



# Looking forward, giving back

Lynn continues commitment to community service

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Introduction  
**A common thread**

At Lynn University we are connected to one another, our communities and the world. In ways small and large, near and far, we reach out as caregivers and changemakers.

We have done this from the very beginning. These days are no different.

This issue of *LynnSight* looks at our proud legacy of community service—from early outreach programs supporting local migrant workers to recent Ambassador Corps projects enabling international empowerment.

Now more than ever, we can make a difference by supporting one another.

[Watch and learn more](#) about the impact of our work: past, present and future.

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# Lynn's legacy of community service

Lynn's legacy: giving back, looking forward

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Even in its earliest years, when Lynn University was called Marymount College, its spirit of giving was undeniable. The Rev. Mother de la Croix, Marymount's president, explained, "Marymount has always seen its mission not only as an educational one, but as one of service to the community."

Proving the point, the college created a program to help migrant workers achieve greater economic self-sufficiency. Local children and adults received support in reading, math and language development. Soon, the campus was hosting a children's enrichment program and sports clinics for girls. Lynn was also home to Project Upward Bound, an effort that provided pre-college preparation and counseling for high schoolers.

Over time, Lynn became a leader in service-learning. In the early 1990s, independent study students earned academic credit for their volunteer work. In HUM 399, Community Awareness, bigger groups participated in preapproved service projects, sharing their experiences online and in class.

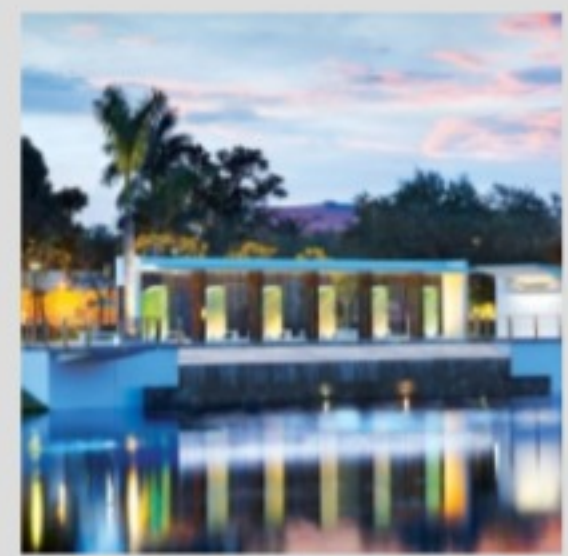
By 2001, outreach was completely embedded in Lynn's educational philosophy. The university developed broader service-learning initiatives—in places ranging from nearby gardens to schools across the sea—that expanded students' knowledge and perspectives.

On Jan. 12, 2010, Lynn's spirit was tested by the unthinkable loss of students and faculty on a January Term humanitarian trip. One year later, Lynn renewed its strength with a fresh tradition: Knights Unite Day. The entire Lynn community worked together to support needy neighbors and the environment.

## Reflecting a decade of hope

Remembrance Plaza is a contemplative, inspirational spot on the Lynn University campus.

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In January 2012, Lynn raised the bar again. [The Citizenship Project](#) made service an academic requirement for all first-year students. Projects were (and still are) designed to achieve goals set by the United Nations to address issues such as health, poverty, education, equality and the environment.

Vice President of Academic Affairs Katrina Carter-Tellison described the ultimate value of the project: "The Citizenship Project embodies the ethos of Lynn, an organization that has been deeply engaged with its community since its founding. It helps our students understand who we are as an institution and what we believe."

Today, Lynn sets its sights on the global community. Student groups and university offices provide ongoing service initiatives. On-campus efforts protect local plants and animals, conserve energy and preserve natural resources. The university is Fair Trade certified. And the [Social Impact Lab](#) propels its own brand of big thinking. Its grassroots programs teach students to launch next-generation business concepts, community-based nonprofits and social enterprise startups that are both locally and globally sustainable.

The challenges ahead—across campus and around the world—may be daunting. Progress will depend on a combination of courage, compassion and innovation. As always, Lynn stands ready to help.

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# The Citizenship Project creates a cycle of giving

Lynn scholarship students pay it forward.

What is important to you?

