

# Update

BY WILLIAM PRESTON

## Elemental Gifts

**Chemistry department gives donors the opportunity to pick the element of their choice from the periodic table**

Every year on Halloween, Charlie Brown opens his bag to find a rock. But what if that rock were a rare element? Wouldn't that be a treat?

Outside the offices of the chemistry department in the Center for Science and Technology, donors who make a campaign-level gift to the department can have their names permanently associated with the element of their choice. One wall has been turned into a giant periodic table display, with all the elements represented by items in which they're commonly found.

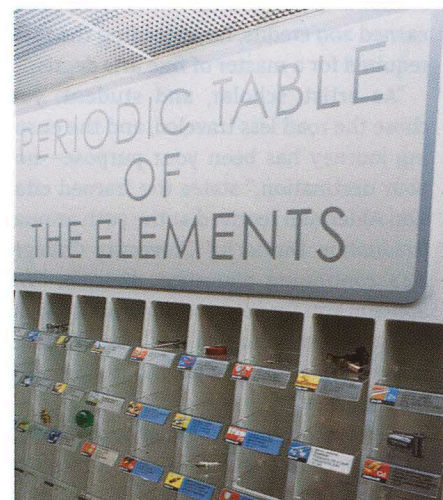
Several donors have already staked claims to elements, and subsequent donors may choose from those remaining. With 103 elements currently in the periodic table, the department's goal of lining up a donor for each would bring a handsome sum of money to meet department priorities.

The "Elements of Success" display—a collaborative effort between the chemistry department and the College of Arts and Sciences' development office—seemed like the perfect solution to attract former students and interested corporations. "The periodic table of the elements is arguably one of the most significant achievements in science, and it often has a special meaning to chemists and others who recall memories of early struggles with learning element names and symbols," says Department of Chemistry chair Laurence Nafie.

"We're offering alumni and friends a unique opportunity to own a favorite element, to have their names be part of our display, to be linked on our web site, and to invest in the research education of our undergraduate and graduate students in chemistry. We are hoping to generate an endowment that will enable us to supplement and support various research projects for our students."

"This initiative will greatly increase our research opportunities for students—both undergraduate and graduate," says Dean Robert G. Jensen. "I am particularly pleased to see the Department of Chemistry reaching out to its many successful alumni by giving them a chance to support the work of current students."

To buy an element, contact Laurence Nafie at 315-443-4109 or [lnafie@syr.edu](mailto:lnafie@syr.edu); or Mike Messitt at 315-443-3403 or [mmessitt@syr.edu](mailto:mmessitt@syr.edu).



steve sartori

Donors to the Department of Chemistry will see their names appear in this periodic table display—where each element is represented by an object containing the element.

## CROUSE REMEMBERED AND RENEWED

Of the 700 seats in the newly refurbished Rose and Jules R. Setnor Auditorium in Crouse College, the College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) has "sold" 200 to donors. The name of the donor or the donor's designee will be affixed to each chair in the restored room.

Emily Corbato '62 donated enough for four chairs—for herself, her husband, and her two sons. A concert pianist with a largely contemporary American repertoire, Corbato says the request to support the auditorium's renovation "hit me right in the gut."

Corbato came to Syracuse with a gift for music, but unsure of her calling. She began studying liberal arts, then switched to the music program.

"When you're an undergraduate," Corbato says, "it's so hard to find the thing you love and want to do. Maybe it's more difficult for

artists. It was at Syracuse that music became permanent in my life, and playing my first formal Crouse concert—as an undergraduate—was a decisive moment."

Four years ago, Corbato returned to Crouse to play a program that included works by her former teacher, the late VPA dean and renowned American composer Ernst Bacon. "Coming back was very thrilling," Corbato says. "Remembering the feeling of being happy at music school, in that building, in that beautiful hall, it gave me a strong connection to where I had been and the importance of it."

"Later in life, when you're comfortable and look back at what you've done, you say, 'I remember that time and place. That was something special.'"

VPA hopes more alumni will feel the emotional tug and consider lending their names to the historic performance space.



## IN MEMORY

Like many children of faculty members, Mary Lou Montonna Williams '50 took advantage of the University's free tuition benefit. The opportunity could not have come at a better time: In 1946, she was just about to start college when her father, a University of Minnesota professor, was "talked into coming to Syracuse" by then-Chancellor William Pearson Tolley.

