Gifts Signal a New Direction in Support for Oxford

Two recent contributions have punctuated Oxford College’s mission and strategic plan with a big exclamation point and created great excitement about the momentum they give to Oxford’s vision. The gifts, which come from the Charles Edwin Suber Foundation and Cammie and John Rice, are significant not only in terms of generosity but also in their importance as signs of a new phase in the growth of Oxford’s philanthropic base.

Traditionally, sources of development funding have come heavily from Oxford faculty and staff, and stories abound of the lengths some have gone to in their support. In the 1970s, when a renovation of Seney Hall was first contemplated, there were no available funds to complete the feasibility study that was required for the project to go forward. Dean Bond Fleming filled the need by selling a piece of land he owned and donating the proceeds to fund the study. Around the same time, Marshall Elizer left his position as director of student affairs to become business manager for the college. In accepting the business-manager role, he told the dean that he would share his salary with his successor in order to ensure that Oxford could continue to have the student-affairs position.

It is difficult to imagine Oxford without its vibrant campus life or the beautiful presence of Seney Hall. To a degree, both of these are part of the legacy of generosity that both Fleming and Elizer left behind. But no college or university, public or private, succeeds without the financial support of alumni and friends. The Suber and Rice gifts are important indicators that Oxford’s base of support is broadening.

The $3.35 million gift from the Suber Foundation is the largest cash donation Oxford has ever received. Charles Edwin Suber 42OX, known as Ed, died in November 2007. He was known to many at Oxford, especially the Alumni Relations staff. He came often to Alumni Weekend and seemed to enjoy just walking the grounds and seeing the campus. From all accounts, most of the people who knew him had no idea of his wealth. His cousin and close friend Jim Campbell, who is trustee for the foundation set up in the Suber will, says, “He lived...”

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An alumna promotes AIDS prevention in South Africa

Using Soccer in Service:

An alma promotes AIDS prevention in South Africa

Horn lives in South Africa and works at Grassroot Soccer (GRS), an organization that spreads AIDS awareness through curriculum and soccer. GRS trains African soccer stars, coaches, teachers, and peer educators in the world’s most HIV-affected countries to deliver a curriculum called Skills, which uses the popularity of soccer to teach youth about HIV and AIDS prevention.

The Skills curriculum focuses on building basic life skills that help boys and girls adopt healthy behaviors and live risk-free.

Horn works in the Programs Department of GRS in Cape Town, where she splits her time between working in the office and working in the townships with the coaches who deliver the curriculum. She also works with FIFA, soccer’s international governing body, on their campaign for the World Cup where they are building twenty Football for Hope Centres throughout Africa that focus on health, education, and soccer.

Soccer and service have always played a big part in Horn’s life. As a high school student in St. Louis, Missouri, she organized and held fund-raisers for breast cancer research after her mother’s diagnosis and donated the money she raised to Washington University’s Siteman Cancer Center. A member of the soccer team at Oxford, Horn continued fund-raising for breast cancer research and worked hard to gain the support of athletic teams and the entire student body. “Oxford’s small size and the way in which everyone is so close and supportive of one another allows it to help nurture and grow a common cause in a way that I think is very rare among universities,” she says. She continued playing soccer and raising money for breast cancer research at Emory, where she majored in English and minored in sociology.

Her yearlong GRS internship includes a fund-raising element, and Horn was required to raise $10,000 to support her work in South Africa. Though she is still short of her goal, thanks to donations from Emory’s Center for AIDS Research, fund-raisers, and the support of family and friends, she is getting closer.

The experience working at GRS in South Africa has been valuable for Horn, both personally and for the many she has helped through education and awareness. “It was slightly daunting moving here but I was so excited to have been granted the opportunity to make a difference in other people’s lives, learn from a different culture, and explore a new land, that any of my initial hesitations were quelled completely,” she says. “Grassroot Soccer continues to prove to me everyday that we have the power to reduce the spread of this deadly virus by using soccer to educate children about HIV and AIDS, and our numbers and research prove it.”

When her internship at GRS ends, Horn says she will return to the United States, but not for long. “I plan on applying for a job with companies such as Nike, Adidas, and FIFA in their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) division and would love the opportunity to work in another country,” she says. “Ideally, I would like to learn Portuguese, move to Brazil, and work for FIFA on their official CSR campaign for World Cup 2014.”

