Leaving a Legacy for Stem Cell Research

Hard work allowed Ivan and Magda Bihler to leave a life of adversity in Europe and start anew in Canada.

During the Second World War, Magda participated in the resistance movement and Ivan was sent to an Italian prison camp. They met as engineering students in the former Yugoslavia and married in the late 1940s. The couple initially immigrated to Israel, where Ivan earned his master's degree in chemistry and his doctorate in biochemistry.

They moved to Canada in the early 1960s when Ivan was invited to join the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the University of Manitoba. "Their support will help our stem cell research program become one of the top three regenerative medicine programs in Canada and advance medical treatments in a new and transformative way."

Ivan's research earned him numerous research grants throughout his career. Upon his retirement in 1993, he was appointed Professor Emeritus by the University of Manitoba. He passed away in 1999.

Influenced by gratitude for the opportunities they had been given, Ivan and Magda made a bequest to the University of Manitoba. Before her death in January 2012, Magda made arrangements to donate their entire estate to the University to establish a professorship in stem cell research at the College of Medicine.

"We are extremely grateful to the Bihlers for their visionary and generous gift to establish the Bihler Professorship," says Dr. Brian Postl, dean and vice-provost of the Faculty of Health Sciences. "Their support will help our stem cell research program become one of the top three regenerative medicine programs in Canada and advance medical treatments in a new and transformative way."

Magda and Ivan made an investment in some of the most progressive research in the country, which will have a significant impact on the future well-being of people in Canada and around the world.
President’s Message

I continue to be inspired by those who have the vision, generosity, and creativity to establish a permanent legacy at the University of Manitoba.

An individual’s legacy can take many shapes and forms, as Albert Brady demonstrated with his recent donation of a painting by the Group of Seven’s Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald. I invite you to read more about Albert Brady, and his inspiring gift, in this issue.

Gifts – like Mr. Brady’s – have the power to enhance student experiences, and in so doing, shape the future of the University and the province as a whole. More than 80 per cent of our graduates remain in the province after graduation. They become the challengers and pioneers who don’t just talk about improving their world – they do.

There is an inextricable link between the success of University of Manitoba graduates, and the potential of our province. Our graduates become outstanding alumni, elevating our economic status, shaping our social and cultural fabric, and contributing to our health and well-being.

Thus, donors today are fostering the achievements of students, staff, and alumni who will be at the forefront of a strong, stable province tomorrow. Legacy donors in particular have a tremendous impact. Their gifts – their legacies – provide extraordinary opportunities for generations to come.

David T. Barnard
President and Vice-Chancellor

Graduate Enhances School of Art with Group of Seven Painting

Albert Brady, along with his late wife Idele, enjoyed a life of adventure and discovery. From canoeing down the Amazon to collecting art, they were a pair of explorers who never forgot Albert’s alma mater.

Both Albert and Idele had distinguished careers as educators. Idele was a teacher, principal and the first speech pathologist for the Winnipeg School Division before she passed away in 2014 at age 98. Albert worked as a science teacher at Gordon Bell High School and remains a proud graduate of the University of Manitoba.

“When it came time for me to leave my home in Brandon and continue my education, it was pretty intimidating for a young, gangly kid with no friends to arrive in Winnipeg. But I really enjoyed my time there,” he says.

The University left such an indelible mark on him, that Brady has chosen to remember the University in his will. In addition, he recently chose to donate an important piece of his and Idele’s art collection to the University. The untitled watercolour by Group of Seven member Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald is from the Brady’s considerable collection of works by important Canadian and Manitoban artists.

“Studying only from images in textbooks does not give the student the proper scale of the object, image, or building, nor does it reveal the nuances of the surface treatment in a way that viewing and handling actual works can.”

FitzGerald is an honorary graduate of the University of Manitoba. His works have been exhibited across the country, including at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

This generous gift enhances students’ experience as they develop and grow as artists. School of Art associate director and professor Mary Ann Steggles explains: “Studying only from images in textbooks does not give the student the proper scale of the object, image, or building, nor does it reveal the nuances of the surface treatment in a way that viewing and handling actual works can.”

The University is honoured to receive gifts like Albert and Idele’s. Their legacy is supporting and inspiring a new generation of developing artists.
A Bequest to Honour His Mentor

In high school, Robert Nix was awarded an Isbister entrance scholarship to the University of Manitoba. He enrolled in the newly formed Department of Actuarial Science under the leadership of Dr. Lloyd A. H. Warren, the University’s first professor of actuarial science.

After graduating in 1948, Nix went on to a long and successful career in actuarial science. He credits his career achievements to the education he received from the University of Manitoba.

“My actuarial degree was a great starting point for a new graduate,” he says, “and, at the time, I could have gotten employment at almost any life insurance company in Canada or the United States.”

For Nix, a sense of gratitude has endured, both for the guidance of his professor, Dr. Warren, and for the support he received through student awards. “Dr. Warren had me apply for scholarships each year thereafter, which, fortunately, came my way. He also made sure that I wrote a thank you note each time,” explains Nix. “This support was a tremendous help.”

To show his appreciation for the support he received as a student, and to encourage a new generation of scholars, Nix has included a bequest in his will toward the L.A.H. Warren Chair in Actuarial Science, named in honour of his mentor.

For Nix, a sense of gratitude has endured, both for the guidance of his professor, Dr. Warren, and for the support he received through student awards.

Part of the I.H. Asper School of Business’ Faculty of Management, the Warren Centre for Actuarial Studies and Research continues the tradition of excellence that has distinguished the University’s actuarial program, while providing students with the educational breadth obtainable through access to business and management-oriented courses. The Warren Centre is the only Canadian actuarial program able to provide students with this powerful career advantage.