Highlighting the Impact of Giving in 2013

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Cover: Nicky Jacobs and Phoebe St John, University Annual Appeal Telethons Team 2013.

Photograph: Stuart McEvoy, The Australian
Thank you for your generous support

In 2013 we launched Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne, the largest philanthropic appeal ever undertaken by the University.

Thanks to your generous support, and the magnificent leadership of our Campaign Chairman, Mr Allan Myers AO QC, together with the Campaign Board, we were able to publicly launch the Campaign having raised nearly half of the $500 million target from 13,000 donors. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity and enthusiasm shown by our community of donors and as the 2013 Report went to press, an amazing $289.2 million had been raised for the Campaign.

The University’s capacity to be equal to the best in the world is clear. In 2013, our position as Australia’s leading university was reaffirmed in both the Times Higher Education World University and the Shanghai Jiao Tong rankings.

However, if we are to continue to advance and have impact on the world around us through our research and teaching, we must find new ways of funding the work we do. It is vital that we build our endowment to ensure the long-term strength and vitality of the University. Philanthropy has, and will continue to have, a crucial role to play in the future of the University of Melbourne.

I hope this Report will provide a glimpse of the immense impact your giving has – not just in financial terms but also in the encouragement it provides to our students, staff and community.

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to continuing our connection over the coming years.

Glyn Davis AC
Vice-Chancellor
Last year, I was appointed the inaugural Chair of the University of Melbourne Foundation. With the imminent public launch of *Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne*, the Foundation was established to oversee the University’s philanthropy policies and practices, and to ensure that all gifts had the maximum impact.

It has been heartening to see the extent to which our donor community continues to grow. In 2013, more than 6,000 people made donations totalling over $68.3 million to the University. This represents the most significant year of philanthropy, with the largest number of donors in our 160-year history. These donors have come from all walks of life, including students, alumni and friends of the University. All gifts, even modest ones, are gratefully received and overseen.

The transformational impact of all gifts can already be seen. An increasing number of students are able to benefit from scholarships and bursaries that help them achieve their dreams, and assist them in making a positive contribution to society.

The creation of endowed Chairs is ensuring that there can be ongoing expertise and leadership across a range of disciplines – the Francine V McNiff Chair in Human Rights Law, featured in this publication, being just one example.

New building projects are underway that will provide scholars and students with facilities befitting a world-class university, which will also benefit the wider community.

The enthusiasm that people have for this great University is unmistakeable, and is demonstrated daily as the donations arrive following a year of Campaign events and communications around the globe.

As an alumnus and a Member of Council, I am proud to be associated with the Campaign and with the University. On behalf of the University of Melbourne Foundation, I thank you for your generosity. Your giving is already transforming lives, and will continue to do so well into the future.

THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE JOHN MIDDLETON
CHAIR, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE FOUNDATION
An amazing year for philanthropy

In 2013 the University publicly launched the largest philanthropic undertaking in our 160-year history. Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne is seeking to raise $500 million by 2017 and secure the University’s position within the top universities worldwide. To date, $74.2 million has been raised by the University and its affiliated Colleges and institutions.

We are extremely grateful for our donors’ amazing generosity and their enthusiastic support of the Campaign. Together, we can ensure the University continues to excel in all areas of academic endeavour, and transform the lives of communities at home and abroad.

We have received tremendous support with an unprecedented number of donors giving to the Campaign’s three central priorities:

— Educating Tomorrow’s Leaders
— Enriching our Communities
— Finding Answers to the World’s Grand Challenges

* These figures show donations to main University funds and do not include gifts to affiliated colleges or institutions.
A body of law that promotes dignity and equality for all is being advanced thanks to a significant gift.

Professor Dianne Otto, appointed the inaugural Francine V McNiff Chair in Human Rights Law at Melbourne Law School in 2013, is well-placed to lead research in this important area.

She has taught human rights law subjects to LLB, JD and LLM students for over a decade and supervised many PhD candidates. Since 2006 she has been Director of Studies for the Graduate Diploma in Human Rights Law and is the current Director of the Institute for International Law and the Humanities (IILAH).

