

## **A Meaningful Way to Honor Our Parents**

Wendy Irving, Esq.  
Assistant Vice President for Planned Giving  
University at Buffalo  
irving@buffalo.edu

With the arrival of spring, it's hard to believe that Mother's Day and Father's Day are just around the corner. For those who are fortunate enough to still have our parents with us, it's a time to celebrate. For those who have lost our loved ones, it's a time to reflect on the good times, and reminisce.

Regardless of how you plan to spend the upcoming occasions – and who you plan to spend them with – allow me to propose an idea...

Why not mark the upcoming occasion, by giving back, and honoring or memorializing a parent or someone else you love? I guarantee that this will have special meaning to you, to the individual(s) who you are recognizing, and to others as well. And best of all, your gift won't end up buried in a closet in a month!

Whether it's your alma mater, your church, or the local food pantry, there are many organizations – and people who could use your help. More and more individuals are making charitable donations to organizations that they care about, while honoring loved ones at the same time.

As someone who has worked in the planned giving arena for a number of years, I have personally seen the satisfaction and tremendous joy that results when a charitable bequest is made in honor of family and friends. This truly is a method of giving has impact beyond just the donor and the charity involved.

One such example that comes to mind is a donor, who recently established a named scholarship in honor of his parents. He parlayed his fond memories of attending UB athletic events as a child with his dad, into a gift that will benefit students within the athletics department for years to come. While a portion of the gift is being funded through his annual donations, the bulk of the contribution will be received through a charitable bequest.

While this gift certainly has heartfelt meaning to the donor, his parents were tickled at the fact that he established a scholarship in their names. After all, they had given him so much over the years, and now he's given them some "payback" for their kindness, which will in turn help generations of needy students for years to come. Truly a gift that keeps on giving!

Of course, the opportunities to make tribute gifts are virtually limitless. The number of worthy charitable groups in Western New York alone is mind-boggling. What causes have special meaning to you and your loved ones? If disease has impacted your family, then consider supporting an organization that treats that disease. If faith has played a pivotal role in your family, then consider giving back to your church in this special way. If education has provided opportunities that you never thought were imaginable, consider supporting one of the many fine educational institutions in the region.

With Mother's Day and Father's Day rapidly approaching, please consider this unique and significant way to make a difference in the lives of the people and organizations you care about.