York Couple Honours University with Legacy Gift

When Barbara Crow (BA ‘84, MA ‘86, PhD ‘94) and Michael Longford (BFA ‘88) were students at York University, the couple never imagined they would one day return to their alma mater as faculty members. She was immersed in social justice issues and political activities, he was interested in sculpture and visual arts.

“York is a place for experimentation,” Longford says. “We can come and try new things, experiment with new ideas, rethink old ways of doing things and look for ways to positively impact the world around us.”

Today, Crow is dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Longford an associate professor in the Digital Media Program. In honour of their time at York then and now, the husband-wife duo, longtime supporters of scholarships and bursaries at York, has made a bequest to the University in their will and named their alma mater the beneficiary of their life insurance policy.

“Since I’ve moved into an administrative role at York, I have a very different perspective on the University that I hadn’t even imagined before. That was the first time I had a sense of the budget and the costs associated and how important funding is,” Crow says. “As a senior administrator, it was important for me to demonstrate to people that if I thought it was important to give to the University, I had to give to the University as well.”

With many of their family members having attended York in the past, Crow and Longford say it was an easy decision to make a legacy gift that will support future generations of students at York.

“We hope our gift will help future students and faculties realize a wide range of activities that will augment and enhance the intellectual environment on campus,” says Crow and Longford, who have structured their gift so University departments may determine how to best use the funds.

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REMEMBERING THE LEGACY OF CLARA THOMAS

While she was always listed as an anonymous planned giving donor during her lifetime, Clara Thomas was not one to shy away from championing women writers, encouraging her graduate students to do archival research on forgotten female figures and paying respect to the work of literary pioneers.

When Clara died in 2013 at the age of 94, she left a $100,000 bequest in her will to support her namesake Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York. With $300,000 remaining in her estate which she left to her husband Morley Thomas, Clara’s family generously established the Clara Thomas Doctoral Scholarship in Canadian Literature in her memory.

"Clara would have been very pleased and proud ... she would have hoped that others might follow her example."

A well-loved and admired member of York’s faculty, Clara began teaching in the Department of English at York in 1961 and retired in 1984. She was named a Canadian Studies Research Fellow in the York University Libraries, an emeritus professor of English and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. She was also awarded the Northern Telecom Canadian Studies Award and given three honorary degrees by Ontario universities, including York.

John Lennox, a close friend of Clara’s and a professor emeritus of English at York, recalls Clara never took anything for granted.

"Clara treasured friendship. I think that it was her preeminent human value," Lennox says. "She esteemed the academic profession and cherished York. She was a unique figure, a ‘force in the land’ as she sometimes said of others. Above all, she was a generous, clear-eyed, positive and a constant participant in, and contributor, to her field, her students and her institution. A builder and a fearless advocate for students, Clara set and exemplified the highest standard of personal and professional conduct. York has every reason to be grateful that she was one of us.”

“Clara was very much aware that although some graduate students had obtained PhDs, they were unable to get university positions where they could teach and do research,” Morley says. “She would have been very pleased and proud that her estate money is being used to assist those York PhD graduate students who qualify. I believe she would have hoped that others might follow her example.”
Kiera Dinsmore seems like your average university student. In reality, this York student is anything but.

A Glendon eAmbassador, campus ambassador, and research assistant, Dinsmore recently became the first-ever student director inducted to the York University Alumni Association.

Dinsmore has deep roots at York. She is a third-generation York student, following her mother, uncle and grandfather. She works three jobs (four during the holiday season) to pay for her schooling, residence and living expenses.

When she’s not working or studying for her international bachelor of arts degree in international studies and political science, she is the premier of Ontario Youth Parliament, a non-profit, non-partisan model parliament organization run for youth, by youth. Now in her second year at Glendon, Dinsmore credits awards like the Escott Reid Entrance Scholarship she received last year for giving her a head start.