Her new position, which is endowed in perpetuity, was made possible by the generosity of respected barrister and friend of the University, Ms Francine McNiff.

Dean Carolyn Evans said Melbourne Law School was honoured and privileged to appoint Professor Otto to this new role.

"Dianne has a remarkable ability to help students understand human rights issues using both theory and practice, and she encourages them to see both local and international dimensions to human rights law," Professor Evans said.

Professor Otto’s approach to human rights law was developed by a career involved in community-based advocacy. She spent 14 years as a Melbourne outreach and community development worker, assisting domestic violence survivors, the homeless young and people with psychiatric disabilities.

She said that activism has informed her academic career, and she aspires to bring together research knowledge with community engagement.

"There’s a real responsibility that comes with a Chair like this, and the responsibility is to continue that historical tradition of fruitful interactions between universities and communities in addressing social injustices of all kinds."

Professor Otto said universities were well-placed to advise governments on domestic and international human rights issues.

"Universities can provide assistance and shared knowledge to the public, but can also learn from the community about how the work we do might make sense to them and be of use."

Australia’s domestic human rights legislation is an area that Professor Otto believes deserves greater attention, with the Melbourne Law School assisting the community to question the inadequacies of laws purporting to protect individual rights.

"I think we can raise awareness in the general community about individual and collective human rights and the importance of human dignity and equality," she said.

"One of the aspirations for the future would be to see stronger legislative foundation for human rights work, but also to see that people are more effectively using what legislative base we do have – as well as the common law and Australia’s international obligations."

The Law School’s immediate goals include the creation of a Melbourne Law Masters degree in human rights law (currently only a Graduate Diploma is available) and the organisation of an annual regional human rights law symposium.

Melbourne’s human rights law subjects have a breadth unrivalled in Australia. Professor Otto believes it is this dedication to human rights law that attracts international scholars to teach many of these subjects in the Law School.

The human rights-related subjects offered in the graduate teaching program attract many international students, as well as Australians working overseas or seeking work in international humanitarian organisations or NGOs.

Professor Otto believes a regional human rights symposium will provide a rare opportunity to bring together new scholars from the Asia-Pacific region, encouraging stronger teaching and research.

In addition to the Francine V McNiff Chair in Human Rights Law, Ms McNiff has also funded the Francine V McNiff Chair in Criminology in the Faculty of Arts and the James and Valerie McNiff Scholarship Fund, which provides assistance to doctoral researchers in medical jurisprudence.

We can raise awareness in the general community about individual and collective human rights.
Many in the community will benefit from this boost to human rights research and advocacy.
Lawyer, property developer and philanthropist Jason Yeap OAM is investing in the future of the University and his own community.

Jason Yeap has great confidence in the University of Melbourne. Not only has he made a significant gift to research at the University, he is an enthusiastic member of the board of Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne.

His dedication is admirable, particularly as he did not study at the University of Melbourne. However, he said making the decision to support Melbourne was quite simple.

“I believe it is the best-placed university in Australia to be a major leader in the region,” he said.

“If we want to get involved in educating our future leaders, we need to have a leading university in Australia. I believe that because of the standards that the University of Melbourne has attained over the years, and the efforts it makes, it can continue to be number one in Australia and, with a bit of financial assistance and a bit more investment, one of the top in the region.”

Mr Yeap has pledged $250,000 to the Asia Institute, a School of the Faculty of Arts, to investigate a topic close to his own heart: why Asian-Australians are under-represented in public and political life in Australia.

“We are recent migrants to this country, and I would say that we are a reasonably successful group, but the representation of Asian-Australians in Australia is not proportionate to the population that we have,” he said.

“It is especially strange given our success at all levels in schools. If you look at the VCE results, the musical talent, the talent across health and indeed all areas, Asian-Australians are so successful academically. Yet when they reach their 40s and 50s they have disappeared. They are stuck in middle management.”

Mr Yeap, who migrated to Australia from Malaysia in 1978, said he hoped researchers at the Asia Institute would be able to uncover the reasons for this, so that work can start on addressing the issue.

