Chairman’s Letter / Spring 2009

Dear Friends -

As we enter the final few weeks of the 2008-2009 academic year at the University of Georgia, I want to take this opportunity to offer my thanks to the administration, the deans, the professors and staff that have done such an outstanding job in educating the young people that are the future of our state and nation. Your work has been, and continues to be, exemplary.

To our donors, I wish to express my sincerest thanks for your unwavering support. The University of Georgia Foundation is proud to be the organization through which you have funded more than 150 chairs and professorships, hundreds of scholarships and the spectacular study abroad facilities in Great Britain and Costa Rica that enhance the learning experiences for our top scholars.

To the students who are earning degrees in May and planning additional studies or starting down their chosen career paths, congratulations on your accomplishments and best wishes in your future endeavors.

Double award for Muktha Natrajan continues proud family tradition

It has been a very good semester for UGA student and scholar Muktha Natrajan, from Martinez, Georgia. Not only was she awarded a mid-term Foundation Fellowship, but she also earned one of academia’s most prestigious honors when she was named as winner of a Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship.

Muktha is studying in a combined bachelor’s/master’s program in which she is working toward a BS in genetics, and a master of public health in environmental science.

Muktha’s Goldwater Scholarship not only continues a tradition for Foundation Fellows, but also a family tradition. Her sister Nithya, who is also a Foundation Fellow, was a Goldwater recipient in 2007 and this year’s honor marks the fifteenth consecutive year in which a University of Georgia honors student has won a Goldwater Scholarship.

Trustee Steve Smith and family featured in Atlanta Business Chronicle

I hope you had a chance to see the April 3-9 Atlanta Business Chronicle. Our very own Steve Smith, his beautiful wife Debra and their son Steven, Jr. were featured in their “People in the News” section. The Smiths have a very full and ambitious schedule.

Steve, who is chairman of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau – and a trustee of the UGA Foundation – somehow finds time to study for his MBA, which he is working toward in the Terry College.

Debra Smith and family in the April 3 Atlanta Business Chronicle

Steve Smith and family hold a Ph.D. in counseling from Georgia State, is the head counselor at Woodward Academy Middle School in College Park in addition to her duties as a full-time mom. The Smith’s are truly wonderful folks and we are so pleased to have them as part of our family at the University of Georgia Foundation!
Mark Runco named new E. Paul Torrance Professor

Mark A. Runco, a nationally-recognized scholar on creativity, has been named as the new E. Paul Torrance Professor of Creative Studies and Gifted Education in the College of Education. Runco will serve as senior scholar for UGA’s Gifted and Creative Education Program as well as executive director of UGA’s Torrance Center for Creativity and Talent Development.

“We are pleased to have Dr. Runco join us. He is a senior scholar with an international reputation in creativity, talent identification and development research, with an ability to provide leadership in integrating creativity research across disciplines at UGA,” said Dean of Education Andy Horne.

The National Association for Gifted Children honored Runco with the Early Scholar Award in 1993 and the E. Paul Torrance Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. He has been editor of the Creativity Research Journal since 1988.

The late Professor Torrance was one of the most published faculty members in UGA’s history, and known as the “Father of Creativity” for his nearly 60 years of research that became the framework for the field of gifted education. The professorship bearing his name is funded through an endowment managed by the University of Georgia Foundation.

Marcus Hines awarded mid-term Foundation Fellowship

Marcus Hines from Albany, who has been a Ramsey Honors Scholar since arriving in Athens in the fall of 2007, was awarded a mid-term Foundation Fellowship. Marcus is on track to graduate in 2011 and is double-majoring in microbiology and cellular biology.

“I have known Marcus since he arrived at UGA. He is very intelligent and highly motivated, and cares deeply about bettering society through scholarship and service,” said David Williams, director of the Honors Program and Foundation Fellowship.

Caitlin McLaughlin presents original research findings at undergraduate symposium

Foundation Fellow Caitlin McLaughlin, class of 2009, was chosen to present at the annual spring symposium sponsored by the Honors Program’s Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) on April 6.

Caitlin, who is double majoring in political science and history, and plans a career in law, presented her original research on why the framers of the Constitution did not include term limits.

The CURO symposium was begun in 2000 to encourage greater research by undergraduates with guidance and mentoring from top faculty.

The University of Georgia Foundation accepts and manages gifts to the university according to donor wishes. For more information, please call (706) 542-6677 or visit the foundation’s Web site at www.ugafoundation.org.