"I always felt I owed the University something," says Williams. So she and her family established the Dr. Ralph E. Montonna Fund for the Teaching and Education of Undergraduates, named in honor of her late father, a 1916 graduate of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Williams gave a major gift to establish the fund in 1997; her daughter and son—Suzanne Williams Vary and Mitchell R. Williams—have also given substantially to support the endowment.

"Mary Lou and her late husband, Dale, have always shown a profound respect for university scholarship and learning," says Robert McClure, senior associate dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. "Their gift will support the work of faculty who are leading the team-teaching in Maxwell's introductory multidisciplinary citizenship course. Such an outcome for their gift fittingly captures the commitment of Mary Lou and her family to the work of both faculty and students."

Williams had planned a bequest to Syracuse. The recent sale of the family business—Williams Oil Company Inc. in Remsen, New York, started 70 years ago by her father-in-law—gave Williams and her husband the idea of immediately supporting their alma maters. "I wanted to do something to remember my father, who really enjoyed students," she says. "Dean McClure and I believed that this initiative would fulfill that desire."

The Montonna Fund will begin its work once the endowment reaches \$100,000.

## GOOD NEWS FOR ALUMNI

Great universities are made great by their alumni, and one goal of the Commitment to Learning campaign has been, in the words of Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw, "building bridges to you, our alumni."

With that in mind, the University's "embassy" in Washington, Greenberg House, launched a newsletter this January. *Syracuse in DC* provides alumni news and a calendar of events—at Greenberg House and elsewhere—for alumni in the Greater D.C. and Baltimore area. More than 9,000 alumni receive the newsletter, along with nearly 800 parents of SU students.

"Alumni connections can enrich both your work life and personal life," Chancellor Shaw wrote in the inaugural issue. The University wants to encourage alumni to network as well as maintain ties to their alma mater.

A short hop to the north, in New York City, Lubin House also hopes to enhance alumni connections. Its newsletter will soon expand in content and increase in frequency.

## THE FUTURE'S FOUNDATION—PLANNED GIVING

The founders of Syracuse University could never have envisioned, in 1870, the University as it exists today, but they had enough foresight to know the fledgling institution would need financial assistance after they were gone.

Jesse T. Peck, George Comstock, J.F. Crawford, Eliphalet Remington, and Francis Root, five of the most visible founders, made the University's first "planned gifts"—gifts fully realized only after the donors died. The Founders Society, established in 1990, honors and recognizes those who make such commitments today. Some of the University's most significant gifts come from alumni and friends who remember Syracuse in their wills. In addition to bequests, the Founders Society recognizes commitments made through other deferred forms of giving such as gift annuities and charitable trusts.

During the Commitment to Learning campaign, \$42.2 million has been pledged through bequests and gifts of life insurance; another \$6.7 million has been committed through charitable trusts and gift annuities. The University has also received \$37.5 million from estates.

Founders Society member Dorothy Chapman Saunders graduated from



Research biologist Dorothy Chapman Saunders '34 and husband George out, literally, in the field.

Syracuse in 1934. She went elsewhere for her graduate degrees in biology, but it was at Syracuse, where she'd come for journalism, that "they put me in front of a microscope, and I never left." Her education here gave her an edge over her peers in graduate school at the University of Michigan.

An athlete, outdoorswoman, and pilot, Saunders taught biology for a time before becoming the first female research biologist for the Department of Agriculture's Agency of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Long assignments during World War II took her to experimental stations in Central America. The United States was interested in growing crops to replace those that could no longer be accessed

from the East Indies. "You never knew what you were going to do," she says. "It was fascinating."

She met her husband, George, also a research biologist, in 1947. She continued researching, traveling, and publishing until the early seventies. Now in her 80s, Saunders wonders how to rid her house of the accretions of books and decorations. She reads a great deal, and studies genealogy.

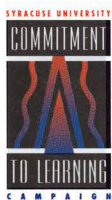
"I gave to SU annually for years," she says, "even when I couldn't afford much." She has given two gift annuities that provide her with income now but will be available for the University's use upon her death; she's also made a provision in her will for a bequest to support scholarships at Syracuse for needy biology students.

"It wasn't the easiest, attending college during the Depression," she says. Scholarships helped her stay at SU, where she was president of the Women's Athletic Association, played sports year-round, and found her calling in a required class.

"I've been lucky," she says. "Luck is taking advantage of your opportunities."