Horn has set a blog where people can find out more about her experiences. Visit www.annieshinafrica.blogspot.com.
Continuing the Elizer and Fleming Legacies

Many things stand out that Oxford can point to with pride, but what I have been pondering recently is the legacies of two men whose lives have come into focus here at Oxford in the past months. Those two lives were different from each other, but both speak worlds about what Oxford is and means.

It was the fall of 1978, and Marshall Elizer had just retired after thirty-two years of service spent in a variety of roles at Oxford College. Never in his life had this former farm boy and veteran of two wars been idle, and he wasn’t likely to start now. The first project he turned to was the Confederate cemetery located in the woods on the west side of Oxford’s campus. It had fallen into disrepair, markers and curbing upended and the obelisk at its center askew. He began his work and, “almost immediately there appeared a help-mate—one other than former Dean Bond Fleming,” Elizer wrote in his 2002 memoir. Together over the next several months and with the help of retired biology professor Curry T. Haynes, they restored the cemetery with their own hands.

This was not the first project the two had joined forces on, nor would it be the last, and Oxford College was the place where each left his greatest legacy.

Elizer possessed a combination of stern demeanor and caring concern that endeared him to many in his various roles of mathematics lecturer, director of student affairs, and business manager. This concern extended to the college itself, his careful stewardship helping to keep Oxford afloat in a time when resources were more strained. One remarkable example occurred in 1968, before Elizer became business manager, he suggested that the dean cut his (Elizer’s) pay so the money saved could be used to fund the salary of his successor in student affairs.

Fleming, who served as dean from 1966 to 1976, came during a tumultuous time in higher education, but his greatest challenges were the need to continue Oxford’s efforts to build a solid financial footing and strengthen its ties to and place within Emory. Facilities were improved, Oxford enjoyed its highest enrollment to that time, and it became increasingly integrated into the University as a whole. He established the Oxford Board of Counselors, and in its early days, he and Mrs. Fleming held board dinners in their home, where she cooked the meal herself.

A generous spirit in fact infused the lives of both these men, and like a flame passed from candle to candle, it has inspired generosity in others. The Fleming and Marshall Elizer scholarships, established and funded by alumni and friends, and the Fran Hardy Elizer scholarship, established by Marshall Elizer, make it possible for more students to attend Oxford. Book funds, which enrich the library’s collection, have also benefited. All told, twenty-eight book funds have been established either by the Flemings or Elizers themselves or in honor of them. And the naming contribution of Hugh Tarbutton Jr. ’84OX to the planned new Oxford library has been designated in honor of Fran Elizer.

Fleming and Elizer both died in 2009, each just shy of his one hundredth birthday. They were two different individuals, but just as they rolled up their sleeves to preserve the 1864 cemetery, they worked tirelessly to preserve Oxford’s past and also to ensure its future. It is Oxford’s gain that they inspired so many others to do the same.

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Oxford Athletics and Recreation Spring Report

The spring semester always brings a freshness and excitement that can lead to big things on campus, and this spring is no different at Oxford Athletics and Recreation.

The addition last semester of a new assistant athletic director of facilities, Pete Sherrard, has given new life to many of Oxford’s intramural and recreational offerings. In intramural sports this semester, Futsal (indoor soccer) completed successfully with eight teams and more than fifty participants. Five-on-five basketball competed with ten teams and more than seventy participants. Recreationally, in January, the first series of extracurricular group exercise classes was offered, taught by certified local fitness professionals. More than twenty mem-

Entering the tennis season:
No. 1 ranked men’s team in NJCAA III
No. 3 ranked women’s singles player, Ayanna Groves

Emilio Casillas ’10OX

Tone and Tighten (TNT), Attack, Mat Pilates, and Zumba.

In varsity athletics, men’s and women’s tennis concluded Oxford’s varsity competition for the year. The men came into the season as the preseason No. 1 ranked team in NJCAA III, and the women have the preseason No. 3 ranked singles player in Ayanna Groves ’11OX. Both teams are working towards the goal of winning a national title. For the men, it would be a defense of their 2009 title, while for the women, it would be the first-ever national title in any sport at Oxford. Both teams are currently below .500, but a predominance of the matches have been against four-year schools, which do not impact their national tournament chances. The schedules for both Oxford teams are the toughest in the nation for NJCAA III teams and will hopefully give our Eagles a wing up at the national tournament.
Our Oxford
Making the college’s production of Thornton Wilder’s Our Town a community event

“...at least choose an unimportant day,” Mother Gibbs tells Emily. “Choose the least important day of your life. It will be important enough.”