“The ultimate aim is to have an Australia that is very integrated; a better Australian community,” he said.

“Society is changing and I am very conscious that Australia should have the optimum group of people representing it in everything. I do truly believe there is a pool of talent that is increasing in size, and which we must not exclude.”

Mr Yeap’s gift – which he hopes will be bolstered by donations from others – will be used to fund research into the role of Asian-Australians in the Asian Century.

The project is looking at what factors prompt and hinder participation in public and political life, and what can be done to increase the presence of Asian-Australians in these areas. Ultimately, recommendations will be made to government.

Professor Pookong Kee, Director of the Asia Institute, said: “This is an important issue to tackle, particularly in the wake of the launch of the Government’s Asian Century White Paper. We are extremely grateful for Mr Yeap’s support and for his commitment to research at the University.”

Mr Yeap’s gift to the University of Melbourne is just the latest demonstration of his generosity towards his adopted country. He has long been a supporter of the National Gallery of Victoria, and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2010 for his service to the arts and to the community. He also donates to his alma mater, Monash University, and believes those with the means to give should do so.

“If I can support a cause that makes this country more understanding, more embracing, and more tolerant, and helps it become a better country, I should do it. If I can contribute even one small piece of the puzzle, I should. I want to be able to say at least I tried,” he said.

“A lot of people have said to me it is just a matter of time until Asian-Australians become more prominent in our society. I can accept that or I can accelerate the process. If I can be a catalyst, why would I not want to accelerate it? We are in the Asian Century. We need to capture this opportunity.”
We are extremely grateful.
The Honour Roll

We honour the following individuals and organisations that have shown extraordinary generosity. Each of the donors listed in the Honour Roll has, over time, contributed an outstanding level of support to the University of Melbourne.
Exceptional Gifts

The University of Melbourne would like to acknowledge and offer special thanks for the immense generosity of the following donors who made gifts of an exceptional level in 2013.

Duncan Andrews & Jan Andrews
Apex Foundation for Research into Intellectual Disability
The Atlantic Philanthropies
Michael Bartlett & Mim Bartlett
BEP Akitek in memory of Kington Loo
The Late Stuart Alan Black
Graham Brown AM
Sue Clifford & Leigh Clifford AO
The Cripps Foundation
Cybec Foundation
Diabetes Australia Research Trust
Helen Exarchos-Jacobs
East Family Trust
Financial Markets Foundation for Children
Patricia Fullerton
John Gandel AO & Pauline Gandel
Garnett Passe & Rodney Williams Memorial Foundation
Gastroenterological Society of Australia
The Graeme Clark Foundation
Hansen Yuncken Pty Ltd & The Peter Hansen Family Fund
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Holsworth Wildlife Research Endowment
Human Frontier Science Program
The Ian Potter Foundation
Ian Roach Family
International Center - Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation
Italian Services Institute
The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
The Late Jean Jackson
John Burge Trust Fund
Judith Jane Mason & Harold Stannett Williams Memorial Foundation
Mr & Mrs Anthony Auh Chew Kang & Family
The Laby Foundation Pty Ltd
Estate of Colin Robert Laing
Jenny Leaper & John Leaper
Andrew Lee King Fun
The Late
Diane Adrienne Lemaire
The Lionel Gell Foundation
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Penelope Maclagan & Christopher Scown
Margaret Lawrence Bequest
Francine McNiff
Ross McPherson & Dianne McPherson
Medical Research Foundation For Women & Babies
The Late Nancy Millis AC MBE
The Myer Foundation
Ross McPherson & Dianne McPherson
Medical Research Foundation For Women & Babies
The late Noel Shaw
Spencer-Pappas Trust
Stephen Farmer & Associates
The Late Kenneth Styles
Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation
Carlo Vaccari
Vizard Foundation
Volvo Research & Educational Foundations
The William Buckland Foundation
Estate of Lily Isobel Wright
Jason Yeap OAM & Min Lee Wong
Yellow Earth Australia
Yulgilbar Foundation
6 Anonymous donors

Royal Children’s Hospital Foundation
Royal Melbourne Hospital Neuroscience Foundation
The Scobie & Claire MacKinnon Trust
The Late Noel Shaw
Spencer-Pappas Trust
Stephen Farmer & Associates
The Late Kenneth Styles
Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation
Carlo Vaccari
Vizard Foundation
Volvo Research & Educational Foundations
The William Buckland Foundation
Estate of Lily Isobel Wright
Jason Yeap OAM & Min Lee Wong
Yellow Earth Australia
Yulgilbar Foundation
6 Anonymous donors
Philanthropy is helping Melbourne researchers make life-changing discoveries.