"Not only was it humbling and an honour to be recognized for my dedication to international affairs and volunteerism, but I was grateful for the scholarship as it relieved some of the financial burden of paying for school," she says. "Thanks to the scholarship, I worried less about funds and focused more on an education that will further my future experience and involvement in international movements."

Established through a bequeathed gift in the last will and testament of Escott Reid (Hon. LLD ’72), who served as Glendon’s founding principal from 1965 to 1969, the Escott Reid Entrance Scholarship benefits outstanding students who have demonstrated activity in international events through education, volunteerism or employment. Several other gifts from organizations and the provincial government have also supported this award.

A diplomat, respected scholar and high-level public servant, Reid, who died in 1999 at the age of 94, provided Glendon with its unique mission of bilingualism and the liberal arts, and determined the distinctive position Glendon was to occupy within Canada’s university system. Thanks to him and the continued commitment of his successors,
Glendon has successfully developed this mission in the last 50 years, providing a first-class liberal arts education in both of Canada’s official languages with an increasingly international flair.

Michiel Horn, professor emeritus and university historian at Glendon, recently reminisced about the early days at Glendon in *Glendon Magazine*.

“One of my happiest memories is sitting next to Escott on the floor of the old dining hall, listening to a debate on a recent student strike at Simon Fraser University,” Horn writes. “One participant was C.B. (Brough) Macpherson, a University of Toronto neo-Marxist political theorist with impressive left-wing credentials. All the same, an SFU graduate student accused him of being, au fond, an apologist for capitalist and reactionary social forces. Escott, who had known Brough for more than 30 years, leaned over to me and whispered: ‘Michiel, please pinch me. I want to make sure that I’m not dreaming.’”

While few could have anticipated what Glendon would be today, Horn writes that the college’s new Centre of Excellence for French Language and Bilingual Postsecondary Education is the culmination of the hopes that Reid and others entertained for Glendon back in its early years.

For students like Dinsmore and Natalia Ladyka-Wojcik, Reid’s efforts and contributions have enabled them to make a difference in the world.

“The Escott Reid Entrance Scholarship truly demonstrates how York is dedicated to supporting global thinkers,” says Ladyka-Wojcik, who recently travelled to Kenya as a volunteer for Free the Children alongside its founder Craig Kielburger (EMBA ’09, Hon. LLD ’13).

An international studies and psychology student, and one of 10 Glendonites who have benefited from the Escott Reid Entrance Scholarship since it was first awarded in 2003, Ladyka-Wojcik says the scholarship goes a long way in helping her achieve both volunteering and academic goals.

“York and its amazing donors are helping make my dreams, as well as those of other York students, completely achievable,” she adds. “This is my favourite part of York: it singles out every one of its driven students, through education as well as extracurricular opportunities, to nurture their goals and empower new generations of successful individuals.”

”The scholarship truly demonstrates how York is dedicated to supporting global thinkers.”

— Natalia Ladyka-Wojcik
DISTINGUISHED ENTRANCE AWARD INSPIRES NEW LAW STUDENTS

Tyler Fram didn’t come to Osgoode Hall Law School because of a scholarship. However, the first-year law student at York is poised to set out on a legal career of his own, thanks to The Honourable Charles and Anne Dubin Entrance Award.

“Law school is an expensive endeavour and the award is going a long way toward making my debt load more manageable,” Fram says. “It certainly has a significant impact on reducing the financial stress of my first year at Osgoode.”

The late gifted lawyers Charles (BARR ’44, Hon. LLD ’90) and Anne Dubin (BARR ’51) rose to the top of their profession during their lifetime. A jurist, lawyer and chief justice of Ontario, Charles became a national figure after chairing the 1989-1990 royal commission into drug use in amateur sport. Anne was a pioneering female corporate lawyer at Tory, Tory, DesLauriers & Binnington (now Torys LLP). She served on the boards of many companies and non-profit organizations, including York’s Board of Governors.

