Dear Friend and Supporter of University of Detroit Mercy,

Each year, University Advancement hosts Day of Giving, an initiative that makes students aware of the impact philanthropy has on Detroit Mercy’s teaching, programming and campuses. Our staff place bows on rooms, benches, lobbies, equipment, faculty offices and even trees made possible by more than a century of donor giving to the University.

These bows represent a thriving culture of philanthropy that keeps Detroit Mercy a special place. As I walked the McNichols Campus that day, I was never very far from one of those bows. In fact, as I stood in the middle of campus, I could see many of them without moving at all. Almost everything people see on campus is there because of the generosity of a donor.

I’m happy to say that the culture of philanthropy is alive and well today and makes our University stronger. Our donors share their time, talents and treasure with today’s Titans. Those who share their treasure become part of our campus language. The educational programs, buildings and scholarships created by those donors bear their names or the names of people they chose to honor.

We are grateful to our alumni and friends for their willingness to share all of their gifts, including time, talent and treasure. Through presentations to students, serving as mentors, assisting with student projects or providing internships at businesses, our dedicated supporters see and understand how their philanthropy changes lives. Building relationships with today’s students makes establishing scholarships and funding new facilities and exciting programs a personal connection.

Those who give of their treasure also help shape the Detroit Mercy of tomorrow. Increasingly, those donors are not foundations or corporations, but individuals and alumni who have a relationship with this University. This fiscal year, 95% of all donations came from individuals, accounting for just over $7.5 million. Of those individual donors, 76% were alumni. These figures are important because they show that this University holds an important place in the hearts of people who entrusted us with their education, whether as University of Detroit, Mercy College of Detroit or University of Detroit Mercy.

This issue of Impact of Giving shows the many ways generous donors have made their mark on Detroit Mercy. I encourage you to consider how this institution has shaped your life and how your donation can shape the future of this school.

All the best,

Arnold D’Ambrosio, M.A.L.S ’17
Vice President for University Advancement
On Nov. 28, 1914, University of Detroit’s Board of Trustees formally accepted a gift of property from a Mrs. C.J. Reilly. She and her sister, Marie L. Lansing, would be allowed to live in the home on that property until their death several years later. In 1922, when the building was sold, the proceeds were to be used “to erect a memorial building in memory of the late Cornelius J. Reilly and Lansing Reilly, respectively the husband and son of said donor on the new site recently acquired by the University of Detroit at Livernois Avenue and Six Mile” and to call it the Reilly-Lansing Building. Today, the Lansing-Reilly Building houses the Jesuit community.
Years ago, students were at the forefront of many fundraising efforts. In the 1920s, they bought seats at $7.50 to help fund a stadium at the McNichols Campus as the University’s alumni hosted their own drive to add to the pot. Students were later asked to contribute $10 to fund Memorial Tower, what is now known as the clock tower.

In 1925, the University of Detroit Alumni Association sponsored a lavish production about India to raise money to “assist the Faculty Board of Trustees in the $10,000,000 building expansion program for a greater University of Detroit.” It was performed in the stadium, which was about the only complete structure on the McNichols Campus. The elaborate staging included the temples and tombs of the emperors of ancient India, scenes of a bazaar and a parade with elephants and horses, acrobats and a ballet. The second half of the program depicted a major battle with roaring artillery, flashing guns and it was followed by fireworks. More than 100,000 people attended the fundraising event the first weekend, newspapers reported at the time.

After witnessing the excitement of the students for the projects, donors with more means also came through to help make the buildings a reality.

In the 1950s and early ‘60s, the big campus event was the Spring Carnival. Games, rides, parades, entertainment and even an annual beard-growing contest united students, staff, faculty, alumni and the community in an effort at raising funds to build a student union. Big-time stars of the era came to campus including Danny Thomas, Patti Page and Arthur Godfrey who, after seeing the students’ passion for a union building, did a benefit performance that raised $16,000 for the effort.

