

Pillars ²⁰²⁴

A REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF GIVING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND



Welcome to *Pillars*, an annual report dedicated to showcasing the impact of philanthropy at the University of Richmond. This publication illustrates how the generosity of the Spider community carries forward the promise of access and opportunity to the next generation. We hope you are as inspired as we are by the incredible stories within these pages.

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND MISSION: To educate in an academically challenging, intellectually vibrant, and collaborative community dedicated to the holistic development of students and the production of scholarly and creative work. A Richmond education prepares students for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world.

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Produced by the University of Richmond Advancement Office, *Pillars* reflects our commitment to transparency and our sincere appreciation for those who give generously to the University through their service and philanthropy.

For a PDF version of this publication and to read more stories of impact, visit giving.richmond.edu.

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“As you read this publication, I hope you will see how your support helps us advance these priorities every day.”

Dear Spiders,

During this season of reflection and gratitude, I am proud to look back on an incredible year at the University of Richmond. I am both humbled and inspired by the extraordinary impact your unwavering support has had — and continues to have — on our students.

The 2024 fiscal year was another landmark fundraising year: your support helped us raise \$49 million! More than \$2.2 million came from this year’s record-breaking UR Here Giving Day, which saw participation from more than 4,000 donors (learn more on the following page). I am deeply grateful to the Spider alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff, and friends who are helping us make such a profound difference.

In this edition of *Pillars*, we share our gratitude and recognize your support through meaningful stories that demonstrate the long-lasting impact your giving has on our community. These stories represent priorities that we are eager to advance with future philanthropy:

- **Access and Affordability:** ensuring that outstanding students from all financial backgrounds can pursue a Richmond education
- **Academic Excellence:** offering academic programs built on inspirational teaching, dedicated mentoring, and ambitious scholarship, research, and creative work
- **Athletics:** bolstering our NCAA Division I athletics program, a vital force in uniting our campus and surrounding community
- **Leading Lives of Purpose:** giving students the skills and experiences they need to succeed on campus and as citizens and leaders in the world beyond

As you read this publication, I hope you will see how your support helps us advance these priorities every day. Your steadfast commitment to our mission has an indelible impact on countless Spiders seeking education and opportunity, and we are so grateful.

Martha Callaghan
Vice President of Advancement

Our Culture of Giving

BY GIVING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND, you join generations of Spiders in fulfilling the promise of a world-class education made to every student who comes here while fortifying the University’s financial future for years to come.

Each year, our legacy is sustained by the generosity of our caring alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends. These gifts of all amounts are essential to Richmond’s upward momentum. We are grateful to have your support on this important journey.

DURING 2023–24:

\$49M in total gifts and commitments

16,500+ donors gave back

\$8.9M given to Financial Aid

\$610K came from gifts of \$100 or less



UR Here Giving Day

In April, Spiders across the globe showed their support for students during UR’s sixth annual giving day. We raised a record-breaking total of \$2,211,866 from 4,350 donors! More than 150 individual funds were represented benefiting every area of campus, including scholarships, the student experience, well-being, academic excellence, athletics, and more.



STEVE BISESE SCHOLARSHIP

Alumni, colleagues, and friends established the new Steve Bisese Scholarship in gratitude for and celebration of Dr. Steve Bisese’s 29 years of service to UR. Bisese, who retired this fall, first served as an area coordinator for Richmond College, later as dean of Richmond College, and finally as vice president for Student Development from 2006 through 2024.

More than 100 donors contributed \$150,000 to the scholarship during UR Here Giving Day. To inspire additional support, Marcus Weinstein, R’49, matched 2:1 all gifts to the fund through the end of June, bringing total gifts to \$537,000.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$2.2M given by **4,350 donors**

33% increase in total donors

43% increase in first-time donors

\$1M given to Richmond Athletics by **2,219 donors**

15 countries and **50 U.S. states** represented



Gratitude Day

The Spider community came together to celebrate the generosity of donors as part of the fifth annual Gratitude Day in November. Students, faculty, and staff gathered on the University Forum and participated in various activities to thank donors, such as writing down their words of appreciation on notecards that were displayed on a large web and recording video messages. Spiders not on campus were invited to submit their words of gratitude online.

Scan to watch a video and learn more about Gratitude Day.



Spiders Helping Spiders

This annual fall initiative encourages gifts targeting specific areas of financial need. Gifts are directed toward financial aid; the Student Emergency Fund, which helps students who experience urgent and unforeseen expenses; and the Career Opportunity Fund, which provides financial assistance for students to pursue internships, job interviews, or graduate school.

\$312K

GIVEN BY
1,376 DONORS
IN 2023

MAKING AN IMPACT

UR Career Services oversees the Career Opportunity Fund and distributes resources to qualifying students. This past fiscal year, 240 students received more than \$15,000 in aid with an average award of \$345. Top funding requests were for professional attire, travel for conferences and interviews, and graduate and professional school application fees.

“These resources can make all the difference for helping a student start the next phase of their journey,” said Leslie Stevenson (right), director of career development. “Whether it’s making a great first impression for an interview or having the means to travel, the impact on students is substantial. We are helping them do something they might not be able to do otherwise.”

Stevenson said she is proud to support the fund as a donor. “Being at UR has helped me understand the importance of giving back to the place where I work,” she said. “So much of my experience is made possible by gifts that others have made before me, and it’s my responsibility to maintain that tradition.”



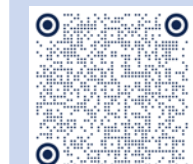
Quatrefoil: Evening of Gratitude

In March, UR hosted Quatrefoil: Evening of Gratitude to recognize and celebrate the transformational philanthropy of our most generous donors. Our premier recognition group, Quatrefoil honors those whose lifetime giving totals \$1 million or more. Held at the Jepson Alumni Center, the event included a Spider Showcase featuring student, faculty, and staff participants, live student performances, a Richmond Athletics uniform display, and more.