This is the advice given to Emily Webb, who, after dying during childbirth, is determined to find her way back to her life in Grover’s Corners, even if just for a day, in Thornton Wilder’s Our Town. Emily chooses to return to the Tuesday morning of her twelfth birthday, in her mother’s kitchen.

Professor of English Clark Lemons, the play’s director, wanted to heighten the impact of such moments in Oxford College’s October production of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play. So while the set’s scenery in the Tarbutton auditorium was minimalist, as Wilder intended, real bacon actually sizzled in the frying pan on the Webb’s stove during Emily’s nostalgic visit.

Lemons used several other techniques to make the audience feel a part of Grover’s Corners. Characters mostly wore their own, contemporary clothing. Actors proceeded up and down the aisles of the auditorium when entering and exiting.

During a scene when questions asked of the town’s newspaper editor, Mr. Webb, are supposed to come from actors planted in the audience, Lemons used actual audience members.

And he stocked the cast with Oxford “locals” as well as students.

Lemons himself plays the pivotal role of the Stage Manager, who frequently speaks directly to the audience. “I talked to them more like a friend introducing them to this other world,” he says.

“Some academics have viewed this play as overly sentimental, but I saw the production being treated in a more hard-hitting way,” adds Lemons, who has taught English at Oxford since 1982 as well as heading the theater program. “With the intimacy of our theater and the closeness of the actors to the audience, I knew I could do that.”

Stage Manager, who frequently speaks directly to the audience’s reactions when they walked on stage. In addition, they were so much fun to work with. It was an interesting dynamic—having faculty and staff on the same ground as students. For a time, it almost felt as though we were equals.”

Patricia White, director of development and alumni relations at Oxford, came to respect her character, Mrs. Soames, who is often viewed as the community gossip.

“This was a small part, which became a much larger part with Clark’s imagination,” White says. “I think the reason she was always trying to stir up drama in this small town was to combat boredom and unhappiness and hold it at bay. Sometimes she seemed like a buffoon and a bother, but I really admired her.”

Being in the play was great fun for White, as well—a longtime thespian who was missing the stage.

“Since my work now is mostly with alumni and faculty, I don’t have as much opportunity to be involved with current students and to find out what student life at Oxford is like,” White says. “Every performance was such an adrenaline rush. What a great playwright Wilder was. Our Town is so sparse when you read it it’s almost ho-hum. But when it’s brought to life, the play is so rich. That’s just the essence of pure theater.”

Another strength of Wilder’s most famous play, says Rossman, is that every community can see a bit of itself reflected in the fictional Grover’s Corners.

“It worked for us because the warm, communal atmosphere that we created in the play is very much relatable to the close-knit atmosphere here on the Oxford campus,” he says. “Many in the Oxford community can connect with the idea of the simple life and how this can be both a blessing and a trap. On one hand, you are removed from the larger area and really get to know your neighbors and colleagues. However, you could also take this for granted and become lost in routine.”

Indeed, on the play’s program, a photo of the college’s iconic Seney Hall was placed directly under the words Our Town. “Our town,” says Lemons, “is Oxford.”

New Visual and Written History of Oxford

A new perspective on the history of Oxford’s campus and town can be found in Cornerstone and Grove: A Portrait in Architecture and Landscape of Emory’s Birthplace in Oxford, Georgia, a book by Erik Oliver 93C 93G. A native of the town of Oxford and son of Emeritus Professor of Religion Hoyt Oliver 54OX 56C, Oliver brought his knowledge of the area and campus to the book as well as his experience and training as a historian.

Working with Emory and Oxford archivists, he selected photographs from Emory’s collections and supplemented them with photographs from private individuals and his own line drawings.

The result is a written and visual history of the college and town that can be enjoyed just by looking at the photographs and illustrations, but it is also one that is readable and well researched.

Cornerstone and Grove is available from the bookstores on both the Oxford and Emory campuses. More information, including how to order the book by mail, can be found at oxford.emory.edu.
Tezera Receives Humanitarian Award

Betty Tezera 10OX was named as one of six recipients of Emory’s Humanitarian Award for 2009–2010. The Humanitarian Award recognizes students who embody a spirit of volunteerism and sense of community, both on campus and off.

