

## Senior Giving

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Dear Friends,

As most know, the Big C, perched on top of the Box Springs Mountain, keeps a watchful eye over our campus.

It is the site of many memories for students and alumni, and it has endured its fair share of “alterations” over the years.

It has been painted white, green, pink, red, plaid and striped like a zebra. It has been turned into a zero, and it was used as part of the name "McCarthy" during a visit of the Presidential “peace candidate” Senator Eugene McCarthy in 1968.

From time to time, additional symbols have been appended with a range of meanings...usually socially acceptable.

Construction of the C started in 1955, and at 132 feet long and 70 feet wide, the C is the largest concrete block letter in the UC system. We are eternally grateful to the Yeager family, which finished the project in 1958 by pouring the C-ement.

Less well known is the fact our C is the first tangible manifestation of “senior gifts” at UCR, which have helped build a culture of philanthropy here.

The senior gift concept was a hit-or-miss proposition along the way, but it gained firm traction late last century, and now it is fair to say that it is embedded as part of our DNA – the concept of giving back. It was the Associated Students who decided to cast the senior gift tradition in concrete – as it were – in 1998.

This year, in that pervasive spirit of generosity that I find in so many of our students, ASUCR decided that the senior gift would help provide scholarships for military veterans who risked their lives on behalf of us all. And the vehicle they chose was the Operation Education program.

Operation Education scholarships give back to veterans who were disabled while on active duty after 9/11. On a concrete level, the support enables veteran students to acquire new skills, pursue new careers, overcome disabilities, and gain financial independence. But on a human level, this senior gift informs our veterans with disability that their fellow students care, and care deeply, and that they appreciate their sacrifices.

This year, students – and their parents, friends and families – have been giving \$20.12 (reflecting the year of graduation) toward the senior gift. But beyond the impacts discussed above, it's 20 bucks that establishes each soon-to-be alumnus's personal tradition of beginning to give back to her/his alma mater.

Over the years, senior gifts have had an impact – sometimes physically and sometimes in terms of the hope and support provided to individual students.

Over the years, UCR students have contributed to scholarships, the Learning Center and the Career Center. Their generosity has provided a mural for the campus, and beautified the HUB including trees and furnishings to the patio area.

In the spirit of conservation and sustainability, seniors one year contributed to recycling efforts and, equally meaningfully, added to the books on reserve at the library for students who cannot afford to buy their own.

Particularly touching for me personally is the fact that seniors come up with the money for these gifts at a time when many of them face uncertain futures with no job yet pinned down. Sometimes they charge the gift to their credit card, or ask family to help them out. Still other seniors have delivered loose change to cover their pledges.

Good for our seniors. Good for those they help succeed. Good for all of us.

I close with a note to our current students: you are entering the early dog-days of summer. My trusty pooch, Bella, and I – along with my assistant, Jessica – will be out and about campus Monday afternoon encouraging your success on finals.

Best wishes,

Tim

Tim White, Chancellor

**Share your thoughts:** <http://fridayletters.ucr.edu/leavefeedback>

### **Star maps and mystery tours**

Generations of astronomers like Gabriela Canalizo have traveled to the hills above San Jose and searched the stars from the UC-owned Lick Observatory. She and her colleagues work to understand the mysteries of black holes and galaxies.

<http://promise.ucr.edu/profile-technology-canalizo.html>

### **Understanding the small picture**

At 3:30 p.m., today, in the Genomics Building we will hear from Professor Norman C. Ellstrand, who will discuss his career in plant genomics at the 60th Faculty Research Lecture. This lectureship is the highest honor our Academic Senate bestows.

<http://ucrtoday.ucr.edu/6117>

### **Environmental detox**

Carl F. Cranor, distinguished professor of philosophy and a longtime advocate of reforming policies for regulating exposure to toxic substances, has been appointed by the state Senate to the Scientific Guidance Panel of the California Environmental Contaminant Biomonitoring

Program. Good for our future.

<http://ucrtoday.ucr.edu/6760>

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