Professor Mark Cook has dedicated his life to treating epilepsy, which he believes is one of the worst neurological conditions someone can suffer.

Now, thanks to generous philanthropic support, Professor Cook – the Sir John Eccles Chair of Medicine at the University of Melbourne and Director of Neurology at St Vincent’s Hospital – is leading pioneering work that will have major impact on future treatments.

For epilepsy sufferers, Professor Cook explained, typical activities such as driving, swimming, or even attending work are made extremely difficult due to the unpredictability of seizures.

“We soak people in medications with significant side effects to prevent seizures that might only be occurring for a few minutes every year,” he said.

Professor Cook’s early research suggested it might be possible to predict seizures, which could dramatically improve sufferers’ lives. That led him to the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Melbourne, where he teamed up with Associate Professor David Grayden.

Their initial research was hindered by technical limitations in consistently recording electrical activity in the brain, key to predicting the onset of seizures. That changed when they discovered Seattle-based company NeuroVista.

“NeuroVista developed a device which was implanted into the head to record exactly what we needed – long-term electrical signals,” Professor Cook explained.

This marriage of the medical and material sciences moved the project forward at a rapid pace. Under Professor Cook’s leadership, researchers devised a way of feeding the long-term electrical signals recorded on the NeuroVista device to a second device implanted under the skin of the user’s chest. This transmits the information to a wireless hand-held device, calculating the probability of a seizure. The device, small enough to carry in a handbag or pocket, uses lights to warn patients of a low, moderate or high risk of impending seizure.

A small proof-of-concept study took place involving 15 people suffering between two and 12 seizures a month – with profound results. The system accurately predicted seizures with a high warning 65 per cent of the time, and worked to a level better than 50 per cent in 11 of the 15 patients. The average time between the alert and the seizure was about 100 minutes.

“It had never been established that you could predict seizures, so this was groundbreaking,” Professor Cook said. He now hopes to replicate the study in larger clinical trials.

“I can imagine these devices will be used to allow the supply of some treatment, maybe electrical stimulation of the brain, maybe a short-acting medication that’s delivered directly to the brain, while also allowing for the practical aspects of prediction so people can make their environment safe,” he said.

Professor Cook said his collaboration with the engineering department was crucial. “New developments in materials, computing, engineering – areas that perhaps we wouldn’t have thought too much of once before – actually turn out to be really important components of the systems we’re working with. We lack that perspective if we approach the problem entirely from the biological end of things.”

The University and St Vincent’s Hospital, recognising the enormous potential around Professor Cook’s work, appointed him the inaugural Sir John Eccles Chair of Medicine in 2013.

Through Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne, they are aiming to raise significant funds to endow the Chair. Endowed Chairs are one of the best ways in which a researcher’s vision can be realised, by providing long-term security.

It is one of several health Chairs created with gifts to the Campaign. Others include the Financial Markets Foundation Chair of Developmental Health, established with a $5 million gift from the Financial Markets Foundation for Children to improve the health and wellbeing of children who are vulnerable to mental illness; two Chairs established with a $10 million donation from Mrs Pamela Galli, in memory of her late husband – the Lorenzo Galli Chair in Melanoma and Skin Cancers and the Lorenzo and Pamela Galli Chair in Developmental Medicine; and the APEX Australia Foundation Chair of Developmental Medicine, to support work on intellectual disabilities in children, funded by a $5 million gift from the Foundation.

Professor Cook has already received donations from those who truly understand the value of his research – his patients.

