit.ly/charles-forbes to watch Charles Forbes discuss his longtime love for his alma mater in a video made after the Class of 2012 selected him as its ring collection namesake.

Meet Kyle Simmons, a senior majoring in wood science and forest products who plans to work in sales. In job interviews, Kyle will be able to cite his experience designing, manufacturing, and marketing the wood products he developed alongside classmates in a program supported by donors to the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

The hands-on learning initiative Kyle benefited from is just one of many extraordinary student experiences that you can support with a gift to Virginia Tech. Please visit www.givingto.vt.edu to make your gift or learn more.

Virginia Tech’s first vice president for development and university relations, who established fundraising as a major driver of new initiatives at his alma mater, died March 7 in Wilmington, Del., at age 84.

Charles Forbes was the architect of The Campaign for Excellence, Virginia Tech’s first national fundraising campaign, which generated $188 million and helped increase the value of assets held by the Virginia Tech Foundation from less than $8 million to more than $123 million.

He earned his bachelor’s of industrial engineering and operations research in 1949. After working as an engineer for DuPont, Forbes entered the fundraising and communications business.

“Charlie Forbes had an infectious passion for improving his alma mater, and he was a master at sharing that with our alumni and friends,” Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger said. “During his time here, philanthropy truly became a major driver of our success. Whether it was helping to ensure our financial security by increasing the Virginia Tech Foundation endowment, or helping to finance new initiatives, Charlie made great things happen. We will miss him a great deal.”

Forbes was vice president for development and public affairs for the Memorial-Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York before Virginia Tech President William Lavery convinced him to return to his alma mater in 1979. In 1983, the university launched The Campaign for Excellence, which raised more than double its $50 million goal.

“Charlie Forbes was the architect of national fundraising at Virginia Tech,” said the university’s current vice president for development and university relations, Elizabeth “Betsy” Flanagan. “All of us who knew him will miss him, and he left an unforgettable legacy at this institution.”

Forbes served as vice president until 1992, when he became vice president for development and alumni relations at the University of Delaware. In that position, he oversaw four campaigns for individual building projects.

During his tenure at Virginia Tech, major new initiatives for which he oversaw fundraising included the public radio station WVTF and the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Forbes also was the driving force in creating the Ut Prosim Society, which recognizes extraordinary support of and service to Virginia Tech.

His own extraordinary service was recognized during University Commencement in 2001, when he was presented Virginia Tech’s University Distinguished Achievement Award.

More online

Visit http://bit.ly/charles-forbes to watch Charles Forbes discuss his longtime love for his alma mater in a video made after the Class of 2012 selected him as its ring collection namesake.

Meet Kyle Simmons, a senior majoring in wood science and forest products who plans to work in sales. In job interviews, Kyle will be able to cite his experience designing, manufacturing, and marketing the wood products he developed alongside classmates in a program supported by donors to the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

The hands-on learning initiative Kyle benefited from is just one of many extraordinary student experiences that you can support with a gift to Virginia Tech. Please visit www.givingto.vt.edu to make your gift or learn more.