A Special Campaign Report

A Comprehensive Campaign to Support SUNY Plattsburgh Students

Spring 2011

Bright with Promise is dedicated to enhancing the student experience, ensuring accessibility to students, and supporting the college’s mission by securing $15 million in gifts from alumni, faculty, staff, corporations and friends between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2011.
Help Us Meet the $1 Million Bright with Promise Challenge

Two graduates — a husband and wife, members of the classes of ’70 and ’72 — have pledged $1 million to challenge us to reach two Bright with Promise Campaign goals:

» Enlisting 1,500 additional alumni donors by June 30.
» Securing an additional $1 million from all members of the Plattsburgh community.

Donate even a small amount and help us meet the Bright with Promise Challenge.

You will support the college in raising more than $15 million and helping current and future SUNY Plattsburgh students fulfill their promise.

Funds given to the college through Bright with Promise as of April 6, 2011

$4,678,730
Endowment

$7,670,424
Plattsburgh Fund

$1,560,766
Capital Projects

OVERALL TOTAL
$13,909,920
OR
92.7% of Goal

“’If each of us can take less than 15 minutes and give $15 or more, we can make amazing things happen for the students and their communities.’

—Anonymous Donors, Classes of ’70 and ’72

Bright with Promise
For Daniel Kelleher, giving back to SUNY Plattsburgh was a no-brainer — especially since he attributes his success to the academic atmosphere at the college.

The ’08 environmental science graduate is the business manager for Downtown Albany Business Improvement District, where he promotes business development and quality of life in the state capital.

It’s a job he loves and is one of the reasons the Delmar native has been giving back to his alma mater, but not the only reason. Kelleher gave his first gift before he had a job — when he was still a graduate student working on his master’s degree in regional planning at Cornell University.

“SUNY Plattsburgh helped me become who I am and helped me on my career path,” he said. “I’m just grateful for that.”

“First of all, there were great faculty within my major. They really supported my career path and the goals I wanted to achieve,” he said. “And the general-ed curriculum helped broaden my experience and direct me to where I ended up.”

Since he’s a recent graduate, he understands it can be hard to find the means to give but said, for him, even giving the $25 or so each year counts for something.

“It takes careful planning,” he said. “I give even the small amounts that I do because I am able to. I believe we are shaping the next generation of leaders today, and it is the responsibility of alumni to ensure that the resources are there to do so.”

Gifts in all amounts are appreciated, especially when those gifts come from recent alumni, said Anne Hansen, vice president for institutional advancement at SUNY Plattsburgh.

“Sometimes people don’t feel like their gift of $15 or $20 would make a big difference to students, but it can,” she said. “We all know there is power in numbers. When many people give, gifts are quickly multiplied. For example, half of the college’s total alumni, 25,324 people, graduated in the past 20 years, yet only 2 percent of this group supported the college last year. If every recent grad gave just $20, we would have half a million dollars in additional resources. The impact on students would be tremendous, and the future would definitely be brighter.”

Kelleher said he plans to give to the college forever. After all, he said, “Plattsburgh made me who I am.”

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— Daniel Kelleher
He would say the words so often that his sons thought they were amusing. Now that Harry Mowry is gone, however, those words — loving, caring and sharing — mean more to his family. “He was so much about those three words,” said Harry’s middle son Scott, who now lives in Scranton, Pa. “It was a three-word edict, a phraseology to live by.”

Harry’s three sons, Kurt, Scott and Craig, want that spirit live on. To continue the legacy of the man who served on the College Council and the College Foundation, chaired the Centennial Campaign (1989-1993) and received the college’s Distinguished Service Award, they have pledged $100,000 to college.

Half will go to maintain and enhance the Mowry Family Business Center. Named in their parents’ honor, this center will be located in the new academic building along with the School of Business and Economics and the computer science program. The three agreed to make the rest of their gift unrestricted, allowing the college to use the funds for scholarships and the enhancement of programs as needed.

A Life Infused with Empathy

Harry knew hardship. He was raised mostly by a single mom, who at times had to split the family up to make ends meet in the Great Depression. “His pockets weren’t full of money, and there were times he was hungry,” said his youngest son Craig, who now lives in Southhampton, N.Y.

His sons say those challenges changed Harry, infusing his character with empathy. “It was very difficult for him to see somebody go through some of the challenges that he went through and not be a mentor or a helper or a person who built breaks for them,” Craig said.

According to the brothers, this was reflected in his giving to the college, helping students pay for their education, much as the G.I. Bill had once helped him. “Dad wasn’t affiliated with the school. He wasn’t an alumnus. He basically just believed in the education that was going on there and wanted to support it,” Scott said.

While the brothers knew that their dad was helping the college, it wasn’t until they witnessed him at events like a celebration of scholarships and the dedication of the Harry E. Mowry Conference Room in Redcay Hall in 1992 that they came to fully understand these efforts. “The students who were benefiting from the program got up and thanked the donors for helping them get their education. That was when I realized how my father related to those students and how much he was emotionally invested in helping people and being a part of their lives,” Craig said.

Lynn Mowry: A Strong Partner

Harry wasn’t alone in his actions. As strong as Harry was, Lynn was his equal, according to Kurt, their eldest son, now a Plattsburgh-area business executive. “She was a force to be reckoned with,” he said of his mother, who passed away in 2003. “She was the perfect match for my father.”

“At a young age, she taught classes and was able to maintain authority over a pretty rough group of New York City-area youngsters,” Scott said.

The daughter of a doctor, she taught English while Harry went to school to earn a bachelor’s in sociology and a master’s in divinity. While the divinity degree informed who Harry was, he never used it to become a minister. Instead he became a major player in the printing industry, working for Harris Graphics and moving from place to place until he opened a shop in Champlain, employing from 600 to 650 workers in the shop’s heyday.