To discuss planned giving options with the University's Office of Development, contact Andrea Latchem at 315-443-2135, or [amlatche@syr.edu](mailto:amlatche@syr.edu).





# Update

## GOOD "THINGS" FUNDED

Every new technology is touted as a way to improve people's lives. If Eyal Sherman is any proof, computers can indeed provide a better quality of life for people with severe disabilities, and Syracuse University's Pulsar Project means to spread some high-tech solutions far and wide.

"Thing One and Thing Two, they ran up they ran down," wrote Dr. Seuss in the classic *The Cat in the Hat*. Since a brain-stroke rendered Sherman a quadriplegic at age 5, he has not run at all. But TNGs (an abbreviation of "totally neat gadgets" and pronounced "things") 1, 2, and 3—computer interface devices designed and built through the Pulsar Project—have given Sherman, now 17, the ability to communicate, participate more at school, and navigate the World Wide Web.

Other young people with disabilities have also been helped by Pulsar's ongoing research. And now a \$40,000 grant from the NEC Foundation of America will make possible the next step: nationwide testing of new computer-driven tools for people with disabilities.

Physics professor Edward Lipson and Dr. David Warner, a research associate at the Northeast Parallel Architectures Center (NPAC) at SU, are the driving force behind Pulsar (<http://www.pulsar.org>). According to Lipson, Pulsar's mission is to "develop low-cost technology to help people with severe disabilities access information that will make them productive members of the information world."

The grant to Pulsar will enable Lipson and Warner to provide schools and sites in several cities across the United States



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Eyal Sherman sports the sophisticated hardware that allows him to interface with a computer. Funding from the NEC Foundation of America will allow nationwide testing of the SU-developed hardware and software designed for people with severe handicaps.

with free TNG interfaces along with sensors and online training information for their free downloadable "NeatTools" software. TNG devices collect such data as facial gestures from the user; the software processes that data for computer control.

"This alpha test is for systems still under development but not yet ready for full-scale dissemination," says Lipson.

Just as computer technology increases the possibility of fortuitous connections between people and ideas, so the history of this project has been constructed of such connections. Lipson was involved with SU's NPAC in 1995 when he met Warner and learned of Warner's pioneering efforts to enable the severely disabled to act and communicate through computer technology. Lipson knew Sherman and his family through their shared synagogue, where Sherman's father is the rabbi.

Building on Warner's innovative technology, Lipson, Warner, and their team developed a chin joystick, the NeatTools

JoyMouse program, and an array of sensors that monitor Sherman's facial expressions. This computer interface has enabled a young man who can neither move his head nor vocalize to use standard computer technology to type text, surf the web, send e-mail, and generate speech.

"Eyal and his family have achieved independence using this system," Lipson says. "His mother is able to set up the hardware and software in a matter of minutes."

This groundbreaking work now enjoys support from the NEC Foundation of America, which learned of Pulsar's work through a local NEC representative who attended a 1998 presentation on campus.

NEC Foundation of America was established in 1991 and endowed at \$10 million by NEC Corporation and its United States subsidiaries and affiliates. The foundation supports programs with national reach and impact in science technology education, principally at the secondary level, and/or efforts to apply technology to assist people with disabilities.

"NEC Foundation of America complements NEC's corporate philosophy of advancing society through technology and enabling individuals to fully develop their human potential," says Sylvia Clark, executive director for NEC Foundation of America. "We see few demonstrations of the meaning of those words that are quite as dramatic as the Pulsar Project."

"Pulsar's work to give the means of expression to its clients—and to many more people in the future—opens possibilities for these individuals and deepens the mutual understanding of everyone involved in the project."

## REMEMBRANCE ENDOWMENT CLIMBS

Eight years after its initial gift to help endow the Remembrance Scholarships, the Dr. Scholl Foundation has added another \$50,000 to the scholarship fund. The gift came last December, the 10th anniversary of the terrorist bombing that led to the establishment of the memorial scholarships.

Last year, the Fred L. Emerson Foundation announced a \$500,000 challenge grant to the scholarship fund. The University must raise \$3 million in order to receive the entire grant.

