Scholarships for Wheeling Jesuit Students: A Worthy and Lasting Investment

For many students who hope to attend Wheeling Jesuit, a scholarship gives them the chance of a lifetime. It is a chance to attend a prestigious university, graduate, and become prepared to pursue successful careers and lives of civic contribution. It also gives them a unique opportunity to reflect on who they are and who they want to be in the context of a liberal arts, service-oriented Jesuit education.

I often hear our alums say that their experiences at Wheeling Jesuit made them better people and motivated them to make the world a better place. Bob Knott, a WJU Board Member and alum, is profiled in this communication and puts it so aptly: “A liberal arts education prepares you for the world; a Jesuit education prepares you to do your part for the world.”

Helping financially challenged students attend WJU is an important priority and I am proud of our track record. 91% of all WJU students receive financial aid. On average, 33% of each new class of WJU students are Pell Grant recipients, double the average of other private institutions. Clearly the opportunities are not squandered: 94% of the class of 2013 is either working, pursuing post graduate degrees, or both. They report that neither would have been possible without their degree from WJU.

In this communication, I invite you to read the stories of two alums who attended WJU on scholarship and hear about the impact this had on their personal and professional lives. Both are accomplished professionals serving the greater society. And both have carried Wheeling Jesuit values with them on their personal and professional journeys.

I also want to invite you to attend our second annual Gaudiosa on March 28, 6 pm, at the McDonough Center on campus. All of the proceeds from this event go to scholarships for students. Please contact Jasmine Lo, WJU Institutional Advancement (jlo@wju.edu or 304.243.8147) to help sponsor and/or attend this event or contribute to the Gaudiosa Scholarship Fund. You can reserve tickets and find out more at: www.wju.edu/audiosa.

To those who have contributed funding for scholarships for worthy Wheeling Jesuit students in the past – I say Thank You. I hope that I can count on your continued support and your help to add the support of new donors.

Peace,

James J. Fleming, S.J.
Opening Minds and Doors

It was a big dream – to be the first in his family to graduate from college. Not just any college, but Wheeling Jesuit, a top-rated and highly-respected Jesuit institution with an accounting program which was exactly what he wanted.

“I was the first person in my family to attend college, so tuition of any kind was a shock. The scholarship dollars made the difference between being able to afford WJU or attending my alternative choices,” recalled Richard ‘Dick’ Riley, class of 1984. “I will always be grateful for that help.”

Today, Dick is Dr. Riley, and the highly awarded Louis F. Tanner Distinguished Professor of Public Accounting at West Virginia University (WVU) where he has taught since 1998. His primary focus is the Business Masters Programs.

The scholarship helped Dick attend WJU, graduate magna cum laude and fast track a career that led him to a position as CFO of a $25 million company at the age of 29. After nine years, Dick decided to change course, earned his Ph.D. and joined the WVU faculty.

And what he learned and experienced at Wheeling Jesuit continues to influence his actions and his goals.

“The classroom was important but the extra-curricular life is what ensures that WJU graduates will transition from participants in society to leaders,” says Dick. “WJU provides an environment where students can explore their skills and their weaknesses. You learn about making choices, with accountability, and you learn to reflect on those choices—not in a vacuum, but with guidance from the faculty and Jesuits.

“WJU gave me the ability and experiences to grow as a person and a leader,” says Dick. “I had incredible opportunities to learn about leading and to be a leader on campus. We all did. It was a Wheeling Jesuit expectation. I was deeply involved in Wheeling Jesuit activities and it was a very exciting time in my life.”

And now he hopes to impact students the way he was impacted while at WJU. “While I teach in a public institution,” he shares, “I incorporate the Jesuit philosophy for living and teaching in all that I do. I try to get my students to see the bigger picture, reflect on who they are, and their role related to topics like leadership, teamwork, and professionalism.”

Dick remains strongly involved in Wheeling Jesuit and was the 2013 Wheeling Jesuit Alumni Scholar in Residence and is the Alumni Council President Emeritus.

In a post financial crisis world, he says it is more important than ever to choose a college wisely. He believes WJU is a clear frontrunner for students who seek a quality Jesuit, liberal arts education that is extremely affordable.

“WJU is clearly recognized as a distinguished university where people graduate and have high successes,” he affirms. “And very competitive when it comes to affordability. I really have to applaud WJU’s efforts to seek scholarships for students so that they can attend.

“Scholarships are critical for opportunity -- especially for students with limited means and unlimited potential.”
For the Greater Good

When Kristin (York) Fijewski received a scholarship that made it possible for her to attend Wheeling Jesuit, she looked at it as a promissory note—one that she has paid back since graduating from WJU in 1990, by serving others as an accomplished and dedicated nurse.

Ever since high school, when she served as a candy striper, Kristin knew that she wanted to be a nurse and acquire high level skills that would help her provide meaningful service to those in need, improving their health and welfare.

