A Rebirth for Hartt, for the University, for the City

MORT AND IRMA HANDEL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER OPENS

There was no drum roll to announce the opening of the much-anticipated Mort and Irma Handel Performing Arts Center, but there were plenty of other sounds at the dedication ceremony. Hartt musical theatre students sang a tribute to the new center. Hartt dance students tapped. Hartt musicians played, and dignitaries spoke about the stunning new arts facility at the corner of Albany Avenue and Westbourne Parkway in Hartford.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell; Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez; and Dollie McLean (Hon. ’07), founder of The Artists Collective and widow of world-renowned jazz musician and Hartt faculty member Jackie McLean (Hon. ’07), joined President Walter Harrison, Hartt Dean Malcolm Morrison, University life regent Mort Handel (Hon. ’02) and Irma Handel, and Thomas J. Groark Jr., chair of the University’s board of regents, on stage for the celebration. Also present was Trish Robinson, a senior vice president at MassMutual Financial Group, which made a major gift to the project.

“Today is one of the most meaningful days in the entire history of the University of Hartford,” said Harrison. “The dedication of the Mort and Irma Handel Performing Arts Center marks a rejuvenation and rebirth for The Hartt School and the University, as well as an important moment in the rebirth of the city of Hartford.”

Approximately 450 guests attended the ceremony, then toured the 55,000-square-foot facility for dance and theatre instruction and performance of both Hartt’s collegiate and Community Division students.
Raising the Barre in Handel Center

By Stevie Zimmerman

Twelve-year-old, Cuban-born Miguel Campaneria was at a piano lesson when members of the National Ballet of Cuba came to examine his feet. He displayed such a beautiful arch that he was encouraged to audition for the national Ballet of Cuba.

Campaneria, the recently appointed chair of the dance department of The Hartt School Community Division, is passionate about his desire to teach ballet to young dancers. Whether they have professional ambitions or not, all the students in his classes receive the kind of tough love he credits with motivating his own career.

“Push them hard,” Campaneria says. But it is clear, watching him at work with a group of 12- and 13-year-old dancers, that they enjoy being pushed and are inspired by him. He has taken his first teacher, Alicia Alonso, as his model—a teacher who helped him develop, in just two years, to the level of a soloist touring internationally with the National Ballet of Cuba. He was also inspired by the dancing of Rudolph Nureyev, whose masculine, muscular style appealed to him. “Not just the boy behind the ballerina,” as Campaneria puts it.

A picture of Campaneria with Nureyev is one of the few things the newcomer has had a chance to unpack at the new Handel Performing Arts Center. He is delighted with many aspects of the new facilities; the studios in particular earn his special praise for their space and lighting. Campaneria hopes that, as faculty members, students, parents, and their young families get used to the new surroundings, there will be opportunities for collaboration with the music and drama programs. His students performed excerpts from The Nutcracker in an evening of dance at the Handel Center in December.

Campaneria, who was appointed to the National Council on the Arts by President George W. Bush in 2007, says his favorite part of the job is seeing the dancers in his classes develop and improve. He has a very simple goal for the dance program of the Hartt Community Division: to make it “the best in the country—as good as the music school, even perhaps better.”

A Feast for the Senses

More than 300 people attended The Hartt School’s annual fundraising event, held in November this year in the University’s new Mort and Irma Handel Performing Arts Center. Shown above are Mort and Irma Handel with President Walter Harrison (far left) and Hartt Dean Malcolm Morrison (far right).

Every corner of the Handel Center was filled with the talent and energy of Hartt student, faculty, and Community Division performers. The night included a broad range of the performing arts, from comedy to choral and instrumental music to music theatre.

Silent and live auctions, the latter hosted by local columnist and then-radio show host Colin McEnroe, raised more than $70,000, an unprecedented amount, that will be used for musical instruments and technology.
With Your SUPPORT

An Investment in Success

Stacy McCann ’96, ’00, a former Hartford Scholar and current principal of Dwight Elementary School in Hartford, was the master of ceremonies for the 2008 Hartford Scholars Dinner, which raised approximately $100,000 for the scholarship program.

The Hartford Scholars program provides half-tuition scholarships to qualified Hartford high school graduates who attend the University. President Walter Harrison thanked the guests for their generous support of the program, which has helped hundreds of young people earn University of Hartford degrees since its creation in 1990.

Top photo: Four current students received academic awards at the dinner: (l–r) Irmarie Rios ’10, Marva Williams ’10, Aja Wilson ’10, and Philip Jackson ’09. Bottom photo: Three University of Hartford graduates shared their success stories, thanks to the Hartford Scholars program: (l–r) Wayne Webster ’96, a vice president at Liberty Bank; Tara Washington ’95, M’08, director of finance for The First Cathedral; McCann; and Arturo Arroyo ’03, M’08, a junior designer for JCJ Architecture.

Success!

(From left) Alissa Rauch ’09 and Elsa Chin ’09, both student regents; President Walter Harrison; and Campaign of Commitment co-chairs Linda Fisher Silpe M’65, regent, and Richard Cardin ’62, board of regents vice chair, lead a celebratory toast. The University marked the successful completion of its 10-year, $175 million Campaign of Commitment with a gala dinner in October, attended by approximately 200 invited guests. The campaign, which closed on June 30, 2008, raised $175,852,600, surpassing its fundraising goal. The campus has been transformed by the campaign over the course of the past decade by a series of construction projects as well as increased endowment monies that support teaching, research, and financial aid, and allow the University to attract and retain impressive students, faculty, and staff.