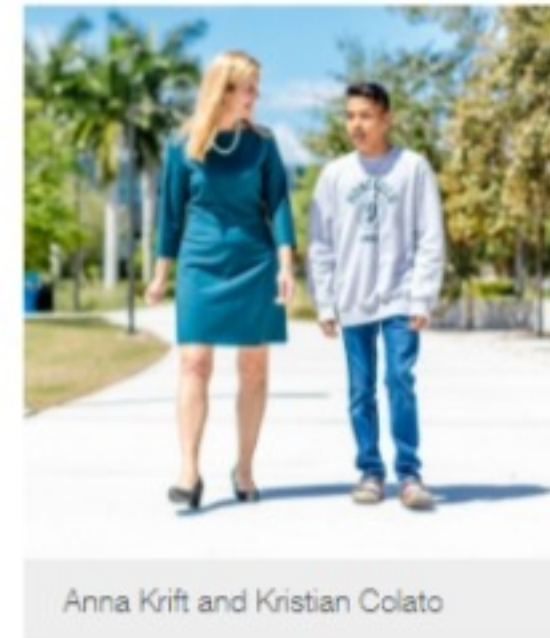
Anna Krift, associate professor and [Citizenship Project](#) director, wants to know.

"Of all the challenges in this world, what are you concerned about? What are you passionate about?" Krift raised the stakes further, "If you could be a change agent for something, what would that be?"

Lynn University faculty posed these questions to first-year students in 2012. The answers—environmental sustainability, homelessness and urban renewal—created the framework for Lynn's signature service program, the Citizenship Project.

Today, the project is a required part of each student's education—a time for Fighting Knights to prove their priorities through community action. Moreover, it's a chance for them to take the lead in determining how they want to make a difference in the world.

"Initially, these were faculty-driven courses," Krift explained. "In the past two years, the students have driven the car, if you will. And we [the faculty] have taken a side seat. We're on the passenger side."



Anna Krift and Kristian Colato

"If you could be a change agent for something, what would that be?"

Anna Krift, associate professor and Citizenship Project director



Students participate in a group design-thinking process in the fall semester, connecting their own ideas and experiences with the needs of the community. For students who receive support from Lynn, the opportunity to give back can be a deeply personal experience.

Morgan Parks, class of 2022, spoke of her appreciation for her alumni-funded Pay It Forward Endowed Scholarship. "My scholarship means so much to me," she said. "It is from the people who love and support the community and this place. That is something that makes Lynn unique. [J-Term](#) meant a lot to me because I was able to give something back."

Scholarship recipient and Citizenship Project participant Kristian Colato, class of 2022, described his experience: "It motivated me to not think about myself, to give back to others who are not blessed like we are."

Since it began, the Citizenship Project has delivered more than 49,000 hours of community support. But Krift and the students would agree: This story isn't just about numbers; it's about the power of connections between students, alumni, donors, faculty and the community. Krift concluded, "Realizing we're one piece, we can have an impact, we can effect change."

See what we achieved in 2020!

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# First-year students make a measurable difference

## Summing up **good+works**

This January, first-year students participated in one of Lynn University's proudest traditions—the Citizenship Project—and proved (once again) just how much a dedicated group can achieve together. Students took action across the local community—creating, harvesting, organizing, packing, painting, singing and so much more.



1 baseball game with children of all abilities



1 on-campus class and visit with Vietnam veterans



2 painted homes plus 1 painted farm fence and multiple murals

+

+

+



4 parties for retirees and families coping with cancer



90 hours of song practices and shows for sick children



450 classroom items for a school supply drive

+

+

+



655 hours of food distribution, preparation and service



800 comfort cases for children in foster care



1,000+ pounds of collected debris and microplastics

+

+

+

1,504 walks for rescued dogs



3,144 pounds of picked peppers for local food banks



\$5,000 worth of bracelets to support families in Haiti

3 weeks

+

24 partner organizations

+

675 students

+

8,640 hours of community service

=



of 17 UNSDGs\* achieved

\*UNSDGs—the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—are the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect the planet by 2030.

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# One small bag, a whole lot of heart

Alumni join Citizenship Project efforts by packing Comfort Cases for fostered infants.

The foster care system not only shelters children in need—it also provides a nurturing environment that can help shift the direction of a child's life.

From January through the end of March 2020, the Florida Department of Children and Families oversaw out-of-home care for more than 23,000 children. Palm Beach County accounted for 1,100 of those cases, and 400 of those children—11% of which are infants—are in foster care.

## Caring for society

Each year, Lynn University students participate in experiential learning opportunities during a three-week semester called January Term (J-Term). In 2018, Lynn identified a way to serve children in foster care through its Citizenship Project, which freshmen participate in during J-Term.