In Memory of Christopher Elvin

The Spider community was deeply saddened by the loss of sophomore Christopher Elvin in March. A caring donor stepped forward to help UR create a scholarship fund in Christopher’s name to honor his life and the impact he had on the campus community. The Christopher G. Elvin Jr. Memorial Scholarship will support undergraduate students.



Scan to learn more.

The Impact of Annual Giving

THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND ANNUAL FUND supports the entire Spider experience. Funds go right where they're needed most to make students' time on campus the best it can be. Your gift of any amount makes an immediate impact.

DURING 2023-24:

4,600 donors supported the UR Annual Fund for a total of \$1.9M.

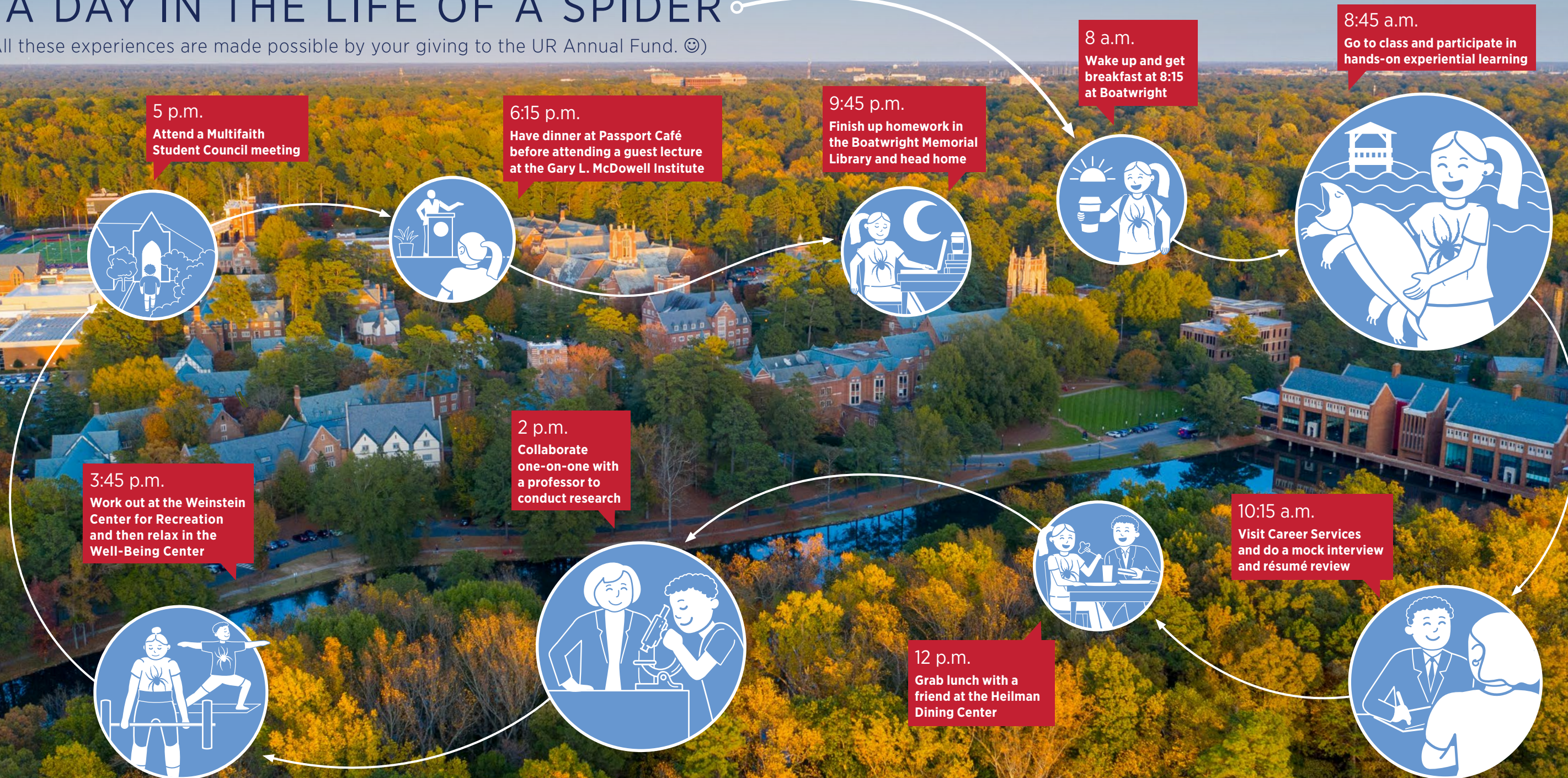
\$1,200 was the average gift.

2,648 donors were alumni and 938 were Spider parents.

\$255K was given during UR Here Giving Day (the most donations to any fund).

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SPIDER

(All these experiences are made possible by your giving to the UR Annual Fund. ☺)



The Endowment: Investing in Excellence

2024 Endowment Performance

The period ending June 30, 2024, was notable for a high-interest rate environment and a historically concentrated public equity market. Technology stocks that were viewed as well positioned to benefit from artificial intelligence performed extremely well and drove strong public equity performance. Like many of its large university peers, Spider Management’s allocation to private assets dampened its returns (though these assets have been a driver of long-term returns) and Spider’s private equity portfolio had a strong year relative to its benchmark. Spider had a return of 7.51% during this period and its portfolio overall is well diversified to be resilient across market environments. Spider’s five-year annualized return for the portfolio was 9.51%, outpacing a standard 70/30 portfolio of public stocks and bonds by nearly two percentage points per year.

Your giving, coupled with Spider’s disciplined investment strategy, enhances the University’s long-term financial capacity. It provides a dependable and growing source of support and presents us with important opportunities to strengthen UR in ways that would not otherwise be possible without the generosity of the Spider community.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the endowment?

UR’s endowment is composed of 1,560 individual endowed funds, designated to support scholarships, fellowships, faculty chairs, and other important activities. Together, these funds provide a permanent source of support for UR’s students, faculty, and programs, and represent the University’s largest financial asset.

How does the endowment support UR’s annual expenses?