Tezera is a way of life for Tezera, a sophomore from Marietta, Georgia, who is a Bonner Leader at Oxford. She is in her second year working at Palmer Stone Elementary in Oxford, giving extra help to students in reading and math. This past summer she worked at the International Rescue Committee in Decatur, Georgia, teaching English as a second language to refugees. Her experiences volunteering have taught her more than she expected. “Most of the people I have worked with have been through a lot more than I have ever had to go through, but they teach me a lot about strength and what it means to persevere,” she says.

Tezera began volunteering in high school, when as a sophomore she was elected vice president of her school’s Interact club. A service-oriented club, Interact got her involved in her community, and before she knew it she was spending most of her extracurricular time in service—and liking it. “Service work has shown me my passion and what I love,” she says.

Though much of her service work is off campus, Tezera is also involved in the life of the college. She is active as a Student Admissions Association coordinator and the Sophomore Class Gift Committee chair, and she is part of Oxford Fellowship. She plans to major in business and sociology at Emory, and would like to get a master’s degree in nonprofit management after she graduates. And, yes, while she does all of that Tezera will be helping others along the way. “Service will always be a part of my life,” she says. “It’s what I enjoy.”

Oxford Graduates, Faculty Honored

In a December ceremony, the Emory University chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious academic honor society, inducted into its ranks eleven Oxford graduates who are now continuers at Emory on the Atlanta campus. From the Oxford Class of 2008 were Elizabeth Blake Encarnacao, Zachary James Hennessey, Esther Frances Kim, Tiffany Xuan Phuong Phan, Harry Ross Powers, and Paula Jay Zwillich. Inductees from the Oxford Class of 2009 included Emily Abigail Gardner, Samuel Hong, Juliet Dawn Sheridan, James Brandon Shope, and Samuel Claud Whitehead.

Five Oxford faculty members were also honored, for their excellence in teaching. They are Stacy Bell, lecturer in English; Eloise Carter, professor of biology; Steve Henderson, associate professor of geology; Michael McCluade, professor of sociology; and Effrosyni Seitardou, assistant professor of physics.

Gretchen Schulz Retires

Gretchen Schulz, associate professor of English at Oxford, will retire after more than three decades of service to Oxford and Emory. Schulz began her career at Oxford in 1978, and during the next thirty years she taught writing, poetry, and British and American literature. At Oxford, she is known for her dedication, enthusiasm, and creativity in teaching and for her genuine interest in her students. For her commitment to her students and the college, she was honored as a Georgia Governor’s Teaching fellow and as a recipient of a Gregory/Rackley Development Award.

Schulz was involved in the larger Emory community as well, representing Oxford on University committees including the Ethics Center Advisory Board, the University Advisory Council on Teaching, and the University Research Committee. She also was an integral part of the Center for Women at Emory, serving on its advisory board since 1996. Schulz was a recipient of the center’s 2010 Unsung Heroine Award.

Schulz will retire from teaching in May 2010, and she will spend the next year traveling in the English Lake Country. After her official retirement in August 2011, she plans to remain close to the Oxford community, teaching occasionally and perhaps initiating an Evening at Oxford community learning program for adults in the Oxford/Covington area.

Campaign Oxford Progress

$24,839,890 Million
Total Goal $40 Million

To support Campaign Oxford, visit www.oxford.emory.edu.
In March Tommy Owens 59OX 61C 650 received the J. Pollard Turman Award for his service to Emory.

First at Oxford College and then as a student on Emory’s Atlanta campus, Owens was heavily involved in a variety of campus groups, and has continued his leadership as an alumnus. Among his many volunteer leadership positions at the University, Owens has served on the Oxford Board of Counselors for more than thirty years, including a term as president. He also served as president of the Dental Alumni Association and general chair of the Hinman Dental Society and Meeting. His selfless work on behalf of his alma mater led to his receiving the Distinguished Oxford Alumni Award and the R. Carl Chandler Award, the latter presented to him in 2004 for a lifetime of service to Oxford College.

The Turman award, established in 1998, is named for J. Pollard Turman 34OGL 73H, an influential humanitarian. It recognizes Emory alumni who have performed extraordinary service or made outstanding contributions of time, expertise, and leadership to Emory.

Tommy Owens Honored with Turman Award