Lynn became the glue that held the family together as they moved from city to city, living in places like Pittsburgh, Pa., and Milan, Italy. “She was the nucleus of the family,” Craig said. “Wherever we would move for business, she would create the world and make sure we were settled in.”

“They were a good team,” Kurt said. Between Harry and Lynn, the Mowry brothers say they found acceptance and support for whatever they did. “They were very level-headed and very wise in knowing how things shake loose,” Scott said. “After I would talk with them, I always felt like it was going to be OK.”

Adding to the Legacy

Now as the brothers raise the next generations of Mowrys — Harry and Lynn’s five granddaughters and two great-granddaughters, they hope to pass on the hard work and respect that the children’s grandparents embodied.

They also hope to continue the Mowry legacy at the college. “The gift is a way to support the college and honor both of them. This institution exemplifies what is best in this community,” said Kurt, who added that he would hate to see what would happen to Plattsburgh if it didn’t have the college, both in terms of education and culture. “With all three of us making the gift, it says a lot about...
Brothers Continue What Their Parents Began

Then-SUNY Plattsburgh President Charles Warren speaks at the 1992 dedication of the Harry E. Mowry Conference Room. In the front row sit Harry and Lynn Mowry's sons: Kurt, Craig and Scott Mowry. Behind Warren are Bob Garrow and Lynn and Harry Mowry.

who my parents were and the importance of what they were doing. The fact that my brothers would be willing to give, even though they are far away, shows how important this is to us all.”

Lynn and Harry Mowry unveil the plaque honoring them at the dedication of the Harry E. Mowry Conference Room.
Carla (Canjar) Jordan ’04 calls the Casella scholarship a quintessential example of how investing in people can yield amazing results. Craig Squier ’97 G’04, the general manager at Casella Waste Management Inc., agreed — especially since Jordan, who was the first recipient of the scholarship in 2002, is such a successful employee at the waste-management company.

He complimented Jordan on her work ethic and attention to detail, adding that “her academic acuity and background in environmental studies have provided her with a solid background for her career as an environmental compliance specialist.”

According to Squier, the success of students like Jordan is why, for the third time, Casella has pledged a generous $112,500 to the Plattsburgh College Foundation. That gift is spread out to support five $2,500 scholarships over five years for earth and environmental science students. The remaining $50,000 goes toward the Casella Earth and Environmental Science Endowment.

‘The Perfect Place to Plant a Seed’

“Casella has nurtured a personal desire of mine to be actively involved in what I describe as a paradigm shift from waste management to resource management,” said Jordan, who is now an environmental manager at Casella.

“Individuals within the company felt the college’s reputation for educational excellence was the perfect place to plant a seed,” she said. “Over the past eight years the scholarship has grown into something that I’m sure no one within the company could have imagined.”

The decision to choose SUNY Plattsburgh for the gift was made, Squier said, “because of the outstanding reputation of Plattsburgh’s environmental studies program, which is recognized and ranked nationally.”

Squier, himself, found the program enriching. A ‘97 environmental studies undergrad, he came back to Plattsburgh to earn a master’s degree in administration and leadership.

‘A Really Great Foundation’

The program has played a role in the success of many other students, including Carolyn Strauss, ’09, who was a two-time participant. Now a Cornell graduate student, Strauss thanks Casella for the first-hand knowledge of waste management.

“The Casella Scholarship program provided me with a really great foundation for the rest of my education,” she said. “…. It’s relatively uncommon for a person to think about where their trash is going each time they take it to the curb. Being able to visit the landfill, see the methods of handing waste and learn about the regulations and safety precautions really put things in perspective for me.”
MEGHAN RYAN  
Sophomore, Adolescent Education (Spanish) Major

» Plattsburgh native, recipient of the Community Service Scholarship and Service Corps volunteer at Meadowbrook Healthcare in Plattsburgh.

Why adolescent education (Spanish)?  “I am a tutor and that inspired me to teach. I had two ladies who, when they first came into the Learning Center, were failing Spanish class, and, by the end of the semester, they were at the top of their class. That made me want to teach.”

Why Plattsburgh?  “I started taking classes when I was in high school and knew Plattsburgh had a good foreign language and education program. I decided Plattsburgh was a good fit for me.”

What does the Community Service Scholarship mean to you?  “The Community Service Scholarship gives me the opportunity to stay active within my community. I get to know more people, make relationships with those I help out, and I am able to make someone’s day, which is the best feeling ever.”

The Community Service Scholarship is supported by contributions from individuals and local businesses. It is awarded to freshmen and transfer students who must complete 10 hours of community service per week throughout the academic year and attend a one-credit seminar in the fall. Ryan’s Community Service Scholarship is sponsored by Dr. Richard Semmler ’68.

Give to the Bright with Promise Campaign.
To learn more about the Bright with Promise Campaign, visit www.plattsburgh.edu/promise or call 800-964-1889.
Take 15. Give 15.

Take 15 minutes (or less) » Give $15 (or more) » Be one of 1,500 additional alumni donors

Achieve $15 million

Meet the $1 million Bright with Promise Challenge put forth by a husband and wife from the classes of ’70 and ’72.

“Around 50 percent of our college’s entire alumni population graduated in the past 20 years. If each of these individuals gave even a little to the college, they would have a serious impact on the students of today and tomorrow — making the goal of a Plattsburgh degree all the more attainable.

— Anonymous Donors, Classes of ’70 and ’72

Featuring a year’s worth of rewards for the class with the largest increase in donors:

» See Burghy wearing your class year to events year round.
» See your class pennant fly atop the college’s flag pole.
» Get a 30 percent discount for members of your class at the College Store and online.

Plattsburgh
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Rewards will be offered to members of the winning class from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.