Each year, the University’s Board of Trustees approves a distribution from the endowment to fund operating expenses. This spending distribution comprises approximately 40% of the University’s annual operating budget, followed by revenue from net student tuition and fees, auxiliary enterprises, and current use philanthropic contributions.

The annual distribution allows UR to pursue unique and critical initiatives, but it can only be spent in accordance with donor specifications. Current use gifts allow the University to provide increased access to the latest technologies, outstanding programs, and excellent facilities. Both annual and endowed giving are critically important to our ongoing success.

How does UR manage its endowment?

Spider Management is the University’s investment management affiliate. It is governed by its Board of

Managers, the majority of whom are trustees of the University. The endowment has grown by more than \$2.1 billion over the past two decades thanks to generous donors and Spider Management’s unwavering focus on generating strong absolute returns over the long term.

How do I support the endowment?

Donors may work with University Advancement to establish a fund that aligns with the donor’s philanthropic interests, such as a scholarship or faculty chair. Contributions are invested by Spider Management, and each year, a portion of the fund’s value is withdrawn to support the purpose specified by the donor. Earnings in excess of this withdrawal amount remain invested, building the fund’s value to ensure that your gift continues to provide meaningful support for years to come. When an endowed fund is established, a permanent legacy of support is created for UR.

2024 ENDOWMENT PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

\$3.25B
endowment
market value

\$138M
endowment
distribution to
support the
operating budget

7.79%
10-year
annualized return

1,560
individual
endowed funds

Questions?

Contact the Office of Donor Relations

(804) 289-8658

donorrelations@
richmond.edu

giving.richmond.edu

Creating a Meaningful Legacy

Estate gift will educate future community change-makers

Originally recruited to swim for the University of Richmond, Dr. John Bistline, R’77 (left), was fortunate to receive a donor-funded scholarship to support his education. A psychology and sociology double major, Bistline treasured the close-knit mentorships formed and the individualized attention he received from faculty.

“They really guided me and gave me a great head start towards my graduate program,” said Bistline, who recently retired from a successful career as a psychologist.

In 2015, Bistline made a bequest — a gift that is made as part of a will or trust — to establish the Bistline Endowed Scholarship in memory of his late wife, Kathleen Carlsson Bistline, W’78. When the gift is realized, the scholarship will provide financial assistance to undergraduate students, with a preference for those involved with UR’s Bonner Center for Civic Engagement.

“We believe it’s important for students to not only get an education but also be involved with their community and give back to others through service,” he said. “It was that combination of factors that inspired us to create the scholarship.”

Bistline and his wife, Dr. Kathryn “Kay” Bistline (right), are pleased the gift will make a difference in the lives of future Spiders. “Although one never knows the future, we have a plan for what we want to see happen to our financial resources,” Kay said. “We value education and good citizenship in the hope they will make the world a better place after we’re gone.”



Scan to learn more
about gift planning at
the University of
Richmond.



Best in Class

Donor support of SPCS education program helps combat national teacher shortage

Teacher shortages continue to plague the U.S. with nearly 86 percent of public schools struggling to hire educators, according to the National Center for Education Statistics' 2023-24 survey of K-12 public schools.

Virginia is no exception, with state data reporting more than 3,600 full-time teacher vacancies last school year. In particular, Richmond, Henrico County, and Chesterfield County school systems' teacher vacancy rates are higher than the state average.

UR's School of Professional & Continuing Studies (SPCS) has long been working to combat this shortage with its multi-faceted education program, designed to meet the needs of adult working professionals. Additionally, donor-supported scholarships and programmatic funding are giving students the resources needed to succeed and pursue fulfilling careers.

Building strong leaders



A military veteran, Orlando Dick, GC'24, was honored as the U.S. Flag Bearer by Dean Jamelle Wilson at the SPCS Night awards ceremony in May.

As a result of the teacher shortage, there is a scarcity of educational leaders as well.

"Many qualified teachers who would have been tapped for leadership roles have left the profession," said Dr. Kate Cassada, associate dean for academic affairs and chair of educational leadership and policy studies (ELPS). "So, we risk putting people into positions who are not fully prepared for the crucial work of leadership in our schools, and that can potentially harm their careers."

The graduate program in ELPS is designed to prepare experienced educators seeking an administration/

supervisor endorsement for leading a Virginia public school, as well as those who seek positions in private schools.

Orlando Dick, GC'24, initially came to SPCS through its Partners in the Arts program. Funded by an endowment established by longtime UR supporter Joan Oates, the program trains educators to integrate community and culture into K-12 curricula through the arts and technology. Dick went on to complete the ELPS master's program and now intends to use his knowledge and experience to bolster his role as an educational technology integrator for three Richmond Public Schools.

"My goal is to promote fair practices through technology integration, making education the ultimate equalizer for people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds," he said. "I want to motivate upcoming leaders — particularly men of color — to work hard, encourage their peers to set an example for their families, and instill in them a sense of accomplishment for being contributing members of society."

A recipient of the SPCS Endowed Scholarship Fund, Dick said he is grateful to have been supported and encouraged from the time he set foot on UR's campus. The fund is one of about 25 donor-financed scholarship funds available to SPCS students.

"Education changes the trajectory of an individual's life," said Dr. Jamelle Wilson, SPCS dean. "If we change an individual through education, we can positively impact their family and their community. For that reason, our commitment to supporting educators remains very strong."



Encouraging long-term educators

The national teacher shortage does not necessarily reflect a lack of interest in the field. Much of the problem is caused by a large-scale exodus of experienced teachers due to economic strains and longstanding workforce challenges.

"Teaching is not an easy profession," said Dr. Jamelle Wilson, SPCS dean. "It becomes more challenging as societal pressures influence our schools. So, we aspire to equip students with the quality skills and support they need so they will stay in the profession."

For example, many schools are forced to hire underqualified teachers to fill vacancies in their classrooms, leading to higher rates of teacher burnout and a less-than-ideal educational experience for students. SPCS is working to produce top-quality teachers through its provisional licensure support (PLuS) program, which offers the school-based teacher education partnership (STEP) credential for current MT students and the teacher licensure completion (TLC) program for provisionally licensed teachers.