Anna Krift, director of the Citizenship Project, reached out to Robert Scheer, founder of the national nonprofit, Comfort Cases, after reading about his story and seeing a viral Upworthy video. She and other university leaders were moved by the organization's mission: to help children who have been removed from their family homes have a sense of dignity and security when they enter their foster care.



Robert Scheer, founder of the national nonprofit Comfort Cases

Scheer joined the J-Term participants on campus and shared how he began the organization based on personal experiences: Each of his four foster children arrived to his home carrying plastic bags containing their belongings. He recalled, 40 years earlier, carrying a plastic bag to his first foster placement, too. Eager to put an end to the heartbreaking practice, he and his partner founded Comfort Cases. "Comfort Cases" are backpacks or duffel bags that volunteers fill with essentials—like blankets, note pads, stuffed animals and other supplies—that are provided to a child as they transition to their foster home.

As part of the Citizenship Project, Comfort Cases fulfills not only an academic purpose, but a societal one: It raises awareness and concern for members of the community who—at no fault of their own—are displaced from a parent's care, and for those who welcome the children into their homes. It is also an opportunity for university students who have never experienced hardship to see the world from another point of view and for those who have, an opportunity to heal. The project teaches understanding and compassion, and allows students to exercise both by caring for others through packing the cases and leaving a message of support.

In the project's first year, freshmen students packed 500 cases. In 2019, they packed over 700.

"It takes a community to provide nurturing environments for children, and I believe our alumni really understand that."

**Barbara Cambia, executive director for Career and Alumni Connections**



## Expanding our reach

As the Citizenship Project team began collecting provisions for the over 800 Comfort Cases it planned to pack in 2020, Barbara Cambia, executive director for Career and Alumni Connections, had an idea: Why not engage alumni in this humanitarian project, which had become a beloved Lynn tradition in only a few short years?

Cambia activated her team, who urgently called upon Lynn's alumni to donate goods for infants. The team collected supplies through the annual Alumni Holiday Party in December and, to Cambia's delight, received over 400 donations ranging from bibs and bottles to books and pajamas and soft toys.

At the Jan. 9 alumni packing party, 29 alumni were greeted by Cambia's team and Scheer, who flew into town early to speak with them. Together, the crew assembled 100 infant comfort cases.

"It takes a community to provide nurturing environments for children, and I believe our alumni really understand that," said Cambia. "They were very interested in and supportive of what we were doing. They knew that they and our students are giving these infants and children the opportunity for a brighter future."

Cambia's team was proud of the outcome and committed to offering a Comfort Cases packing party for alumni in 2021. She added, "We hope to continue to offer such meaningful ways for alumni to connect with each other and with the university."



Alumni join together to pack 100 infant Comfort Cases.

## Building a better world

When a child receives a Comfort Case, its contents represent one less concern the foster family needs to address. By alleviating these seemingly simple pressures—an outfit to wear, a blanket to sleep with—Lynn's students and alumni directly help that child and their foster family get to business: breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect, and bringing about lasting change.

With the expansion of a project like Comfort Cases to alumni, the university's mission to build a better world with its students carries on, even after graduation.

"It was so nice to see the turn-out," said Judy Falvo '80. "The packing went fast, and I think we were all glad to be a part of it. I attended the university when it was the College of Boca Raton, and since I still live in the area, it's wonderful to get back on campus and participate in events like this. After all these years, I still feel connected."

Krift added, "Our alumni are incredibly giving and answered the call to serve with such an outpouring of love and support. We loved working alongside them as we packed cases—it gave us a chance to connect through service."

With the alumni contribution, the university has delivered 2,100 Comfort Cases to the local community in only three years.

For more information or to get involved in the alumni Comfort Cases project, contact [Laura Gilli](#).

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# The Ambassador Corps aims for global change

Community service drives social impact.

The Ambassador Corps and its home base, Lynn University's [Social Impact Lab](#), remind us of some simple truths: The world is made better by connections between people and ideas, and it can all start with the work of a single student.

Through the corps, students are matched with nonprofit and social enterprises working with grassroots programs in developing countries. Instead of participating with a large class, students are deployed as singles or pairs to become part of the communities they serve. They provide hands-on help in locales as far away as Colombia, Nicaragua and Rwanda.



