

Giving the Future to Our Students

By Joel Seligman

SUPPORT FOR SCHOLARSHIP AID IS THE GIFT of a student's future. This point was eloquently made in January by Amy Roth, a senior from Savannah, Tenn., as she discussed what the Alan and Jane Handler Scholarship has meant to her.

"I really feel like it's given me the time and the resources to explore my interests and gain confidence in what I'm passionate about," explained Amy, a psychology major who is a member of the inaugural class of Handler Scholars. "Essentially, it's given me my future."

Amy is one of 10 students in the College and at the Eastman School who have received Handler Scholarships since 2007. She and her brother, Aaron, were among the first group selected as Handler Scholars. Amy and Aaron and the other students in the inaugural group epitomize the goal of the scholarships' benefactors, University trustee Rich Handler '83 and his wife, Martha. The students represent an extraordinary group of young people who would otherwise have limited opportunities for a college education.

The opportunities for all Handler Scholars received a historic boost this winter, when Rich and Martha announced their intention to make a gift of \$20 million. Their extraordinary generosity increases to \$25 million the scholarship fund they established in 2007. The fund, named in recognition of Rich's parents, Alan and Jane Handler, is the largest contribution to student scholarships in the University's history.

We are profoundly grateful to Rich and Martha. Coming at a time when families are still feeling the effects of the longest post-World War II recession, this extraordinary augmentation of their original commitment is especially timely.

The Handlers' generosity will make it possible for generations of deserving students like Amy and Aaron Roth to attend the University. Almost all of those students have been the first in their families to attend college. All of them have enriched our campus with their talent, perspective, and



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initiative, improving the communities in which they are engaged.

That is the power of student scholarships: They not only transform the lives of the students who receive the scholarships, but they also enrich our University by ensuring that young people who have much to offer, but lack the means, will have the opportunity to succeed here.

Since 2005, our University has received \$113 million in gift commitments from generous supporters and their families for undergraduate and graduate scholarships. Support for our students will be a fundamental priority of our capital campaign.

In making his announcement, Rich noted

that there's never a perfect time to make a gift. But he and Martha were prompted by the desire to help some deserving students before they go out to make the world a better place.

The Handlers are not alone in providing exceptional support to our students.

In February we celebrated the announcement of the Renée Fleming Endowed Scholarship Fund for Eastman opera and voice students. Renée Fleming returned to her alma mater for a benefit concert in Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre, where she thrilled a packed Kodak Hall audience with a bravura performance of arias, art songs, and contemporary music that demonstrated why she is considered the world's greatest living soprano. As part of her visit, she made a point of having the opportunity to perform with students. She shared the stage with the Eastman Philharmonia, our top student orchestra that was founded in 1962 by Howard Hanson.

Because of Renée's generosity and the generosity of other music supporters, we will be able to ensure that the Eastman School will continue to be seen as the setting for future generations of opera singers and other performers to establish themselves and to hone their talents as performers and artists.

When Ed Hajim '58, our board chairman and the namesake for the Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, announced his \$30 million gift commitment, he insisted that a portion of his extraordinary commitment go to student scholarships in the Hajim School.

He was particularly pleased to help support "exceptionally talented students whose families simply do not have the financial resources to attend a world-class research university like Rochester. These are the students who will help ensure our nation's continuing success in a world of ever greater competition."

Support for scholarships recognizes that a core mission of our University is education. Our challenge in simple terms is to provide the most outstanding students the means of receiving the most exceptional education. 📍