With support from the REB Foundation, the TLC program offers students discounted tuition for courses, testing vouchers for any required assessments,

non-evaluative coaching, and advising. Since the program started in 2022, 39 teachers have obtained their full licenses.

"We're specifically working with hard-to-staff schools in areas of high poverty where good teachers are needed most," said Dr. Deborah Napoli, director of clinical practice. "We get to support educators on an individual level, and it's stopped people from walking away from teaching altogether. If we can create situations where highly qualified, effective teachers are staying longer, we can affect larger numbers of students."

Making a career switch

Danielle Cormier, a student in the master's of teaching (MT) program, hadn't planned on pursuing an education career after graduating from the University of Virginia with undergraduate degrees in studio art and women & gender studies. But her positive experience working as a substitute art teacher changed her mind. She earned her teaching license and is now in her second year of the MT program, aspiring to become a full-time middle school art teacher after graduation.

Cormier is a recipient of the Sprenkle Family Scholarship in Memory of Clarence Sprenkle, which has alleviated financial stress so she can fully focus on academics, she said.

"The MT program challenges me to think critically about lessons I create as well as the teaching context I will be stepping into," she said. "I truly feel that graduating from this program will better prepare me to teach. I couldn't be more grateful."

The MT program offers a pathway for students like Cormier and other "career switchers" who hold a bachelor's degree in a discipline other than education but want to build the skills to become an effective classroom teacher.



Classroom Hero

Travis Dodds, GC'17, GC'14, received the Milken Educator Award this spring. Often called the "Oscars of teaching," it is awarded to 75 teachers in the U.S. annually. Dodds is a graduate of the teacher licensure program and the master's in curriculum and instruction program through SPCS.

A Generational Impact

Spider family honors multigenerational legacy with \$1.5 million scholarship gift



“My father had a tremendous amount of pride for Uncle Charles,” said Lauren Wheeler, Bill’s daughter. “He saw himself as following in Charles’ footsteps by coming from a modest background, getting a quality education, and creating a meaningful career.”



Born and raised in Wheeling, West Virginia, Bill was student body president during his time at Richmond and graduated with a business degree. After receiving his MBA from Harvard Business School, he served in the U.S. Navy. He later worked as an analyst on Wall Street before deciding to enter the U.S. Foreign Service, for which he served as a government diplomat and statesman in Nigeria, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Bill retired as a senior diplomat of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

“He had a sincere passion for helping those around him,” said Daniel Wheeler, ’10, Bill’s grandson. “He felt he was fortunate to be given the opportunities he had, and in many ways, his contribution to the University is helping to give someone else an opportunity. He believed that education is one of the greatest achievements a person can pursue.”

In February, three generations of the Wheeler family and President Kevin Hallock gathered in the Charles H. Wheeler III Conference Room in Maryland Hall.

William “Bill” Wheeler, B’52 (above), always spoke highly of his educational experience at UR. Though Bill passed away in 2009, he left a legacy that will have a life-changing impact on generations of deserving Spiders.

A \$1.5 million gift from Bill’s estate will be used to support the Charles H. III, and Elizabeth D. Wheeler Scholarship.

Dr. Charles Wheeler — Bill’s uncle — served Richmond from 1928 to 1975 as a mathematics professor, University treasurer, and vice president for Financial Affairs and Business, making key contributions that helped the institution achieve prominence. He and his wife, Elizabeth Darracott Wheeler, W’38, established their endowed scholarship in 1985 to help meritorious students with financial need. Since then, the scholarship has supported 44 students.

Pursuing Boundless Opportunities

RACHAEL RUTH, ’25

- *French and leadership studies double major; business administration minor from Steamboat Springs, Colorado*
- *Recipient of the Brockenbrough Family Scholarship*

What has been your most meaningful extracurricular activity so far?

Participating in the University of Cambridge summer study abroad program. Courses like International Law and U.K Comparative Public Law offered a comprehensive introduction to legal education, providing not only knowledge but also a broader understanding of European perspectives. The program’s unique blend of undergraduate and graduate students created an ideal environment for expanding my professional network. Interacting with fellow law students and esteemed Cambridge professors enriched my international knowledge and professional skills significantly. Overall, this experience not only deepened my understanding of law but also enabled me to forge lasting connections.

What has been your favorite class?

My favorite class was Sex, Leadership, and the Evolution of Human Societies. I was captivated by this course because it delved into the profound impact of biological and cultural evolution on the development of human societies. By exploring various theories and drawing from case studies in primatology, cultural anthropology, psychology, and other fields, I had the opportunity to investigate the reasons behind the diversity in leadership and political organization across both human and non-human societies.

What are your goals for the remainder of your time on campus?

In addition to achieving my academic goals, I plan to maintain my active participation in various extracurricular activities both on and off campus. This includes my involvement in the Kappa Delta sorority, Alpha Kappa Psi business fraternity, the improv club, and my engagement in community service through Youth Life Foundation of Richmond. These extracurricular pursuits not only enrich my college experience but also help me develop leadership, teamwork, and community engagement skills.

What has been most notable about your time here?

What I value most are the sense of community and the opportunities for personal and academic growth. I’m grateful for the dedicated professors who have mentored me and the lifelong friendships I’ve formed. The tight-knit Spider community has provided me with a supportive network that will extend well beyond graduation.

I’m proud to be a Spider because this university encourages us to be curious, ambitious, and socially responsible. Your support has made it possible for me to be a part of this exceptional community, and for that, I’m deeply thankful.



Putting Learning into Practice

Students get an inside look at the NYC art world in collaboration with University Museums



When Anastasia Carrico, '26, first heard about an upcoming art trip to New York City, she knew she had to go.

"As an art student, the path forward can often feel uncertain, with fewer clear-cut options than other fields," she said. The trip, held over UR's spring break this year, helped bring an art career into sharper focus for her.