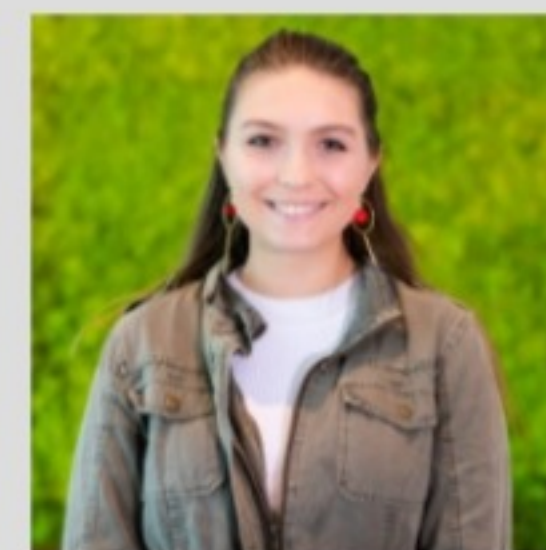
"This program really pushes our students outside of their comfort zone. So, they can really experience the country, the culture, the people ... at the same time that they're making a difference," explained Antonella Regueiro, assistant professor and social impact faculty fellow.

In the summer program—which was created by Jerry Hildebrand, director of the Center for Social Impact—approximately a dozen student-interns partner with local organizations for up to 10 weeks. For their efforts, undergraduate students receive academic credit, practical experience and a lifetime of inspiration.

"It was truly an eye-opener. Everyone thought, we are going to a developing country to help people," said Jayla Hall, class of 2020. "While you are making a difference in their lives, your life is also being impacted because you're seeing things from a different perspective, getting that one-on-one, hands-on experience, and realizing that little things are the most valuable."

"The amazing work experience ... made me a more mature and confident person. It helped me realize I am capable of anything."

**Francesca De Nes, class of 2020**



Francesca De Nes, class of 2020, described the "amazing" corps experience that sparked her dream of an eco-tourism career. "It made me a more mature and confident person. It helped me realize I am capable of anything."

To Regueiro, the program is more than community service: "It's community engagement. They're not just there to serve and leave. They're there to engage, connect and create long-lasting impact."

Proving the point, one student's internship with Vega Coffee Company in Nicaragua was the first step toward making Lynn a Fair Trade University. Another student's social media work led to the development of a Rwandan sports camp and city basketball team. And a leadership and entrepreneurship training program helped put Costa Rican women on the path to financial independence.

This kind of progress is made possible, in large part, by a scholarship fund underwritten by the Cordes Foundation, the CapCon Foundation and independent contributors. Need-based scholarships are awarded to participating students. Speaking of this support, Hildebrand was filled with gratitude. "The fund is essential," he said. "It makes the overall program possible."

The corps' impact on its students is extraordinary. Hildebrand said, "It heavily influences their advanced studies, as well as career directions." But the real power is in the work the students will do to help communities and the world in the days ahead. According to Hildebrand, that could be "transformative."

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# Longtime donors support the Snyder Center

Health and wellness come together on campus.

Behind the temporary blue fence in the center of campus, a new university resource is emerging: the [Snyder Center for Health and Wellness](#).

This unique project draws inspiration from its lead donors. "I can't say enough about Jamie and Steve Snyder and their family," said Senior Vice President for Development and Administration Gregory J. Malfitano '73, '75. "They're kind, caring, health-conscious, very philanthropic and they understand the student experience."

Newly announced support from longtime university friends and donors will provide extra resources to the building.

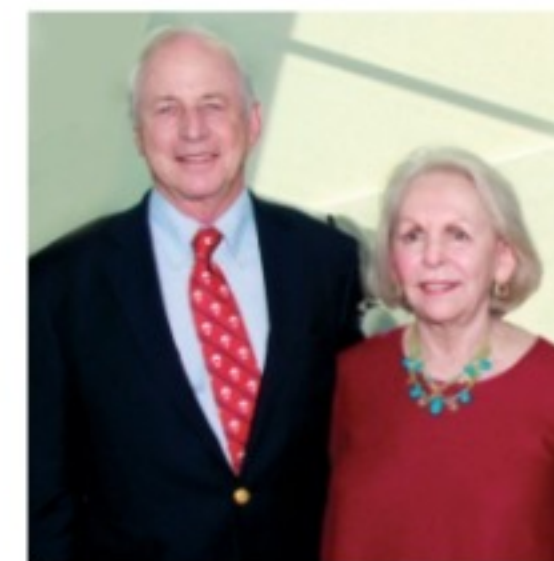
A generous gift from Caryn and Arthur Levison via the Daniel and Harriet Freed Foundation will establish the Office of Student Wellness. This space—dedicated to providing programmatic and support services—will contain staff offices and a guest reception area. It will also provide care for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault.

