Building a better world with our students.

Christine E. Lynn gives largest gift in university history

Lynn dedicates Perper field

Circle of flags named in honor of Yvonne S. Boice
I’ll never forget the first time I stepped on Lynn University grounds. I had been on the job as society editor of the Boca Raton News for only a few weeks when I was invited to a luncheon in The Christine Room (since revamped as Christine’s, a market-fresh bistro).

As I got out of my car, I thought, “Wow! What a gorgeous campus!” It was that feel-good sensation of being surrounded by beauty and welcomed by a loop of international flags that made me think that this place is special. Six years later I thought, “Wow! I work here now!”

After 11 years at Lynn, I’m retiring to pursue the next phase of my life. For that reason, I’m considering this Winter 2016 issue of LynnSight to be my “swan song.” Please indulge me a few parting words.

During my tenure as editor, we’ve published 30 issues of this philanthropy newsletter. We’ve had plenty of good news to share when it comes to our benefactors, their gifts and the impact those gifts have on our students, faculty and the campus. I’ve learned that the reasons people give to Lynn are as varied and diverse as our donors. In these pages, you’ll read how an arts lover’s passion for music prompted her to establish an endowment for piano students; how sports enthusiasts provide for comfortable, collaborative spaces befitting our champion student athletes; how a world traveler creates an endowment for the maintenance of one of the Lynn campus signatures—the circle of international flags; and why an educator makes annual gifts to help students with learning challenges. With donor support, we dedicated a new intramural field as well as a non-denominational spiritual center last fall.

All varied and diverse, yes, but one thing our donors have in common: They recognize the power their gifts have in taking Lynn to the next level.

The physical transformation that has taken place on campus is nothing short of astounding. Since 2009, five new buildings have been constructed and two major projects (Remembrance Plaza and two new entrances) were completed—all enhancing students’ living and learning environments.

And speaking of construction … one of the most exciting things to happen recently is the announcement of a $15 million challenge grant by Christine E. Lynn, the university’s namesake and chair of the board of trustees, to build a much-needed university center at the heart of campus.

Of course, none of this could have been possible without the generosity of those who share in Lynn’s mission to provide a quality education that prepares students for success in this world; and vision to be recognized as one of the most innovative, international and individualized small universities in our nation.

On behalf of the students, faculty and staff of Lynn University, I thank our beloved donors from the bottom of our collective heart. You are our heroes.

As an interested neighbor and former employee, I will watch Lynn with great pride and affection as it continues to grow its active, vibrant campus—a great asset to our community.

See you at the beach!

Joyce Shelfo
Communications Manager
Office of Marketing and Communication

Christine E. Lynn gives largest gift in university history

President Kevin M. Ross’ surprise announcement at the annual State of the University address last October received a standing ovation: Lynn had just received the largest gift in its history to construct a much-needed university center at the heart of campus.
Christine E. Lynn, chair of the board of trustees of Lynn University, and one of the country’s leading philanthropists, has given $15 million for the construction of the Christine E. Lynn University Center.

This gift empowers the university to accomplish its Lynn 2020 strategic objectives two years early, and propels total fundraising in support of the master plan in the last 10 years to more than $100 million.

Mrs. Lynn’s leadership gift provides other visionary individuals an opportunity to participate in this transformational project. Her gift will match every dollar donated up to $15 million.

By supporting this critical addition to the campus, donors who step forward to meet the match not only demonstrate their commitment to Lynn University, they also honor Mrs. Lynn.

A native of Norway, Christine E. Lynn was trained as a registered and surgical nurse in Oslo. In 1979, on a Norwegian cruise ship working as a head nurse, she met Boca Raton insurance magnate Eugene M. Lynn. They married in 1980, and she began longtime residency in Boca Raton.

Eugene Lynn’s friendship with the university and then-President Donald E. Ross started back in 1974. He received an honorary degree in 1978 and served on Lynn’s board of trustees from 1989 until his death in 1999.