On the trip, students visited galleries in Brooklyn and Manhattan to review and acquire a work of art for the University of Richmond Museums. They met five UR alumni and others working in the art world and got an inside look at commercial art spaces and major art museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and the Whitney Museum of American Art. The students also enjoyed free time to explore the city.

The trip was the idea of Issa Lampe, executive director of University Museums. She had arranged similar road

trips for students when she worked at other university museums, including those at Stanford University and the University of Chicago.

"I tried to put myself in the students' place and think about the kind of trip that I would have liked to go on as an art student," said Lampe, who organized the UR trip with curators Heather Campbell and Martha Wright. "I was hoping it would dispel some of the myths of having an art career."

Carrico enjoyed the hands-on experience with art and the wide range of galleries and museums they visited throughout the Big Apple. "Each institution we visited had its own distinct character and unique offerings," she said. "We had incredible opportunities to engage directly with archives, collections, and exhibitions in some major institutions. That level of access and interaction is invaluable for an art student."

At the Brooklyn Museum, they met with Carmen Hermo, a 2007 alumna and associate curator for the

museums' renowned Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art. UR associate art professor Brittany Nelson introduced them to gallery owners who specialized in photography. Lauren Marinaro, a 2004 alumna, showed them potential pieces for acquisition at her gallery. "Seeing how Richmond alumni have been able to thrive and make their mark was inspiring," Carrico said.

The trip influenced the career plans of Felicia Chen, '24, now a Robins School of Business graduate. "I love art and wanted to fully experience it before going into the business world," Chen said. "This trip ignited my interest in looking into graduate school for art administration after working for a few years in business."

Students took notes as they visited seven commercial galleries, where Lampe and the curators had pre-selected potential acquisitions within their \$15,000 budget. On the last day of the trip, the group met in a board room, as each student gave a presentation about one work that they thought should be acquired by the museum.

Carrico was among those who voted for the winning piece, "Ten Views of Famous Floral Places in Edo: Wisteria at Kemido," a print by Japanese artist Kitagawa Utamaro, circa 1805.

"The print holds a special place in my heart," Carrico said. "Something was enchanting about the vivid colors, exquisite detail, and overall beauty of the figure. As someone with a deep appreciation for Japanese woodblock prints, I was immediately captivated."

"We don't have any Japanese prints of the 19th century in our collection currently, so it's a great addition for exhibition purposes, teaching classes, and of course for student engagement," Lampe said. The print was unveiled in the Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art this fall.

The highlight of the trip for Lampe "was seeing the students' eyes opened for the first time to the excitement of deciding how to think about building an art collection."

She hopes the trip will become an annual event. "It would be wonderful as an alum to look back and know that the work that you added to your university's art collection is still there [and] still being enjoyed by current students."



Above: "Ten Views of Famous Floral Places in Edo: Wisteria at Kemido," by Kitagawa Utamaro

Opposite: Students review art at the Scholten Gallery in New York City.

Spiders in the Arts

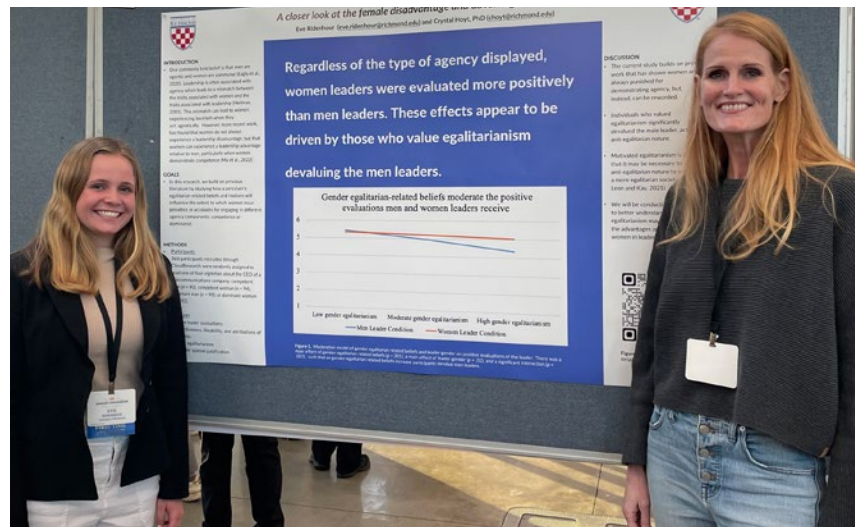
While on the spring break art acquisition trip, students met five alumni who are former recipients of UR's Joel and Lila Harnett Summer Research Fellowship. Established in 2002, the donor-funded fellowship offers the opportunity for one student each year to work with University Museums and co-organize an exhibition of art and objects from the permanent collection.

- **Lauren Marinaro, '04**, owner/director, Marinaro Gallery
- **Bradley Ferrarini, '06**, strategic planning and fundraising advisor
- **Laura Doyle, '06**, senior vice president, Fine Art & Valuable Collections product leader; Chubb
- **Carmen Hermo, '07**, associate curator, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum
- **Morgan Mitchell, '20**, assistant to partner/director, Sean Kelly Gallery

Mentorship Matters

FACULTY-STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IS VITAL TO THE UR EXPERIENCE. Learn how donor support allowed three Class of 2024 graduates to collaborate with professors on one-of-a-kind mentorship, research, and experiential learning opportunities.

The psychology of female leadership



Eve Ridenhour, '24, and Dr. Crystal Hoyt at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention in San Diego

During her February poster presentation at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Convention in San Diego, Eve Ridenhour, '24, fielded questions about her research into the advantages and disadvantages of female leadership.

“Teaching is best when we work side-by-side with undergraduates to create new knowledge. It embodies a liberal arts education.”

She said her work with Dr. Crystal Hoyt, professor of leadership studies and psychology and the Col. Leo K. & Gaylee Thorsness Chair in Ethical

findings indicate that people with egalitarian beliefs are more likely to rate competent female leaders significantly higher than competent male leaders.