After graduating from WJU with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Kristin got a job as an oncology nurse, one of the most physically and psychologically challenging nursing fields, at Duke University Medical Center. She worked there for 16 years before moving with her family to Morgantown to be closer to relatives. For the past 18 years, Kristin has been married to her husband Brian, and they have two children. For the last ten years she has worked at WVU’s Ruby Memorial Hospital as an integral part of their Resource Pool, nursing in different units as needed.

“Every day brings something new, including learning experiences and I love to learn new things. At the end of the day, my job is all about helping people and that is what I love best about it. Wheeling Jesuit gave me the tools, skills and the drive to do that.”

Kristin believes that the education she received at WJU plays a major role in her successful career. And without scholarship assistance, it might not have happened.

Back when she was applying to college, Kristin checked out WJU. After touring the campus, talking to students and faculty, and inspecting WJU’s highly regarded nursing program, Kristin was sold. “I knew that this is where I wanted to go and 25 years later, I remember that vividly. I had come from a small Catholic high school and WJU had a sense of family, community and diversity that I appreciated.

“But it was the scholarship that made it possible for me to go to Wheeling Jesuit and also to graduate. It was a big help to me in achieving my academic goals. My program was rigorous—especially with clinicals—-and you had to work hard and study hard. I did do work-study, but because of the scholarship, I was able to work less and focus on my studies more.”

She says that WJU has influenced her life in countless ways. “I have many fond memories of WJU. I loved the liberal arts aspect of the academics and the opportunity to study philosophy and religion as part of my curriculum. And I made lifetime friendships. WJU enhanced the values and tools my parents instilled in me to help me discern what was best for me and the right thing to do out in the real world.”

“I will always be grateful for that scholarship!”

Kristin and her husband, Brian.

Kristin with her children, Max, left, and Marisa, right.
Robert C. Knott ‘89

Senior Managing Director, MWW Group

Why is a liberal arts education important?
How does it help shape the student and their future?

In a world made smaller and faster by technology, the virtues of a liberal arts education—critical thinking, effective communications skills and a broad range of knowledge—have never been more important. The lines that once separated cultures, industries, issues and people are often non-existent, and matters of genuine significance are revealed, and their outcomes influenced, in real time. Only a liberal arts education provides one with the 360 degree skill set to succeed in such a convergent, rapid-fire society.

What do you believe distinguishes a Jesuit education?
How is it unique?

Whereas a liberal arts education prepares you for the world, a Jesuit education prepares you to do your part for the world. Put differently, a Jesuit education instills in us the ethic of rendering service to others. Or, as St. Ignatius asked of our Heavenly Father: “Teach us to give and not to count the cost.”

Wheeling Jesuit Names Scholarship in Bishop Bransfield’s Honor

In recognition of the Most Rev. Michael J. Bransfield’s 10th anniversary as bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, a scholarship, offered to graduates of Catholic high schools in West Virginia, will now bear his name at Wheeling Jesuit University.

Ten years ago, when Bishop Bransfield arrived in West Virginia one of his priorities was to improve Catholic education in the diocese. Wheeling Jesuit will recognize his commitment to education by naming a university scholarship in his honor.

“Bishop Bransfield has been a powerful advocate of education at all levels during his first decade of service to the people of our state. His commitment to providing access to Catholic education speaks volumes of his passion for learning and the importance of the connection between faith and reason. We know of no better way to recognize his contribution to Catholic education than by naming our scholarship, offered to graduates of the seven Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the Bishop Michael J. Bransfield Scholarship,” said Rev. James Fleming, S.J., president of WJU.

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Board Spotlight

Robert C. Knott ’89

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OF NOTE...

Top National Ranking by U.S. News & World Report
U.S. News & World Report has ranked three Wheeling Jesuit programs among a handful of West Virginia higher learning institutions providing the best in online graduate nursing programs. The recognized programs: RN to BSN degree, Master’s in Educational Leadership (MEL) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). U.S. News examines admissions selectivity, faculty credentials and training, student engagement, student services and technology.

Founders Day Celebrated
Wheeling Jesuit celebrated Founders Day with a special Mass on Feb. 11, in the Chapel of Mary & Joseph with community members invited. Founders Day honors the significant role the Most. Rev. John J. Swint, Archbishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, played in the founding of Wheeling College. The day also marks the date in 1957 when Swint handed over the property deed to the Very Rev. Lawrence R. McHugh, S.J., the first president of Wheeling College.

To honor WJU’s Founders Day, WJU employees donated money and hygiene items to help the House of Hagar in Wheeling. Members of WJU’s Administrative Council spearheaded the project, pictured right: Beth Collins, Greg Shepherd, Margie Cooke, David “Puddy” Agans, Kate Marshall of the House of Hagar, Becky Forney and Melissa Rataiczak.

