

# Thank You, Danny

Outgoing board chair Danny Wegman deserves our thanks as we welcome the new chair, Richard Handler '83.

By Richard Feldman

October marked a significant transition in the leadership of our Board of Trustees. Danny Wegman stepped down as chair and Richard Handler '83, CEO and director of the Jefferies Financial Group, was elected to succeed him.

Danny has served as a University trustee for nearly 20 years and chair since 2016. He is now chair emeritus, and will remain an active member of the board, including as cochair of the Trustees' Presidential Search Committee and a member of the White Report Oversight Committee, which is helping guide our cultural transformation initiatives.

Danny has been a long-time supporter of the University. He and I have worked together closely since I became president last winter. He listens to feedback from all constituencies and has been committed to improving our organization in every possible way. Danny led the board through a challenging time, helping chart a steady course for the University.

I have enjoyed his spirited ideas and energy as well as his kindness and humor. Every time we met, we managed to share a laugh. Danny's leadership has been instrumental in our efforts to strengthen our culture. He has long been a proponent of our motto, *Meliora*. He models many of the values to which we, as an institution, aspire.

Frequently recognized among the most respected business leaders in the greater Rochester community for his roles as former president and CEO and now chairman of Wegmans Food Markets Inc., Danny leads by example and treats his employees, customers, and suppliers like family. His work in making Wegmans a fulfilling, respectful workplace is inspiring. Wegmans routinely ranks at the top of the list of *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For.

The grocery chain invests in its people—last year, Wegmans spent \$50 million on employee development, plus \$5 million in scholarships and filled half of its open positions internally.

Danny has brought similar principles to the University, engaging with people at every level of our organization.



Danny is a community builder. He has done immeasurable good in Rochester, providing meaningful employment to residents, funding scholarships to young urban scholars, supporting economic development initiatives, and working to eradicate poverty in Monroe County.

Danny's involvement in Rochester's Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection has been instrumental over the past 30 years in transforming the program into an initiative that has helped nearly 6,000 young people graduate from urban high schools and become productive citizens.

The University is proud to participate in this important work through our Teen Health and Success Partnership Program. Ninety-eight percent of students who work during high school with Hillside employment partners graduate from high school in four years.

Danny's interest in harnessing the power of data and his passion for wellness have led to his substantial generosity toward the University, as evidenced in Wegmans Hall, the Goergen Institute for Data Science, the Rochester Data Science Consortium, and the Golisano Children's Hospital, among others.

Gifts from the Wegman Family Charitable Foundation have been consequential in our

delivery of world-class health care and our industry partnerships in data science. We recently announced another significant commitment from Danny and the Wegman Family Charitable Foundation to support faculty and students at the Eastman School of Music, which will celebrate its centennial in 2021.

In similar ways, Rich Handler has demonstrated an inspiring commitment and engagement as a leader in the University community. First elected to the board in 2005, he serves on the Executive and Advancement Committees and has been the chair of the board's Investment Committee since 2007.

He has taken on other important roles, including serving as the chair of the board's Special Committee, which oversaw last fall's independent investigation, led by Mary Jo White.

Rich was a cochair of *The Meliora Challenge*, the University's historic \$1.37 billion capital campaign, a commitment that was just one illustration of his leadership by example.

For more than a decade, he and his wife, Martha, have been committed to the Alan and Jane Handler Scholars program, a scholarship they established for undergraduates of diverse backgrounds, exceptional academic and leadership potential, and high financial need.

The Handlers' \$25 million commitment to this scholarship was the largest contribution to student scholarships during the campaign and in the University's history. To date, 76 Handler Scholars have either enrolled or graduated from the University.

Each year, 1 percent (currently 14) of the entering first-year class will be awarded this prestigious scholarship once admitted to the University.

Rich has been a key advisor and dedicated alumnus, and I look forward to working with him to advance key strategic initiatives in anticipation of the arrival of a new University president next summer.

And I am deeply grateful to Danny for his dedicated service, his passion and ideas, and for his generosity in helping the University thrive. On behalf of our community, I thank him. 