In 1991, the College of Boca Raton was renamed Lynn University in honor of Eugene and Christine’s many years of generous support. That same year, Mrs. Lynn received an honorary degree.

The Lynns’ generosity has been responsible for the construction of several major buildings on the Lynn campus, including the College of International Communication, which opened in 1998; the Eugene M. and Christine E. Lynn Library; the E.M. Lynn Residence Center; and several other facilities across campus.

Mrs. Lynn has supported numerous healthcare and community organizations and has been recognized with various honors and awards including the Rotary International Outstanding Philanthropic Award for Leadership and its Paul Harris Fellow Award; The Signature of Life from The Wellness Community; admission to the Gables Society of the University of Miami; and the National Jewish Medical and Research Center Humanitarian Award.

In 2013, she received the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which pays homage to the immigrant experience as well as for individual achievement. It is given to a distinguished American citizen who exemplifies a life dedicated to community service, and who makes a better world for all of us. Past medalists include six U.S. presidents, Nobel Prize winners and leaders of industry, education, the arts, sports and government, along with everyday Americans who have made freedom and compassion part of their lives’ work.

In addition to being the chair of the Lynn University Board of Trustees, Christine E. Lynn serves as chair of the board of Lynn Insurance Group and the Boca Raton Regional Hospital Board of Trustees.
Lynn dedicates Perper field

Students, faculty and staff gathered to dedicate the new Mary Ann and Harold Perper Intramural Field during a special ceremony on Oct. 1, 2015.

This gift is one of many by Mary Ann and the late Harold Perper that has made an impact on the quality of campus life over the past 25 years.

Mrs. Perper was honored with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and speeches by President Kevin M. Ross and students Evan Hargrove, class of ’17, and Jordyn Turner, class of ’16.

“The Perpers’ generosity impacts every student who steps foot on our campus, and it’s an honor to have their name on our intramural field,” said Ross. “We are grateful for Mary Ann’s continued and extraordinary commitment to enhancing students’ lives on campus.”

“The Perpers’ generosity impacts every student who steps foot on our campus, and it’s an honor to have their name on our intramural field.” — President Kevin M. Ross

The new intramural field features upgrades such as a scoreboard and lights that allow Lynn’s Fighting Knights and club sports teams to practice and compete day and night.

Mrs. Perper’s generous gift supports the pursuit of master plan Lynn 2020, which includes building new residence halls in the space the former intramural field occupied.

The soon-to-be-built Mary Ann and Harold Residence Center also supports that university initiative.

Other gifts the Perpers have given to the Lynn community include:

- Mary Ann and Harold Perper Grandstands at Bobby Campbell Stadium
- Perper Tennis Complex
- Mary Ann and Harold Perper Orchestra and Mezzanine Seating in the Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center
- Mary and Harold Perper Plaza
- Perper Mailroom
- Harold and Mary Perper Testing Center in the Institute for Achievement and Learning
- Perper Coffee House
- Perper Communication Center
- Scholarships and annual gifts

Players from the women’s soccer team and Fighting Knights mascot Lance present Mary Ann Perper with flowers as a gesture of appreciation for the campus’ new intramural field.
Snyder Sanctuary serves campus’ spiritual needs

A recent survey conducted at Lynn noted that 75 percent of incoming students identify themselves as spiritual.

“Regardless of our individual religious beliefs, we all have a sense of spirituality that affects us. [The Snyder Sanctuary] is a place of wonder and awe and fosters interchange and understanding of those shared ideas and feelings of spirituality and celebration of our diversity,” says Herbert Newman.

The origin of the design of the sanctuary can be found in the growth patterns of animals and plants. This hidden geometry of nature is related to the mathematical sequence of Fibonacci numbers—sometimes called nature’s numbering system—seen in everything from the spiral shapes of seashells and leaf and petal arrangements in plants to galaxies and hurricanes.

Lynn dedicated the magnificent Snyder Sanctuary on Nov. 12, 2015. This sacred place is the creation of Newman Architects, the same firm that designed the campus’ Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wald Performing Arts Center and the Eugene M. and Christine E. Lynn Library.