These days, each graduating class follows that tradition and collects money to donate to the school. In recent years, these gifts have created scholarships and gone to support The HIVE, the student pantry that helps those on our campuses fight food insecurity.
For more than 60 years, the Chapel at Mercy College of Detroit was a place to be with God. Because it was the Motherhouse of the Detroit Region of the Sisters of Mercy until 1966, all the sisters gathered in the chapel four times a day for Mass, recitation of the office, meditation and spiritual reading. Students often joined the sisters for the early morning Mass, and frequently throughout the day, sisters, students and visitors would visit the Chapel for personal prayer and reflection. Alumni often returned to campus on their wedding days to ask God's blessing on their life together. When the chapel was closed, the stained glass windows were preserved and now adorn the College of Health Professions facility and the School of Dentistry. The installation was paid for by several donors.
Over the years, generous donors inspired by their memories on our campuses, by faculty members or by something new and exciting have made donations big and small that impact daily life on our campuses.

Donors have so many different ways to support the University and each one adds to the fabric of Detroit Mercy. Even the trees on campus and the crucifixes that adorn walls have been gifts from alumni and friends.

In 2021, the University received a gift of dozens of pieces of art both big and small that were part of a collection that filled the Sisters of Mercy’s campus in Farmington Hills. When the property was sold, the artworks came to Detroit Mercy and can be seen all across campus.

Taken together, these gifts make Detroit Mercy a special place for all.
George J. Asher's short life was a model of compassion. The oldest child of Syrian immigrants, he left high school at 16 to support and raise his brothers and sisters after their parents died. A union negotiator for a Detroit-area law firm, he so impressed the attorneys there they urged him to finish his GED and earn a law degree. He supported workers’ rights by day and studied at night. In 1963, shortly before his final year at University of Detroit School of Law, Asher died of complications related to hemophilia. His ideals inspired his brother Anthony Asher ’61, ’65 to pursue a career in the law. Many years later, Anthony Asher’s generous gift would honor his inspiring brother by helping create the George J. Asher Law Clinic Center at Detroit Mercy Law.
In 1961, Richard Cline ’51 wanted to give back to his alma mater by creating a scholarship at University of Detroit in his own name. His gift was $1,000.

Sixty years later, that gesture of support is still helping students achieve their dreams of a Detroit Mercy education. Over the years it has helped many students, some of whom have made their own marks on Detroit Mercy.

After Richard’s initial gift, along with a full match from his employer IBM, his brothers Thomas ‘54, and Charles ‘49 and Charles’ wife Phyllis ‘49 began contributing to the fund. Before long, it seemed fitting to rename it in honor of their father, Leo D. Cline.

Their mother Helen also donated, citing the family’s feeling for the University. In a 1974 letter to the University’s President Fr. Malcolm Carron, S.J., she wrote: “In addition to my three sons, I have two sons-in-law and two daughters-in-law who also graduated from University of Detroit. Thus, we have always felt particularly close to the University and are pleased to be able to have this feeling reflected in the scholarship fund.”

By 1974, the fund had grown to $36,000, and the first award was given according to family wishes to a full-time undergraduate student studying in any discipline.

After Helen Cline passed away in 1983, the scholarship had a second title change to include her name.

**SCHOLARSHIP 101**

When creating a scholarship there are two types from which donors can choose—expendable and endowed. Both have their benefits.

Expendable scholarships are established through contributions to the University and are provided to deserving students each year. All funds from these scholarships are given out each year and a donor renews it annually with a new donation. These scholarships can have an immediate, dramatic impact on students, especially those whose circumstances might have changed through no fault of their own.

Endowed scholarships are established through a $25,000 contribution to the University, which invests the funds. Scholarships are given from the interest earned. These scholarships become permanent sources of revenue for the University, which will be able to distribute more funds from it as the principal grows over the years.

Both types of scholarships can be named for donors or someone who has inspired them, and donors can establish criteria to support students with unique needs and backgrounds.