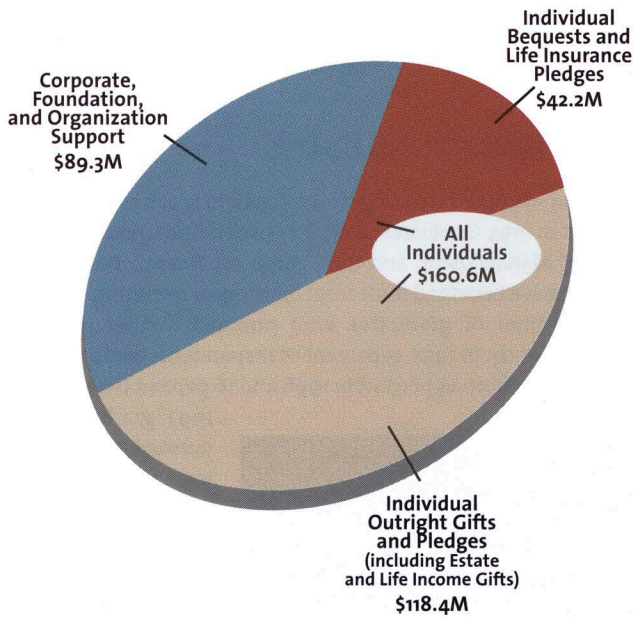
"Gifts such as this make us optimistic that we will fully meet the Emerson Foundation challenge," says Judith O'Rourke '75, executive assistant to the vice president for undergraduate studies.

To learn more about Remembrance Scholarships, contact Judith O'Rourke, 304 Tolley Administration Building, 315-443-1899, [jlourourk@syr.edu](mailto:jlourourk@syr.edu) or Jon Denison, Senior Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations, 100 Women's Building, 820 Comstock Ave., Syracuse, NY 13244, 315-443-5466, [jddeniso@syr.edu](mailto:jddeniso@syr.edu).

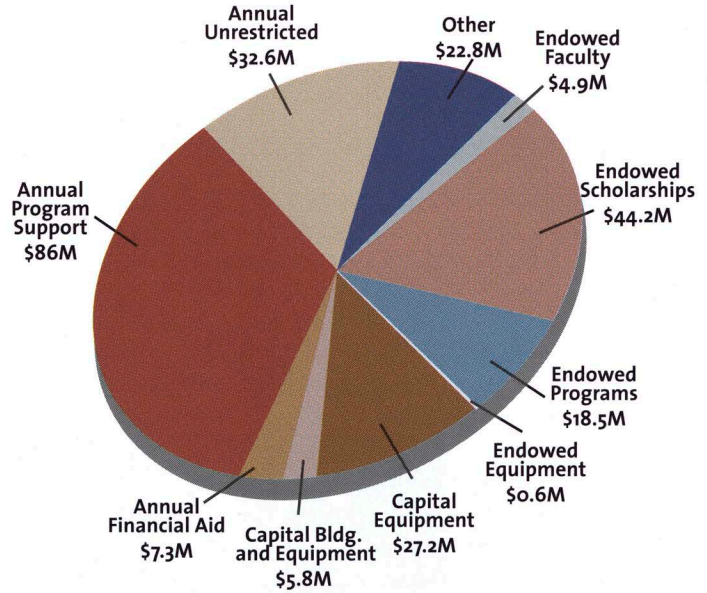


**COMMITMENT TO LEARNING CAMPAIGN AT \$250 MILLION**

**Breakdown by Source of Gift  
July 1, 1993 to December 31, 1998**



**Campaign Disbursement by Broad Purpose  
July 1, 1993 to December 31, 1998**



**BE TRUE TO YOUR SCHOOL**

**W**ould you like to support an innovative program to teach social work students about drug and alcohol abuse? Or what about a fund for graduate research by education students? Or perhaps you want to give Newhouse or School of Management students key information on the workings of government by strengthening the resources of the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.

Every college at Syracuse has a set of bold priorities for the Commitment to Learning campaign. Taken together, those priorities represent a vision of Syracuse as the nation's leading student-centered research university.

If you'd like to directly support a priority at your home college, contact the people listed below. They'll be glad to help you find the proper channel for your generous gift.

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The College of Arts and Sciences  
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School of Education  
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L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science  
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College of Visual and Performing Arts  
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To receive a free copy of *Commitments*, Syracuse University's newsletter about the Commitment to Learning campaign, please write or call Cheri Johnson at 820 Comstock Avenue, Room 100, Syracuse, NY 13244-5040. Telephone: 315-443-2865. Those interested in making a gift should contact Sid Micek, vice president for development and director of the campaign, at the same address and phone number.