“They were best friends who were devoted to one another during their 55-year marriage,” Francie Klein says of her aunt and uncle, who had no children. “They discussed each other’s lives in great detail and challenged one another intellectually. The Dubin award really honours the memory of an extraordinary couple who went to Osgoode, loved Osgoode, and held it in the utmost esteem.”

Through Charles’s estate, the couple established the entrance award with a $100,000 bequest to create a permanent endowment fund. Matched by the Ontario government, the fund benefits as many as five students entering the Juris Doctor Program at Osgoode each year.

“I am honoured to have received an entrance award from such distinguished donors,” says Fram, who is interested in labour law and natural resources law. “For me, it is an affirmation of all the hard work I put in during my undergrad. Charles’s and Anne’s accomplishments are inspiring to me and I look forward to starting my own legal career at Osgoode, where their prominent careers began.”
You may be richer in the end than you think

Ted Rechtshaffen is a Schulich alumnus (BBA ’92, MBA ’93), certified financial planner, and president and CEO of TriDelta Financial. He can be reached at tedr@tridelta.ca or 416-733-3292 ext. 221.

Have you ever wondered what your estate size might be? In some cases, this can be a scary exercise. However, more often, it is a positive surprise as people see numbers in the seven figures.

Some of these people view themselves as wealthy, but many do not. While they may understand they own a house that is worth $1.5 million, which they may have bought for $200,000 or less, until they sell, they don’t feel like they have much money.

So what does it mean when someone sees an estimated estate value of $3 million? Here are a few basics:

1. It means that you never spent $3 million of your net worth. What were you worried about?
2. Unless you are a big spender in the last decade of your life, on average, your estate value is growing every year you live, meaning you will never outlive your money.
3. That $3 million is going to someone after you die. You can’t take it with you.
4. If you are 40 years old, the $3-million estimate is not going to be very accurate. If you are 65 years old and have stopped working, that same estimate will be quite accurate.

My message to people is this: think about what you would do differently at age 60 if you know you will have a $2 million+ estate. If I was in that position, I would think about spending more on myself while I am healthy, I would think about who in my life could use some financial support now as opposed to 30 years from now, and I would think about whether I am doing enough to help the causes I really care about.

The first step is to find out what your estate will look like, and then start planning the rest of your life from there.

DID YOU KNOW?
The White Rose was the emblem of the Duke of York, founder of the House of York in the 14th century, and appears on York’s official shield. At a ceremony in 1961, following the installation of York’s first chancellor, Wilfred Curtis, a symbolic white rose was planted in the Glendon Rose Garden by Lord James of Rusholme, vice-chancellor designate of the University of York in the United Kingdom. York’s coat of arms was designed by war artist Eric Aldwinkle from 1960 to 1968. The White Rose continues today as an enduring, recognizable symbol of York University.

Image (left): York University Libraries, Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections, ASC02063.
Since 2012, the White Rose Legacy Circle at York has recognized alumni, faculty, staff, retirees and friends who have remembered York in their wills or through other forms of planned giving.

In honour of the White Rose Legacy Circle’s third anniversary, the University held a special afternoon tea event on Oct. 21, 2014 on York’s Keele campus. Hosted by President and Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri, the annual event was attended by more than 40 guests.

“Because of legacy donors, York will be able to provide valuable support and create incredible opportunities for students, spaces and academic programs across our campuses,” Shoukri says.

The event served as an opportunity for the University to honour those members of the White Rose Legacy Circle who have recently passed away and whose legacy gifts have been realized. Wade Hall, assistant vice-president advancement, noted that in the last 28 years York has received more than $16 million from the estates of generous legacy donors who have passed on, while an additional $15 million has been pledged in future gifts by 125 active members of the White Rose Legacy Circle.

“Legacy gifts have a huge impact on the University – on our programs, on our students, on campus life – and this event is about recognizing and celebrating your generosity in support of York’s future,” Hall says. “The University owes you and others like you an incredible amount of gratitude for helping pave the way for generations of future world leaders.”

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
For more information, please fill out the enclosed reply card, or contact:
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