Monday, April 22, was bone-chilling, cold and wet. The 1877 Club, nevertheless, was a warm, welcoming venue for 180 guests gathered for the University’s first annual scholarship luncheon. In attendance were the generous donors and the bright students for whom their gifts make a substantial difference.

For a prospective student, choice of college and continued attendance are often dependent on private scholarship money. Federal grants and aid frequently fail to reach applicants whose parents are in that gray income area between having no resources and having the financial means to fund their children’s college educations.

Donors have a variety of reasons for establishing scholarships. University Regent Millard Pryor, Jr., explained to those present at the luncheon that he and his wife, Claire ’84, consider their various scholarships in some sense a repayment to those people in their lives who helped them along the way. There is also the chance, he noted, that a scholarship donation might hit the jackpot and help a future senator or a host of the Academy Awards.

Setting up a scholarship can be an emotional experience, as donors frequently name a scholarship in honor of someone dear to them, either in memoriam or in recognition of someone still living. Family members may share in the responsibility of scholarship growth and maintenance with gifts offered as meaningful tributes to each other on special occasions. For example, eight family members and a collection of friends support the Marian and Richard Keller Scholarship. Jocelyn Coffey ’03, who was this year’s recipient of the award, attended the luncheon with Dr. and Mrs. Edward Herzig and Peter Keller.

Several scholarship recipients shared their stories at the event. Ebony Wright ’04, recipient of the Kaplan and Garcia Scholarship, established by Ben Kaplan ’79, ’81 and Annie Garcia Kaplan ’79, ’81,’97, lost her mother in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. Her strength, as she faces the loss of her only parent, and the depth of her appreciation to the people who have supported her continued education are an inspiration.
Carol Ann Neal, recipient of the Beatrice Fox Auerbach Scholarship, spoke with awe about Georgette Koopman, whom she had not met until the luncheon and who cares enough about the education of a 47-year-old mother of two to be willing to contribute to her tuition.

Dan Castro ’05, recipient of the Bernard H. Rosen Scholarship, spoke eloquently and with humor about his warm relationship with Bernie Rosen ’61 and his experiences as a commuter student at the University.

Endowed scholarships and individual annual scholarship gifts to the University of Hartford result in more than $700,000 in aid to nearly 500 students through 185 distinct scholarships and awards. The University provides assistance to over 3,600 students in order to enable the largest possible number of applicants access to a University of Hartford education.

Scholarships for students are an integral part of the University’s Campaign of Commitment. The goal for the next five years is to raise approximately $15 million in permanent, endowed funds for financial aid. These funds will ensure that future generations of deserving students have a chance to pursue their dreams at the University of Hartford.

Varieties of Gifts Used for Student Scholarships

Endowments
Scholarships of this type have a principal balance of no less than $10,000. The principal remains intact, while a portion of the interest earned through investment is used for distribution to students meeting the donors’ criteria for selection.

Quasi-endowments
These gifts consist of monies provided to the University that are intended to grow to endowment level. Quasi-endowments can be started for as little as $2,000 but need to mature to $10,000 via additions to the principal over a set number of years.

Temporarily Restricted Awards
These awards constitute monies given to the University in a particular year that are intended to be distributed over one or more years. These gifts do not grow to endowment. As in the case of all scholarships, written criteria for selection of student recipients are specified.

Please call Toni Robinson at (860) 768-4223 for further information.

A BIRTHDAY TO REMEMBER

President Walter Harrison received an especially memorable birthday gift this year.

Actually, it was a gift to the University—but it was as meaningful to Harrison as any personal present he has received.

On his birthday, Harrison joined members of the Class of 2002 to unveil the third in a series of class plaques recognizing students who participated in the Senior Signature program. The program encourages graduating seniors to make gifts to the University of $25 each. Those who contribute have their names engraved on a senior class plaque, which is hung on the outside wall of University Commons.

This year, 100 graduating seniors made gifts of $25 each.

“This is a really wonderful gift for me and for the University. It’s the best birthday I’ve ever had,” Harrison said. “What you’ve really done is given a gift to generations of future University of Hartford students.”

The Senior Signature program began with the Class of 2000. Three plaques are now displayed on the outside wall of the Commons, commemorating gifts from the classes of 2000, 2001, and 2002.

The ultimate goal of the Senior Signature program is to encourage students to continue to support the University after they graduate and to become active and involved alumni.

“What I’m hoping is that this will be the beginning of a long relationship with the University,” Harrison told students at the unveiling of this year’s class plaque. After the unveiling, student contributors to the Senior Signature program celebrated with a barbecue at the president’s house.