“If we can have a higher level of commitment to this work we can get things done better and faster,” he said. “No question about that.”
If we have a higher level of commitment to this work we can get things done better and faster.
A generous bequest enabled Cameron Raw to combine his veterinary science degree with a long-held desire to connect with Indigenous communities.

Cameron Raw experienced a rich array of extramural placements during his veterinary science studies. Having recently graduated as a fully qualified vet, he credits the Arno Herpe Memorial Foundation Scholarship for helping him to make the most of his degree.

The Scholarship honours the late Arno Herpe who – upon his passing in 1998 – left a bequest to the University to support Indigenous students in the South Pacific area, including Australia and New Zealand. The bequest continues to make an enormous difference to the lives of today’s students.

“The large study load and additional requirements of veterinary study meant that I had very little time to work to support myself,” said Cameron, who was one of three students to receive the scholarship in 2012.

“The scholarship meant that I was much more able to focus on my studies and make the most of my student experience. It meant I was able to undertake a number of placements that I would otherwise not have been able to afford – something I’m very thankful for.”

Those placements included a stint at the Monarto Open Range Zoo in South Australia and, more recently, involvement in the Western Arnhem Land Dog Health Program in the Northern Territory.

The latter saw Cameron travel to West Arnhem Land to work with Indigenous communities in maintaining animal health in the area. The program is based in the community of Gunbalanyha and travels to a number of outstations in West Arnhem Land and the Victoria Daly region.
“Dogs are a very important part of life in West Arnhem Land and a part of creation stories of the area, thus it is known as dog dreaming country,” Cameron explained.

“Veterinary care is not often available in these areas so the program provides very valuable work, which can have a dramatic effect on both dog and human health by reducing dog aggression, controlling overpopulation and reducing parasite spread.

“As a student I was able to gain a lot of practice and confidence in surgical desexing and field anaesthesia, as well as gaining great insights into the local culture and the importance of animals to the community.”

I was able to undertake a number of placements that I would otherwise not have been able to afford.

The program not only enhanced Cameron’s veterinary skills and provided him with practical experience, it also presented a unique opportunity to connect with the Indigenous community.

“Having Palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) ancestry myself, connecting and working with Indigenous communities has always been a personal goal of mine,” he said.

“The program has been a fantastic way to combine this with my veterinary work. I am hopeful that I will be able to keep taking part in the program in the coming years as a fully qualified vet, and continue to help improve human and animal wellbeing in the area.”

Cameron epitomises the lasting legacy of Arno Herpe’s bequest to the University. With the support of the Arno Herpe Memorial Foundation Scholarship, he has forged an ideal foundation for his career in veterinary science and commenced work at a clinic in Rochester in northern Victoria.

“I get to do a huge range of things meaning that every day is different. I get to be a GP, an anaesthetist, a surgeon, a dermatologist, an oncologist, a dentist, and a radiologist, and I get to work with all species of animals and some really great people,” he said.
Realised Bequests

The University of Melbourne would like to acknowledge the following generous benefactors whose bequests were realised in 2013.

We thank and remember our generous donors.

- The Late Neville Edward Ussher Burkitt
- The Late John Collier
- The Late Susan Esdaile
- The Late Manuel Gelman
- The Late James Hugh Gibson OAM
- The Late Jean Jackson
- The Late Patricia Carmel Stewart Kennedy
- The Late Jean St George Kerr
- The Late Diane Adrienne Lemaire
- The Late Ernest Lions
- The Late Harold George Mackrell OAM
- The Late Nancy Millis AC MBE
- The Late Andrew Colgate Newell
- The Late Kathleen Craven Stringer
- The Late Kenneth Richard Styles
The Heritage Society

We acknowledge and thank our Heritage Society community and all those who have pledged to remember the University in their Will.

