Interior designer’s legacy gift is of his own design

“Design made me see the world differently – my life was profoundly altered by that experience and I’m incredibly grateful.”

Few places can inspire an interior designer more than Barcelona: home to Roman remains, medieval quarters and the stunning architecture of Antoni Gaudí.

When Michael Wan [BID/79] visited the Spanish city with his parents as a young man, his thoughts were occupied by a potential career in health sciences. Having already spent two years in what he described as uninspiring studies in biochemistry, Michael had planned to further his studies with little conviction.

Then, sitting among Barcelona’s cobbled streets and colourful mosaic tiles, he recognized he had a real interest in design.

Returning home, he applied and was accepted into the interior design program at the U of M’s Faculty of Architecture and has never looked back or second-guessed his decision.

Forty years later, Michael – the principal of Vancouver-based interior design and project management firm Prime Interiors – continues to give back to the faculty. He established the Michael Cox Scholarship in 2004, named after the professor who showed him the most patience and guidance when he was a student.

After reflecting on the impact his gift has made over the years, Michael recently decided to extend his support to the University of Manitoba and to leave a bequest in his will to the Faculty of Architecture. A planned gift represents an opportunity for many donors to have their greatest impact and make their largest contribution to the U of M.

“Design made me see the world differently – my life was profoundly altered by that experience and I’m incredibly grateful,” says Michael. “Hopefully this award will help others find the same inspiration.”

Estate gifts make a substantial and positive impact on students at the University of Manitoba. Through these gifts, donors play a role in shaping the future leaders who will change our world.
President’s Message

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Sincerely,

David T. Barnard, O.M., Ph.D., FRSC
President and Vice-Chancellor

Social work bursary gives access to education and to finding one’s potential

When Kim Clare [BID/79] passed away in 2014 it could be said that her life had come full circle.

Her house was just four doors down from her childhood home in Winnipeg’s West End and she had made it her life’s work to support the sort of kids she grew up with—the sort of kid she once was until a chance opportunity changed her course.

“Kim sat down every day to tell students that they are important.”

An intelligent teenager from a working class family, Clare’s mother had secured her a position at Eaton’s. This was to be her future, until she was invited by the YWCA to attend their inner city leadership training program.

This access to education came at a critical moment, and inspired her to choose university over the department store. For the next 40 years, Clare was a much loved and respected figure in the field of social work.

Leaving Your Legacy

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Kim sat down every day to tell students that they are important.”

— Kim Clare, Kathy Jones and Georgina Clare

As director of the U of M’s Inner City Social Work Program, she initiated a part-time ACCESS program designed to support students who have traditionally faced systemic barriers common to inner-city life experience, such as poverty, racism, school failure and marginalization, preventing them from accessing post-secondary education.

Both Clare and her partner, Kathy Jones [PhD/03], worked in the ACCESS program and felt privileged to witness graduates go on to lead successful lives as children’s advocates, elected officials and PhD recipients. “Kim sat down every day to tell students that they are important,” says Jones. “To tell a kid that they can do it—that people believe in them—is an incredibly powerful message. Kids take it more seriously, believe it more, when money is attached to the message.”

Jones established the Kim Clare Bursary in her partner’s honour and has included a gift in her will so that Kim’s legacy of care can continue for future generations. The fund supports undergraduate students in the ACCESS program, a lasting reminder of how education can change lives.

ISBITSTER LEGACY SOCIETY LUNCHEON

Monday, May 27, 2019
Marshall McLuhan Hall, University of Manitoba

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The buzz around bequests

When it comes to metaphors, it doesn’t get much sweeter. Like a beekeeper tends to their hive to produce delicious honey, Gordon [CertEd/68, BSc/66] and Theresa Pazerniuk are taking care of future generations of U of M students and researchers to create a better world.

The irony, of course, is that Gordon himself is an amateur beekeeper. The retired middle years teacher and his wife recently left a bequest in their will to support research projects in the Faculty of Science as well as entrance bursaries.

The former is a nod to Gordon’s days studying physics and the fact that both of their daughters pursued sciences and found careers at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg. The Pazerniuks like the flexibility their gift will give the faculty to designate the funds where it’s needed most in the future.

The couple have always advised their three children and eight grandchildren to pursue higher education no matter the odds. While at the U of M, Gordon received a small award that helped him as a student.

“We’ve seen how some kids don’t receive the encouragement they need, in the face of setbacks, to continue on in their studies. We always told our children to keep on working, to keep trying. We showed them how to work hard, and told them regularly that they were both capable and smart,” said Gordon.

“I always say ‘strive higher’ and then if it doesn’t work out, and if necessary, to adjust your goal. But if you don’t strive high, you won’t achieve your potential and may regret it,” adds Theresa.

They hope that future students who receive their entrance bursaries will see the gesture as a sign that someone believes in them and their capabilities; that the Pazerniuks want to see them succeed, just as they did their own family.

“An investment in education is never a waste,” said Gordon. “Even if it helps just a few people who without the support couldn’t achieve their educational goals, it’s worth it.”