Ridenhour and Hoyt replicated and extended the research in a spring study that they plan to present at next year's SPSP convention, and Ridenhour presented on both studies on campus in April at the Jepson Research Symposium. Currently, the duo is working on conducting a third study and hope to co-publish a paper for an academic journal.

“This research has implications for the future of women in leadership and could potentially make a difference in how our society functions,” Ridenhour said.

Mentoring undergraduates in research is a priority for Hoyt, who

has co-published academic articles with many former students. “Teaching is best when we work side-by-side with undergraduates to create new knowledge,” she said. “It embodies a liberal arts education.”

Leadership, enabled her to present at this professional conference. The Jepson School of Leadership Studies offered her the donor-funded Fredric M. Jablin Award for Undergraduate Research to support her research and a travel grant for the conference.

“When I decided to pursue honors research in the Jepson School, I asked Dr. Hoyt to serve as my faculty mentor because my research interests align with hers,” Ridenhour said.

Hoyt helped her set up a pilot study to test people's perceptions of women and men as leaders. Ridenhour's



Art history research in Mexico City

While taking Dr. Elena Calvillo's class on women artists, Emma Miller, '24, became fascinated by the history of convent art in Mexico. Her paper on the topic was published in Yale University's spring 2022 Asterisk* Journal of Art and Art History.

“I'm a Spanish speaker, so that particular area resonated with me,” she said.

A year later, Calvillo, associate professor of art history, planned a research trip to Mexico City to explore European prints from colonial-era collections for a book that she is writing. Knowing that Miller would pursue the topic of convent art for her senior thesis, she invited her along. With funding from the Tribble Faculty Fellowship, the pair traveled to the capital city in fall 2023. They visited

various historic and culturally relevant sites that strengthened their primary source research, such as the Museo Soumaya and the National Library of Anthropology and History.

For Miller, the highlight of the trip was visiting the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in the town of Tepetzotlán, about an hour north of the city. “I convinced a guard to take us into a closed wing of the museum where a wealth of 18th century convent art was stored,” she said. “The works we studied became an integral part of my senior thesis research.”

As she worked on her senior thesis, Miller received additional mentoring by Dr. Najung Kim, assistant professor of art history and instructor of

the capstone seminar. A chapter from Miller's thesis earned her the 2024 Student Symposium Paper Award from the School of Arts & Sciences in the spring.

As a new Spider alumna, Miller intends to gain experience working in an art museum before enrolling in an art history graduate program. Working one-on-one with Calvillo in Mexico helped her gain invaluable post-graduate skills, she said.

“I learned so many lessons on conducting research just by watching Dr. Calvillo because she's done this so many times,” she said.

Calvillo is grateful for the Tribble family's generosity in making the experience possible. “This was my first time traveling with a student to a place that was part of my research, and we had a great time,” she said. “I would love to have the opportunity again in the future.”



Top: Emma Miller, '24, and Dr. Elena Calvillo at the Templo Mayor ruins in Mexico City

Left: Juan Patricio Morlete Ruíz, “Sor Maria Francisca de San Pedro,” 1760, oil on canvas. Private collection. Miller's research examined “profession portraits” like this, which were commissioned by the families of new nuns to commemorate their entry into cloistered life.

Making real-life financial investments



invest \$1.2 million from UR's own endowment.

The fund is open to senior finance majors as a capstone course. The student managers take a series of investment track courses and learn to evaluate a company and what to look for when investing. They are split into two fund teams: one focused on growth-oriented investments, the other on value funds that are on discount. The teams meet weekly to review their portfolio's performance and pitch new investments.

"It's one of few student-managed funds in the country," said SMIF's faculty advisor Dr. John Earl, associate professor of finance and chair of the finance department. "The managers have rules to abide by, but they make all their own decisions. It gives them real-world experience and a competitive advantage in the job market."

Natalie Null, '24 (above), is doing equity research in New York City at KBW, a full-service boutique investment firm. Her career choice is a direct result of her experience working with the Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF) in the Robins School of Business.

"I did an internship in financial planning and analysis and realized it wasn't for me," she said. "Then I joined SMIF and found something I could see myself doing long term."

For select business students like Null, SMIF is an opportunity to gain real-time experience in securities analysis and portfolio management by deciding how to

Null, who served as head of the value fund, worked closely with Earl through SMIF and as a student in his class. "I absorbed so much information because we could directly apply our classroom learning to what we were doing with the fund," she said.

Financial support from Spider alumni and parents has been vital to the program's success since it was created in 1993. In addition, the fund is advised by a group of investment professionals, many of whom are former student managers. Each fall, SMIF students travel to New York City to visit investment firms and network with SMIF alumni.

"They have this huge network that stretches more than 30 years," Earl said. "They all help each other out; it's very special."



Right: Former and current SMIF student managers visited the New York Stock Exchange during SMIF's annual trip to New York City in fall 2023.

Achieving in Athletics and Academics

MELISSA NWAHALOR, '27 WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING

- *Biology major from Columbia, Maryland*
- *Recipient of the Natalie M. Lewis Memorial Scholarship*
- *Named a 2024 CSCAA Scholar All-American for academic performance*
- *Earned the gold medal in the 50 free with new program record at the 2024 Atlantic 10 Championships*
- *Two-time Atlantic 10 Swim & Dive Rookie of the Week*

What has been most notable about your time here?

Richmond has been such a great experience for me so far. I have already made so many friends, built many close relationships, had a variety of new experiences, and learned a lot. I am grateful that I have a very close-knit team of swimmers who are always there for me no matter what and I always feel safe and accepted.

What has been your favorite class at UR so far?

My favorite class was Biology 199: Biodiversity and Conservation. The class was so much fun, and I had the best professor, Dr. Jennifer Sevin. We went on class trips to the zoo, explored nature, and did many other fun and educational activities.

What has been your most meaningful extracurricular activity?

I am currently part of the UR swim team which takes up most of my time, but it has been especially meaningful to me because of the relationships I have built and the accomplishments I have made so far.