Donors can contribute any amount to any named scholarships or funds at any time.
The school has been awarding scholarships for nearly 50 years. Two recipients were Margaret Samyn ‘85 and Matt Mio ‘97. Both earned a major in chemistry, attended respected graduate schools, and pursued careers rooted in their undergraduate educations.

Samyn, who also majored in biology at the University of Detroit, is a professor and clinical physician of pediatric cardiology at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

“It’s nice to receive the money, but scholarships are also beneficial when applying to a professional school,” Samyn said. “Medical schools look for accomplishments; receiving a scholarship is an honor to put on one’s CV.”

Growing up, Samyn was inspired by her parents’ philanthropy. In 2010, she established the Margaret M. Samyn, M.D. Scholarship, a $1,000 annual award for science students at Detroit Mercy.

“The recipients send nice thank-you letters, which I love reading,” she said. “When I’m having a challenging day and I get a nice thank-you letter, it’s a reminder that I’m doing something good for someone.”

Samyn also gives of her time to Detroit Mercy, recently joining the University’s College of Engineering & Science Board of Advisors.

Creating a donor-sponsored scholarship often requires only a modest investment, but it can have an exponential impact for decades to come.

This year, Detroit Mercy will announce the 50th recipient of the Leo D. and Helen Wolohan Cline Scholarship. A byproduct of this scholarship is a two-inch-thick file of treasured scholarship recipient thank-you letters sent to members of the Cline family who continue to support the fund.

Fred Brenner ’65 is the husband of Helen and Leo’s youngest daughter Helen Jo. After graduating from University of Detroit with a degree in finance, he attended law school before embarking on a successful career as an attorney and tax specialist.

“I can’t emphasize it enough,” Brenner said. “The accounting and finance skills that I received as an undergraduate were as important as my law degree.”

The couple’s continued support of the scholarship helps to further carry on the Cline Family legacy.

“My wife is happy to still give small monetary tokens in memory of her mother and father,” Brenner said.

“We believe in helping people get an education,” he added. “That’s the building blocks for a successful career. And Detroit Mercy does a fine job of providing that.”
Thank you for providing the students of Detroit Mercy with the Leo and Helen Cline Memorial Scholarship. For me, this scholarship is one of the greatest honors that I have received.

I originally attended West Bloomfield High School and lived in West Bloomfield with my family. Currently, I am a sophomore who is studying Biochemistry and Psychology on the pre-medical route.

I am part of the Student Government Association and have been appointed as a senator for the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. I act as a representative of the department and work with the dean on making improvements for the student body. Additionally, I participate in Conversation Partners, which is an organization designed to match native English speakers with international students. This organization encourages international students to practice their English skills in a friendly environment while allowing for us all to learn about each other’s cultures.

I am also a part of the Chemistry Club where I am the public relations officer. In Chemistry Club, I have been the co-chair of two different lecture series: the 5th Women in Science lecture and the Inaugural and 2nd Annual Shulamith Schlick Memorial Lectures. Both lecture series create educational and professional development opportunities for women and people of color in the STEM field.

Also, I work as an undergraduate researcher in organic chemistry at Detroit Mercy. In addition, I work a part-time position as a medical assistant at Michigan Neuroscience Clinic and am in training to be a Head MA at the clinic. Furthermore, I have volunteered with Campus Ministry to paint our peace poles which symbolize the acceptance and unity that is integrated within the core values of our University. Right now, I am fundraising to provide Detroit Public School students scientific equipment and science-based field trips.

Currently, I am enjoying my sophomore year at Detroit Mercy. The reason I chose to attend was because I liked how the University is a small, community-based school. My favorite part is how accessible all professors are and how passionate they are about helping the students. I also enjoy the culture of the school because it is centered around acceptance and service to others, and I see these qualities in my peers.

Looking toward the future, I am running for president of Chemistry Club for the 2023 academic year. I plan to apply to medical school next year and graduate from undergrad in 2024. I hope to carry the leadership skills I have acquired from my undergraduate career at Detroit Mercy in all my future endeavors.

Thank you,

Noor Sabri
Class of 2024