Student Research Presented at the Capitol
Three WJU students presented research projects to state lawmakers at the Capitol in Charleston, WV during West Virginia Undergraduate Research Day on March 4. The WJU students, Rebecca Brown, Mariah Cottrill and Emily Robinson, along with psychology professor Dr. Bryan Raudenbush displayed two projects: “The Effects of Peppermint Scent Administration on Augmenting Driving Performance During a Distracted Driving Scenario” (Brown and Robinson); and “The Effects of Male Income and Male Pheromone Scent Administration on Ratings of Online Dating Profiles of Males Made by Female Participants” (Cottrill). This marks the 12th year that students and faculty from Wheeling Jesuit participated in this event, which highlights research conducted by undergraduates from West Virginia’s colleges and university.

Magic Carpet Ride
Young audience members and their parents were delighted with Wheeling Jesuit University’s children’s play, Aladdin, performed by WJU students, Feb. 12-15 at the University’s Troy Theater. The interactive play had children involved in the lively performance. The play was a fresh retelling of the Aladdin story with moral tales appropriate for children interwoven, according to Dave Henderson, Coordinator of Performing Arts at WJU. All performances were open and free to the public. Student cast members pictured left.
OF NOTE...

Super Star Hall of Famers Named
Two legends in their sports, John Beilein ’75, basketball coach at the University of Michigan, and Kevin Keegan ’71, former rugby player, are the newest members of the WJU Athletic Hall of Fame to be inducted April 25. Beilein was a member of the Cardinals men’s basketball team from 1971-75 and team captain his junior year. Keegan was one of the founding members of WJU’s rugby program in the late 1960’s and his play on the rugby pitch brought national recognition in a Sports Illustrated issue, 1971. John Beilein pictured left and Kevin Keegan, pictured right.

Environmental Forum
Fracking under the Ohio River was the topic for discussion with a number of local and state legislators, environmental experts and Gastar Exploration representatives at a forum which was open to the public and held Feb. 7 at WJU. The University’s Appalachian Institute hosted the event. The forum panel included: Dr. Ben Stout, WJU Professor of Biology and Mike McCown, Vice President for Gastar Exploration, Inc.

Invitational Champs
Cardinal Wrestling, under the direction of Head Coach Sean Doyle, won six of 10 weight classes as the Cardinals were crowned West Virginia Collegiate Invitational Champions for the second consecutive year. Sophomore Ryan Winslow was crowned Most Outstanding Wrestler of the tournament.

Top Ranking for Online Nursing Program
SuperScholar.org has listed WJU’s online master of science in nursing program the fourth best in the nation in its 2015 Smart Choice rankings. The Smart Choice ranking of online graduate nursing schools is designed to help current and future nurses make a smart choice about where to start or advance their nursing education. Wheeling Jesuit University’s MSN program provides an online pathway to professional leadership and advanced practice roles in nursing.

Seven Year Re-Accreditation Earned
WJU’s Teacher Education Program earned national re-accreditation through 2021 by its accrediting council. The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) through the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) system granted the seven year re-accreditation for WJU’s undergraduate education degrees.
OF NOTE...

Extra Help for International Students
International students are getting extra help learning to speak English from WJU’s faculty and staff thanks to the new Individual Conversation Program. Students meet with a faculty or staff member a few times a week and converse informally in English. At left, Colleen Ryan, Director of WJU’s Service for Social Action Center talks with WJU international student Bandar Albalawi of Saudi Arabia.

WJU Professors on C-SPAN
In January, two Wheeling Jesuit history professors were interviewed about their recently published books on a C-SPAN segment on West Virginia and notable West Virginians. The professors and their books are Dr. Daniel Weimer, WJU “Seeing Drugs” and Dr. Jeff Rutherford, “Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front: The German Infantry Combat’s War, 1942-1944.”

Wheeling Jesuit Honored for Extraordinary Volunteerism
WJU was named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the third straight year. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) recognized WJU for the amount and quality of service that students and employees performed locally, nationally and internationally. During the 2013-14 academic year students logged more than 16,000 hours of community service through Wheeling Jesuit’s Service for Social Action Center (SSAC). An additional 11,000 hours were performed by WJU employees and students on other university supported projects for a grand total of 27,000 hours for the year. More than 640 students participated in service projects, along with 65 faculty, staff and administrators.

Thought-Provoking Film Screening and Discussion
WJU’s Office of Campus Ministry sponsored a screening of the film, “Sometimes in April,” and a question and answer discussion led by WJU international students from Rwanda. “Sometimes in April” is a 2005 HBO drama film depicting the lives of two brothers during the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the events that led up to its occurrence. The event was held on Feb. 19 and was free and open to the public.

Jesuit Grads in Congress
Wheeling Jesuit graduate Timothy Murphy ’74 is one of 47 members of the 114th U. S. Congress who are alumni/alumnae of Jesuit institutions--11 in the Senate and 36 in the House of Representatives, as cited by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities. Murphy, pictured right, is a member of the House of Representatives and has been serving the commonwealth of Pennsylvania since 2002. He is a psychologist with a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and the only psychologist serving in Congress. Murphy was recently featured in a CNN article.

And a Parting Thought...
“We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop. -- Mother Teresa