What are your aspirations for the future?

After I graduate from Richmond, I hope to go to medical school and become a pediatrician.



2023-24 Women's Swimming & Diving

- *Earned the second highest GPA in the country out of 783 teams and was named a 2023 CSCAA Fall Scholar All-American Team*
- *Placed second at the 2024 Atlantic 10 Championships*
- *Placed 14th at the NIC Championships*
- *Awarded UR's Women's Academic Team Award for third consecutive year*

A Team Effort

Football alumni fund facility renovation in honor of former coach

Alex Perdikis, '97, a former Richmond football student-athlete, remembers well the time he spent in the Spider Team Meeting Room. From hosting team huddles the night before a home game to presentations from guest speakers, the room became a shared space to support team camaraderie and belonging. "It's always been a special place – a sacred place," he said.

Located in the Robins Center, the Spider Team Meeting Room serves as a hub for more than 400 Richmond Athletics student-athletes, coaches, and administrative staff. Coaches hold most team meetings in this space; the football team utilizes it multiple times a week during the season for educational programming and to watch film. Student-athletes also use the space to study, hold group meetings, and relax.

After years of heavy use, the meeting room needed a fresh, modern look. When Perdikis heard about the need last year, he rallied former teammates Connor Marsden, '99, Samuel Kaufman, '99, Cary Goodwin, '98, and other alumni to make a gift to the cause. The group generously funded space enhancements including new furniture and carpeting, a custom podium, state-of-the-art technology, and updated design and graphics.

"It's one of the first places that new recruits see when they tour campus, so we wanted to make this a space that you're excited to walk into," Perdikis said. "All of the athletics facilities are so amazing; we felt that updating the room would be the perfect touch. No matter the amount people were willing to give, it all made a difference."



Former UR football coach Jim Reid (left) and Alex Perdikis, '97 (right)

"We felt that updating the room would be the perfect touch. No matter the amount people were willing to give, it all made a difference."



"The newly updated meeting room has been a great addition to the already impressive facilities offered for our student-athletes," said Russ Huesman, head coach of the football program. "We are grateful to everyone involved in making it happen."

The alumni dedicated their gift to Jim Reid, who served as head coach of the Spider football program from 1993 to 2004. The renovated meeting room was unveiled in his honor at a special gathering of alumni, coaches, and athletics staff last November that also marked the 25th anniversary of the Class of 1998 football team. That year, the team achieved a 9–3 record, an Atlantic 10 championship, and a trip to the NCAA playoffs.

"Coach Reid was and continues to be an instrumental part of my life and in the lives of every player he's worked with," Perdikis said. "He's an unbelievable mentor, coach, advisor, and leader on and off the field. It was important for us to recognize him with this gift and recognize the importance of great coaching."

The gathering was especially meaningful for Winston October, '99, captain of the 1998 team who

is now the football program's offensive coordinator and wide receivers coach. "It was a special day to celebrate a season where our motto, 'Quest to be the best,' was achieved," he said. "It was an honor to stand together again in remembrance."



Top: The Class of 1998 football team reunited last November for the unveiling of the renovated Spider Team Meeting Room (above) and to celebrate the team's 25th anniversary.

Enriching the Spider Experience

Ellwein family's generosity supports first generation, limited-income students



Above: The Ellwein family at UR Commencement 2024

It didn't take long for Charles and Nel Ellwein, P'24, to fall in love with the University of Richmond through the experience of their daughter, Alexa, '24.

"She had a great first year, even though she started during COVID-19," Nel said. "While many other universities struggled, we felt that UR handled the pandemic well and were so impressed with the communications we received as parents. So, we became really excited about the University and began to learn how we could best offer support."

In 2022, the couple made a generous gift to establish the Ellwein Family Fund, which provides long-term support for programs and activities that further student well-being and belonging, specifically for first-generation and/or limited-income students.

"We recognize that many UR students face real

financial barriers and other obstacles when coming to college," Nel said. "We want these students to feel comfortable and supported so they have just as great of an experience as Alexa had."

The Ellwein Family Fund currently provides vital support to Richmond's Spiders FLI program. Managed through the Student Center for Equity and Inclusion (SCEI), Spiders FLI offers programming for first-generation and/or limited-income students such as networking opportunities, mentorship, leadership experiences, and community-building events. The

"We want these students to feel comfortable and supported so they have just as great of an experience as Alexa had."



Students celebrated their accomplishments at the inaugural Spiders FLI awards ceremony in April.

goal is to help students form meaningful connections and access resources that will allow them to succeed during their time on campus and after they graduate.

Spiders FLI alumnus Sam Ghali, '24, said the program gave him the confidence to pursue opportunities that enhanced his Richmond experience, such as a prestigious internship in mental health research at the University of Oxford. At the inaugural Spiders FLI awards ceremony in April, Ghali received the Spiders FLI Impact Award, recognizing a student who has made a meaningful impact within and beyond the program.

"My most significant accomplishment [at UR] was finding a family like no other in the Spiders FLI program," he said. "At its core, FLI is about mutual affirmation. The FLI community is [one of] the hardest working on campus. Many of us have accomplished remarkable things and continue to do so. We often stumble and anxiety floods in, but there's always a family to lift us up again."

SCEI's former associate director Lisa Miles, who retired in June after 17 years at UR, is grateful to supporters like the Ellweins for helping the program

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grow in breadth and depth.

"We can offer more students deep engagement opportunities and take more students off-campus to engage them with our beautiful surroundings," she said. "Students frequently talk about how this program is foundational to their experience at UR. Without the help of donors like the Ellweins, we simply could not offer all these opportunities to our students."

A Global Family of Spiders

International alumni make meaningful gift to memorialize host mother

Though Rebecca “Becky” Trader had no biological children, 27 Spider alumni proudly call her “Mama Becky.” The alums are all international students who were hosted by Trader as part of UR’s Host Family Program.

Trader initially got involved with UR because her husband, Edwin “Ed” Trader, was a 1960 graduate. In 1994, they attended a meeting for prospective host families and immediately got involved by hosting several students from Africa and the Caribbean.