Before her passing, Sally Shutt arranged to leave a legacy gift to the university. Shutt was well-known for advising others to stay fit, eat well and keep moving. Her spirit will be well-reflected in an essential office.

Previously announced cornerstone gifts include a counseling center from the Schmidt Family Foundation, an athletic strength and conditioning area from Larry and Elaine Smith, and a health center from the late Mary Perper.

"Our donors just love this university," said Malfitano. "We're honored that so many of them are participating in this exciting and important project."

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Steve and Jamie Snyder



Caryn Levison



Sally Shutt





# Lynn bids farewell to Hugh Carville

Hugh Carville—one of Lynn University's true pioneers—passed away in February. He was 91 years old.

In the 1970s, Carville served on the College of Boca Raton board of trustees, ultimately becoming chairman. In recognition of his many decades of service, he was named chairman emeritus of the Lynn University board of trustees.

Beyond Lynn, Carville was recognized for his commitment to education, as well as achievements in business and community work.

In 1979, he received the Utica College Outstanding Alumnus Award. And in 2008, he was named an honorary board member of Fulton-Montgomery Community College.

"Hugh was a dedicated leader in our campus community from its earliest days," said President Kevin M. Ross. "He will be greatly missed by our university family."



Hugh Carville

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A student in a purple witch costume with a broom and a pointed hat stands on a stage. The background is dark blue with several spotlights shining down. One spotlight is green, and another is blue. The student is holding a broom and looking towards the camera. The overall scene is dramatic and theatrical.

# Student's supporting role in productions inspires family

Andreas Family Foundation \$300,000 endowment benefits Lynn's drama program.

Jacob Andreas '19 assists the technical direction of performances for the Lynn University's drama department. While Jacob works behind the scenes, his dedication to creating the best possible production is appreciated by everyone on stage and in the audience at the magnificent Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center.

His family especially noticed.

"My husband David's parents taught him from a very early age about the importance of giving to others—both your money and your time," said Jacob's mother Debbie Andreas.

Love for community theater has been in the family for decades. Jacob's grandparents were deeply engaged in local drama programs and theaters. Their generosity and involvement in the arts helped David, Debbie and Jacob gain an insider's perspective about what it takes to maintain a theater and help it flourish.

"When our son started to be involved in the drama department at Lynn, we loved attending the productions," Debbie said. "We were always so impressed by what the students and the whole team accomplished, but we also understood that there probably was something extra that they wished they had the funds to be able to do."

And so, the Andreas family's gifts—totaling more than \$30,000 for special equipment, training and drama program enhancements—began. By the 2019 academic year, the drama department used these funds to invest in a machine that enabled students to fly across the stage during the annual Celebration of the Arts production, a beloved Lynn tradition.

"We were so impressed with Celebration of the Arts," Debbie said. "I was hooked from the first year I attended."

When David died in 2019, his cousins approached Debbie, wanting to make a gift in his honor. Given the family's past support of education, theater and students in general, Debbie asked them to establish a foundation at Lynn University, and to name the drama department as the benefactor. The meaningful result is the \$300,000 Andreas Family Endowment.

Speaking of the drama department, Debbie said, "I know that it will be helpful for them to have an injection of funds from the endowment each year that they can use in a special, unplanned way. I hope it broadens the scope of what the department can do—which will benefit all the students, as well as those of us who get to attend the performances. I know that David would be pleased."

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# Remembering Bobby Campbell

Lynn mourns one of its biggest fans.

This February, Lynn University said goodbye to a cherished friend and supporter, renowned footwear industry veteran and philanthropist Robert "Bobby" Campbell, who passed away at age 82. President Kevin M. Ross joined the Boca Raton community in mourning Campbell's passing, saying, "We will be forever grateful for his contributions to our campus and students."

Campbell's story was a true Horatio Alger tale. Born into modest means, he lived with his mother and three sisters in the attic of his grandmother's house and worked in his grandfather's bakery. As a teenager, he began working part-time at Kinney Shoes and rose rapidly through the company ranks. By 1975 he founded his own company, BBC International, which grew to become a world leader in children's and athletic footwear design and sourcing.

In 1988, Campbell moved BBC's headquarters to Boca Raton and quickly became a strong supporter of many community institutions, including Lynn.

Campbell's generosity was manifest in gifts such as [Bobby Campbell Stadium](#), home to the Fighting Knights soccer and lacrosse teams. "Bobby didn't attend college, but he often called Lynn his alma mater," said Senior Vice President for Development and Administration Gregory J. Malfitano '73, '75. "When he saw his name in lights here, he was incredibly moved. He said it would have made his mother proud."