Bill Adam
David Adams
Elizabeth Alexander AM
James Angus AO
& Helen Angus
The Late Rae Banger
Amanda Baric
John Baylis & Dorothy Baylis
Sarah-Jane Beavitt
Ronda Bird
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Keith Williams
Elinor Wrobel OAM
Brooke Young
Jenny Zimmer
111 Anonymous donors
The University Annual Appeal

25 YEARS OF REGULAR GIVING

- $3.1M PHILANTHROPIC INCOME 30% INCREASE FROM 2012
- 5,540 DONORS 30% INCREASE FROM 2012

STUDENTS WITH A CAUSE: THE 2013 STUDENT APPEAL

- $17,575.35 RAISED (INCLUDING MATCHING FUNDS FROM THE UNIVERSITY)
- 35 STUDENTS SUPPORTED THROUGH FINANCIAL AID GRANTS
- 240 STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

The University Annual Appeal has been supporting students, teaching and research for 25 years. The Annual Appeal encourages regular support from alumni and friends through appeal letters and telethons. It provides a consistent source of income so the University can plan ahead and respond to changing needs.

Annual Appeal donations are directed towards areas of greatest need, including financial aid and scholarship for students, funding for research, and campus facilities – all of which provide greater opportunities across the University.

The 2013 Telethon brought current students together with alumni and friends of the University in two-way telephone conversations, fostering personal connections, building empathy across generations, and increasing donor numbers and gifts.

The Student Appeal makes more rental assistance grants available to students who need them. Currently, some 1,500 students apply for the grants but existing funding only provides support for around half of them.

In 2013 the Student Appeal Committee raised more than $17,000, providing 35 students with much-needed financial support through the delivery of individual $500 grants.

MELBOURNE CALLING: THE 2013 TELETHON

The 2013 Telethon brought current students together with alumni and friends of the University in two-way telephone conversations, fostering personal connections, building empathy across generations, and increasing donor numbers and gifts.

The Telethon raised vital income for the University to provide current students with grants and scholarships. But perhaps more importantly, it built and enhanced connections between the University, current students and alumni.
Alumna Judy Backhouse and student Edmund Kwong share their experiences and perspectives of the University, their motivations for supporting the Annual Appeal, and make the case for why others should consider becoming involved.

— JUDY BACKHOUSE

Long-term Annual Appeal donor

At the end of my Master degree in sheep behaviour at the University, I called myself a ‘Sheep Psychologist’ and was well set for my first job as the first female Extension Officer employed by the Victorian Department of Agriculture. I enjoyed a further 33 years in the Victorian public service and always figured my early work in sheep psychology stood me in good stead as a senior manager!

I enjoyed my years at University – the challenges of study, the new freedoms of youth and the opportunities for personal growth. But despite the novelty of university life for me, I always felt an undercurrent of tradition and strength of reputation that gave me a sense of security and confidence. I want to see that aspiration for excellence continue so other young people can enjoy the opportunities that I have had.

The Annual Appeal enables me to make a conscious decision each year about my donation. I take time to think about how fortunate I am to be part of the University alumni and to consider how others may benefit from their time at the University.

The University is part of Melbourne – its reputation for excellence enhances our city and its presence brings vibrancy to our lives. More importantly, the University is people doing amazing research, teaching challenging concepts and achieving remarkable results. Why wouldn’t you want to support that and feel part of such an outstanding community?
I started studying the Doctor of Dental Surgery in 2012 after completing my science degree. When I graduate in two years I’d like to start working and contributing to the field of dentistry, hopefully in an area with poor access to dental care. Ideally, I’d like to work in a rural or remote area to experience another side of Australia outside of Melbourne.

I started volunteering for the University in 2009. It was an enjoyable experience and a great way to meet new students, make new friends, and add something extra to my resume.

In 2010 I joined the Student Appeal committee that forms annually to fundraise for the University. I really enjoyed it because everyone was so supportive, encouraging me to branch out and gain more skills.

I’ve come back every year. In 2011 and 2012 I was secretary of the committee, and last year I took the step to become co-chair. It’s been an amazing journey.

I’ve learnt that giving is not just about money; it’s about giving your time and inspiring others to do the same. It’s about giving what you can in your position.