$1.5 Million Gift for New Shaw Center

Thanks to a $1.5 million gift from lead donors John (Jay) ’74 and Debi Shaw, Hillyer College will be breaking ground in the spring for the new Shaw Center. The two-story, 7,500-square-foot addition to Hillyer Hall will provide 23 faculty offices, a conference room, a reception area, and a lounge.

Shaw, who is chair of the Hillyer College board of visitors and a University regent, is managing director of Resource Holdings, Ltd., a New York–based company that he co-founded.

“The generosity and leadership of the Shaw family make possible our dreams of a home for Hillyer College that is in keeping with our goals of reaching the untapped potential in all of our students,” said Hillyer Dean David Goldenberg at the unveiling of a sign announcing the new center on Oct. 19.

When Shaw attended Hillyer in the 1970s, there were 50 students and 12 faculty members. Today there are 700 students and 45 faculty, numbers that have lead to the crowded conditions soon to be alleviated by the Shaw Center. Besides the new addition, the area currently being used for faculty offices will be converted into two high-tech SMART classrooms, and a third classroom will be upgraded to an honors classroom.

President Walter Harrison (left) and John (Jay) Shaw ’74 unveil a sign announcing the future Shaw Center at Hillyer College.
Charitable Giving during Tough Economic Times

BY PETER H. CONGLETON

As we navigate our way through these difficult economic times, the University of Hartford remains confident in the generosity and resilience of its many supporters. Through all of the major economic downturns of the past century, charitable giving by the American people on the whole has persisted. In fact, a number of educational institutions actually raised more funds during the 1930s than they did during the boom years of the Roaring Twenties. Much of that charitable giving came from bequests and through other, more sophisticated planning tools.

Individuals who might be concerned about supporting their family members, outliving their money, or not having enough left over to pay for health care may be surprised to learn that some of their concerns can be alleviated by carefully planned and constructed charitable gifts to the University of Hartford.

Charitable gift annuities can provide financial support for retirees and elderly dependents by generating predictable sources of income and a current income-tax deduction, often by using low-yielding, appreciated assets such as stocks or other readily marketable securities.

Another option, charitable remainder trusts, can be designed to liquidate less readily marketable assets such as real property (a second home, for instance) or tangible personal property (e.g., artwork, patents, collections); diversify the investment of the principal; avoid capital gains taxes; and generate an income stream from an asset that had not previously produced any income. This extra income can come in handy for seniors faced with increasing medical costs.

Although many Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) have been hit hard by the recent volatility in the stock market, retirees may still realize an advantage from the reinstated Charitable IRA Rollover provision that was extended by the “Bailout” legislation. For nonitemizers, qualified charitable distributions from IRAs eliminate the need for donors to claim an income-tax charitable deduction. Consequently, nonitemizers can enjoy the equivalent of a charitable deduction. In fact, some donors who were itemizing for the sole purpose of claiming deductions for their charitable gifts may no longer need to do so if they fund their gifts from their IRAs.

And best of all, the net result of these widely used, straightforward, and nongimmicky gift-planning tools is the charitable benefit that will be received by the University of Hartford in the future, perhaps just in time to help us weather the next economic downturn.

If you or your financial advisor would like to take advantage of the planning opportunities discussed above, please contact Peter H. Congleton, director of planned giving, at 860.768.2415. Information is also available on our website at www.hartford.edu/plannedgiving.

It’s All in a Name

FORRESTERS’ GIFT HONORS UNIVERSITY FOUNDERS, ALUMNI, AND STUDENTS

Students, alumni, and special guests gathered at Al-Marzook Field for the rededication of the refurbished soccer/lacrosse field and the naming of Alumni Stadium.

University regent Bob Forrester ’66 and his wife, Linda, who together made a major gift to the Home Field Advantage portion of the Campaign of Commitment, elected to name the stands at the field Alumni Stadium.

“We chose the name Alumni Stadium in honor of the founders of the University, its alumni, and the current students, who will soon become alumni. It’s up to the alumni to support this University, now and even more so in the future,” said Forrester.

Mohammed Hamad Al-Ghanim, nephew of Faisal Al-Marzook ’67, represented the family at the ceremony. He gave a very moving speech about what the University of Hartford has meant to Faisal Al-Marzook and his family over the years.

“When my uncle came here to the University, he was probably one of the first students from the Middle East to come here. He believes that he was given opportunities here that he could never have received anywhere else. For 40 years the University of Hartford has been part of our family.”

Coaches and members of the men’s lacrosse, and men’s and women’s soccer teams presented gifts of autographed soccer balls, a Hartford Hawks scarf, flowers, and a lacrosse stick to the Forrester and Al-Ghanim in appreciation of their support of athletics at the University. Kacy Busque ’09, a member of the women’s soccer team, read a statement expressing her appreciation for what the athletics program and the University have meant to her.

At the end of the ceremony, President Walter Harrison pronounced the stadium dedicated but added that it wouldn’t be truly dedicated without a victory for men’s soccer in that evening’s game. The Hawks went on to beat Canisius 3-0 before a record crowd.