Campbell also supported scholarships for Lynn students studying at American College Dublin. And he provided a gathering space for the entire campus community: the [Bobby Campbell Dining Commons](#) in the Christine E. Lynn University Center. Describing the gift, he said, "My love for the school and my respect for the people who run it made me want to contribute. I just think it's a great university."

"Bobby was a high-energy, fun-loving, caring person who loved students and student-athletes," concluded Malfitano. "He was a giant success story and a great human being. He was a very special guy."

"He was a giant success story and a great human being. He was a very special guy."

**Gregory J. Malfitano**

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# Eric Varner's family honors his legacy

Dr. Eric Van der Veer Varner, associate professor of bassoon in the Lynn University [Conservatory of Music](#), was a world-class musician and mentor. When he passed away last year, he left behind a benevolent legacy.

"Eric was a true Renaissance man," said his father, Carson Varner. "He had a brain for business and could play many instruments." He was also exceptionally charitable.

His altruism touched students like Fabiola Hoyo, class of '23, to whom he loaned his coveted Heckel bassoon. "He was a very supportive person," said Hoyo. "To play an amazing instrument from your professor for four years ... is like a dream."

To emulate their son's generosity, the Varner family gifted Lynn his reed-making equipment and sheet music. "Through Eric, we learned that reed-making is crucial for aspiring bassoonists," said Carson Varner. The intricate process of shaping materials produces the vibrational sounds synonymous with a bassoon.

Thanks to the family's donation, students will continue to pursue their passion while honoring a beloved professor.



Dr. Eric Van der Veer Varner

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# Dorothy Polayes funds new endowed scholarship

Dorothy Polayes is an artist, music lover and philanthropist. She has an eye for detail and a heart for helping. She paints with soft pastels while listening to Gershwin. Her work, ranging from still lifes to portraits, has been featured in both solo and group shows.

As a young woman, at her family's urging, Mrs. Polayes attended Vassar College and earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics. Twenty-five years later, she earned a master's degree in art education from Southern Connecticut State College. She landed a position at the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University and began teaching paleontology, architecture and more. Her career allowed her to dive deeply into the art world.

"I love the arts," Mrs. Polayes said, "not just visual arts, but performing arts, too."

Mrs. Polayes' passion makes her a true advocate. She donates to various local institutions, including the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, where she and her late husband, Benjamin, also volunteered.

For the Lynn University Conservatory of Music, Mrs. Polayes recently announced a substantial new gift: the Dorothy Polayes Endowed Scholarship. This fund will permanently ensure the best young artists have the opportunity to learn at Lynn and bring musical performances to the community.

Mrs. Polayes feels privileged to make a difference in the lives of Lynn's musicians and audiences. "I learned from my family that if you have the means to give, you should," she said. "It's important to do what you can to help others."

"I learned from my family that if you have the means to give, you should."

**Dorothy Polayes**

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# Dan Mathews '90 thanks Lynn with diverse contributions

Dan Mathews '90 makes an impact on the lives of many. During the day, he's a well-respected lawyer and municipal judge near Syracuse, New York. In the evening and on weekends, he's the owner of a lucrative microbrewery, which he built in 2012.

Mathews attributes his expanding success and responsibilities to the bachelor's degree in business and administration he earned from the College of Boca Raton (Lynn University's previous moniker). "My professors prepared me for business ownership," Mathews said. "I learned how to manage a business and people."

Mathews is one of Lynn's biggest cheerleaders. He regularly attends Lynn's annual Alumni Weekend and stays in touch with classmates and professors.

That connection is the reason why he supports the university. "I feel a sense of community with Lynn," Mathews said. "It's important for me to give back to the place that helped me get started."

Mathews' support includes contributions to capital gifts, immediate needs, athletics and much more. His generosity helps fund campus enhancements like the Christine E. Lynn University Center—a favorite hangout and study spot for students like Mathews' son Cole, class of 2023, who is now earning his own business degree.

"It's important for me to give back to the place that helped me get started."

**Dan Mathews**

With the intent to thank the university and "give back big," Mathews recently named Lynn on his life insurance policy. Establishing the benefit was something "important for me to do as an alumnus," he said.

"Dan has made diverse contributions to Lynn," said Senior Vice President for Development and Administration Gregory J. Malfitano '73, '75. "His latest gift is an impactful and distinct way to make a difference."

For Mathews, the life insurance benefit is a way to recognize Lynn for the role it played in his success. He suggested, "Give back however you can to support your alma mater and its future students."

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