“The walls are a metaphor for how we need to rely on one another for support. Although each wall is facing a different direction, joined together they and we create a sense of unity and shared purpose of community. Light enters through glass openings between the walls. The light changes as the sun moves across the sky between sunrise and sunset. The triangular glass is translucent at the ground in part to restrict views of the sanctuary’s setting, focusing attention within the space. The glass walls become transparent as they rise to the ceiling, allowing views of the outside trees and sky, rooting the experience of the sanctuary in time and space.”

—Herbert Newman, architect

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One can’t help but notice the impressive ring of flags that greets visitors, students and staff as they enter Lynn’s beautiful campus every day. This powerful symbol of the university’s international character, originally conceived by Yvonne S. Boice, is now named in her honor.

Boice, a renowned philanthropist and world traveler, suggested the idea of displaying the flags—representing Lynn’s global student body and their more than 100 nations—during a planning meeting for Lynn’s 40th anniversary in 2002. She has now created an endowment to provide for the ongoing maintenance of the Yvonne S. Boice Circle of Flags, a campus icon that was broadcast internationally during the final presidential debate held on campus in 2012.

“The flags are a glorious emblem of the university’s global diversity while also being a unifying symbol for the sharing of cultural experiences,” says Boice. “Having traveled to 150 countries and visited all seven continents, I understand the importance of fostering cultural awareness in our youth, and I am honored that the Yvonne S. Boice Circle of Flags will continue to represent that mission for years to come.”

“As the former owner of Fugazy International Travel in Boca Raton, Yvonne Boice appreciates the personal and intellectual enrichment that comes with international travel. In 2004 she created the Lynn University Boice Scholarship to enable deserving students in the College of Business and Management to participate in life-changing study abroad experiences.

As a philanthropist, Boice is a champion of arts, culture, education and women’s rights initiatives. She is currently the chair for the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the National Endowment of the Humanities, the chair of the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) at Palm Beach State College and chair emeritus for the Palm Beach International Film Festival.

Circle of flags named in honor of Yvonne S. Boice

As a businesswoman, she ran two very successful enterprises in Boca Raton: The Shoppes at Village Pointe and Fugazy International Travel. During her many years at the helm of these companies, she made it her vocation to mentor women in business, both here and abroad.

In recent years, Boice was selected to represent the U.S. at four high-profile women’s international business conferences. She was chosen as one of six delegates to the Middle East and North African Women’s Conference held in Abu Dhabi, and was appointed to attend the Global Summit of Women in Berlin and Hanoi. She also was appointed a delegate to educate women to become entrepreneurs in Bolivia, South America.

She has been honored with many prestigious awards for her tireless devotion to numerous important causes, and currently serves as a board member on the Trust of the National Endowment of the Humanities.

She is married to attorney Al Zucaro, founder of World Trade Center Palm Beach. Her daughter, Lauren, is a practicing attorney living in the Boston area with husband Randall Knowles Smith, world-renowned astrophysicist.

Yvonne S. Boice has been a consistent and loyal friend to Lynn. Over the years, she has given her expertise and financial support for important causes across campus:

- As the Excalibur Society’s Scholarship Committee chair, she devised a highly effective evaluation system for awarding the fundraising group’s scholarships.
- She chaired the Lynn University gala, “TravelLYNN to Tasmania: A Journey Down Under,” in 2003; and as a member of the university’s board of overseers, she provided expert leadership and counsel.
- Her leadership gift named the Yvonne S. Boice Box Office in the campus’ state-of-the-art Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wald Performing Arts Center.

“This is an especially fitting gift because this representation of our diversity was her concept. Lynn continues to be recognized as one of the most international schools by U.S. News & World Report, and we are so grateful to have Yvonne honor our global spirit in such a meaningful way.”

—President Kevin M. Ross

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Technology helps students with learning differences

“Students, coaches and tutors of the Institute for Achievement and Learning have benefited from the iPad initiative,” says Shaun Exsteen, executive director of IAL. “Coaches have been able to have coaching sessions via FaceTime. The many embedded assistive technological features—such as being able to listen to their books, record lectures while taking notes, translate speech to text—all allow our students to have learning tools available to them at all times and not just within the IAL center.”