It’s understandable that students don’t always have money to give. For me, I can only give a small amount every year, but I can give a good amount of time. When you give time you get things back – you meet new people, you gain new skills, you enrich your degree and you develop as a person.
John Irwin’s impressive career achievements are matched by his outstanding generosity to the University and Ormond College.
In 1969 John Irwin boarded a flight from Melbourne’s Essendon airport armed with a Master of Engineering Science from the University of Melbourne and an intent to spend “one or two years” overseas to obtain a Master degree in business. Nearly 45 years later he is yet to reside back in Australia, having carved out a remarkable international career in the offshore drilling industry.

Despite the geographical separation resulting from his worldly adventures, the Engineering alumnus maintains a close affinity with the University of Melbourne and Ormond College, endowing scholarships and making a bequest that will benefit both institutions into the future.

John recently drew the curtain on an extraordinary career that saw him live and work in all corners of the globe, including the US, UK, Singapore, Denmark, the United Arab Emirates, Myanmar, Nigeria and Brazil.

As President and CEO of the international drilling contractor Atwood Oceanics, he played a significant role during his 17 years of leadership in building the company, its listing on the New York Stock Exchange, and its recognition as number two on the ‘All Star List’ of Fortune’s 100 Fastest-Growing US Companies. He was also the recipient of the Ernst & Young ‘Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Energy’ for Houston and the US Gulf Coast, and was named by Texas CEO magazine on its ‘Best of the Best’ list in 2010.

John credits his time at the University of Melbourne for much of his success.

“The University was life-changing for me in terms of the extraordinary opportunities and life experiences it offered; in preparing me to pursue an international career; and in developing a life-long desire for ongoing learning,” he said.

That ongoing learning included completing further education at Purdue University and Harvard Business School, and a distinguished visiting professorship at the University of Virginia.

As a student in Melbourne, John received a number of scholarships which enabled him to pursue secondary and tertiary education. He said the support provided him with unexpected educational opportunities that opened up a new world for him.

“In some cases, living allowances permitted me to have time for a richer and broader experience, and do things such as reside in Ormond College. The scholarships also gave me a sense of worth, recognition and confidence that were very important.”

This personal experience played a large part in John deciding to endow scholarships at the University and Ormond College. In 2010 the John R Irwin Scholarship was established for students studying a graduate degree under the Melbourne Model curriculum.

Alisha D’Souza, a Master of Engineering student who received the scholarship in 2012, says it allowed her to focus more time and effort on her studies and extracurricular activities, including volunteering with Engineers Without Borders.

“It has made managing work and other commitments much easier, more productive and efficient. I am truly grateful for the generous support,” she said.

Together with his wife Margo, John has also funded the John and Margo Irwin Scholarship at Ormond College for Engineering and Science students.

“I have a desire to see both Ormond College and the University of Melbourne do well in the future,” he said.

“I have wonderful memories and life-long friendships and am grateful for the life-changing educational experience. Having been absent from Melbourne and Australia – as a resident, anyway – for nearly 45 years, these relationships and memories have become extremely important for me to preserve.”

Further underlining the couple’s generosity, John and Margo are making a bequest to Ormond College, ensuring their legacy is felt by future generations.

“This is an opportunity to give careful thought to those areas that are important to you and that bring you a sense of pleasure, satisfaction, belonging and meaning,” he said of the bequest.

“In my own case, three areas that are very important to me are supporting Ormond College, supporting the University of Melbourne – the Melbourne Model, and professional education – and supporting education in Melbourne in terms of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. I am passionate about the longer term competiveness of Melbourne, the city and home in which I was so fortunate to be born, grow up, and be educated.”

Now residing in Houston, Texas, John is a member of the University of Melbourne USA Foundation Board and is a committed advocate for the University, Ormond College, and the city of Melbourne. He is pleased to support Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne.

“I feel it is important for Melbourne and Australia to have world-class universities and attract talented students regardless of means,” he said.

“It has been an honour to become re-involved with Ormond and the University of Melbourne at this stage in my life.”
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The Chancellor’s Circle is the University’s community of generous benefactors who demonstrate leadership and commitment to the University of Melbourne through annual philanthropic support of $1,000 or greater.

In 2013 over 1,200 alumni and friends were part of this community which plays an important and ongoing role in helping the University pursue innovative research, high quality teaching and learning, and support for students through scholarships, grants and other financial support.

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