Ed passed away in 1996, but Trader continued hosting on her own, with the students becoming an integral part of her life and helping heal her grief. That year, she established the J. Edwin Trader Fund, which provides resources so that UR’s international students can learn more about the U.S. by attending cultural and historical events and activities. She went on to welcome host students from nearly 15 countries across four continents.

Marybe Assouan, '05, from the Ivory Coast, was number 19 of Trader’s host children. “Mama Becky had said she was done at 18,” she said. “But then one of her current host students who had gone to high school with me convinced her to take me, too. After that, word of mouth kept spreading, and she ended up having 27 total.”



The Host Family Program pairs international students with UR alumni, faculty, and staff as volunteer hosts, said Michele Cox, senior advisor and partner manager in International Education. The students live on campus and interact with their hosts regularly through activities such as holiday gatherings, family dinners, shopping, and sporting and cultural events.

Assouan said Trader helped students learn about and adapt to U.S. culture while providing a familial safety net. “She helped us prepare for internships and bought us each our own monogrammed stationary to write thank you notes,” she said. “She even took us crabbing at her river house. She made sure that we all felt connected as one family.”

There are many great host family stories, Cox said, but few “rock stars” like Trader. “It’s extremely meaningful for international students to have these educational and personal growth experiences,” she said. “Becky gave them those experiences and loved them all tremendously.”

Now a tax senior manager at EY, Assouan remained in Richmond after graduating and became very close with Trader, visiting her regularly and attending family events together. When Trader became sick unexpectedly in late 2023, Assouan rallied her host siblings to visit her at the hospital.

Sadly, Trader died in February. Assouan connected all of Trader’s “children” with her surviving family members to plan a heartfelt



“Mama Becky” proudly displays photos of her former international host students and their families.

memorial celebration. The alums also organized a memorial fundraiser and collected more than \$7,500, which was used to make a gift to the Trader Fund and purchase memorial pavers honoring the couple in UR’s Columbarium and Memorial Garden.

“The gift is a wonderful way of continuing the Trader legacy by supporting their love of international students and their desire to help students experience historical and cultural events,” said Krittika Onsant, director of international student and scholar services, who has managed the Trader Fund and Host Family Program since 2000.

“We wanted to do something true to our values as a token of appreciation for all Mama Becky did for us,” Assouan said. “What better way to do that than to invest in a cause that was meaningful to her and us?”



Scan to learn more about the J. Edwin Trader Fund.

Left: Becky Trader at Marybe Assouan’s UR graduation in 2005

Right: Trader’s family, former host students, and UR staff gathered at her memorial service and presented a gift to the J. Edwin Trader Fund. Many wore red UR hoodies as a nod to Trader’s own beloved hoodie.



Making a Full Circle Impact

Tennis student-athlete interns for nonprofit that changed his life



For Cole Brashear, '27, his summer internship at Inspiring Children Foundation (ICF) was more than a resume builder – he gave back to the nonprofit organization that helped him during a challenging time in his life.

“I moved into ICF’s transitional housing program in Las Vegas when I was 16,” Brashear said. “I was deeply struggling with my mental health and my journey overall, and ICF helped me change that.”

For more than two decades, ICF has helped at-risk youth and families rise above their struggles to heal, grow, and become their best selves. The organization’s award-winning 10-pillar program provides participants with evidence-based tools and activities for improving physical, social, emotional, and mental health.

Ninety-five percent of children in the program have gone on to receive college scholarships in academics and athletics, including Brashear, who plays for UR’s men’s tennis team.

As part of his internship, Brashear worked to extend ICF’s impact through its #NotAloneChallenge, a worldwide social media campaign focused on reminding

people that they’re not alone and providing access to free mental health tools. “We’re trying to get the word out about mental health and provide helpful solutions,” he said.

Brashear, who plans to major in leadership studies and psychology, said the internship experience directly advanced his academic pursuits while giving him the personal satisfaction of making a difference in the lives of children in need.

“There’s nothing more rewarding than coming back to this place, seeing my former self in many of these kids who are struggling, and using what I’ve learned to help them,” he said.

Funding provided by the donor-supported Richmond Guarantee helped Brashear pay for living

expenses during his internship at ICF’s headquarters in Las Vegas. He was also able to use the funding to help him train and maintain a strength and conditioning regimen while away from campus. He said that his involvement with ICF as a program participant and staff member has contributed to his athletic success.

“Tennis is a very mentally intense sport – it’s difficult to stay focused and compete for such an extended period of time,” he said. “Being part of ICF was integral to my development as a person and tennis player. Without the Richmond Guarantee, I would not have been able to do this internship and do what I love.”

“Cole’s involvement with ICF is an amazing story of development, humanity, and inspiration,” said Houston Barrick, head coach of UR men’s tennis. “His work has helped strengthen his leadership skills on and off the court, and I know it will make him and our team even stronger going forward.”



Above: Cole Brashear, '27 (left), volunteered at an Easter event hosted by Inspiring Children Foundation in the spring.

Right: Brashear plays for UR’s men’s tennis team.



The Richmond Guarantee

Cole Brashear’s internship stipend was provided by the Richmond Guarantee, which is made possible through donor support.

Through the Guarantee, every undergraduate student is eligible to receive a fellowship of up to \$5,000 for an unpaid or underpaid summer internship or faculty-mentored research project. This summer, around 500 students participated in a summer fellowship.

“The summer fellowships help students make connections between what they are learning in the classroom and their career interests and future academic pursuits,” said Brendan Halligan, senior associate director of experiential learning and assessment for Alumni and Career Services.



Thank You

We are deeply grateful for your generosity to the University of Richmond. With your support, we can continue to reach new heights and unlock doors of access and opportunity for our incredible students.





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UR Here GIVING DAY

MEN'S LACROSSE received the second most dollars raised — **\$219,000** — out of all Richmond Athletics teams during UR Here Giving Day in April.

*Learn more about
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