Music lover endows piano scholarship

Deiray Beach resident Nettie Birnbach loves all the arts. That’s lucky for Lynn as she has recently established the Nettie Birnbach Endowed Scholarship for Piano Education—the first named scholarship for piano students.

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“I’ve always loved the arts. Music has been so important to my life since I was a young teenager.”

Nettie Birnbach, who holds a doctorate in education, is a registered nurse and a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. She was described as a “Renaissance woman” by those who nominated her for induction into the American Nurses Association Hall of Fame in 2010.

As a student at Kings County Hospital School of Nursing in Brooklyn, New York, she enrolled in the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, a program established in 1943 by order of U.S. Congress to alleviate the critical shortage of nurses during World War II. The student nurses pledged to serve in civilian, military or federal government services.

Throughout her career, Birnbach made many contributions as a practitioner, educator, researcher and extraordinary volunteer with a great vision for nursing.

She is the proud mother of three daughters, who have given her six grandchildren and six great grandchildren.
The Lynn community is saddened by the loss of Dr. J. Donald Wargo, a Lynn University board of trustees member from 1987–2008, who passed away on Sept. 20, 2015.

Born in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Wargo attended preparatory school at Valley Forge Military Academy and Allegheny College. After graduate study in cardiovascular physiology at the University of Minnesota, he received his M.D. from Temple University School of Medicine.

Wargo moved to Miami, Florida, in 1955 to complete an internship and residency, and specialty training in obstetrics and gynecology at Jackson Memorial Hospital. He established an OBGYN practice in 1959 with offices in Boca Raton and Delray Beach, retiring in 1994. He served his country in the U.S. Army Medical Corps as chief of obstetrics and gynecology at the American Hospital in Paris, France.

Wargo was one of the 25 founding members of the medical staff of Boca Raton Regional Hospital, of which he was president from 1968–1971 and chief of surgery from 1975–1977. He served on the hospital’s board of trustees from 1972–1997.

"Don’s leadership and wise counsel served us for many years," says Lynn President Kevin M. Ross. "We deeply appreciate how he helped shape our university into what it is today."

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Hospitality alum ‘pays it forward’

A native of Caracas, Venezuela, Ronald Harrar graduated from Lynn with a B.S. in business administration in 2001. He went on to receive a master’s degree in hospitality management from New York University in 2002.

While a student at Lynn, Harrar spent a semester in Ireland at American College Dublin. “That’s where I got interested in the hospitality industry. We toured all the best hotels and castles in Ireland. It was a great experience.”

Harrar collects and sells contemporary pieces by such art-world giants as Kusama, Fontana and Calder—with works ranging from paintings and sculptures to photography.

His loft, in the Chelsea section of New York City, houses works that sell for hundreds to millions of dollars. The most expensive piece he has sold is by Italian sculptor Lucio Fontana, the first European artist to truly promote “spatialism” and the idea of performance art.

Harrar’s fondest memory of his time at Lynn? “… That it was always on the cutting edge of new technology. Back in 1998, we didn’t have the technology that we do today. eBay was just being created … nobody really knew what it was. We’d have classes on how to sell an item over the Internet, but there were no digital cameras and eBay couldn’t upload the photos. Everything was so complicated. But I did actually sell an item. The professors brought the current technology into the education.”

Harrar is a member of the Lynn University Leadership Society, and he was recently invited to join the President’s Alumni Advisory Council—a hand-selected, prestigious group of alumni leaders who provide President Kevin M. Ross with feedback and ideas for the university.

Residents of New York City, Harrar and wife Valery have a 7-year-old son, Yves, and 5-year-old twin daughters, Clara Alessia and Stephania.

All styles of giving

Ronald Harrar ’01

Ronald Harrar has chosen to “pay it forward” with other alumni to endow a scholarship for first-year students.