Performing Miracles

As far back as she can remember, Polly Updegraff Champ ’61 of Cromwell, Conn., has been a performer. Throughout her colorful and storied life, these eclectic performances have taken place in high school gymnasiums, community and college theaters, classrooms, nightclubs, churches, soccer and baseball fields, and tennis courts. “I loved to dance, sing, act, and play sports,” says Polly. “So, I just did them all.”

At Mary Washington, Polly majored in dramatic arts and speech, held leadership roles in numerous arts organizations, and participated in community theater for children. While performing was in her blood, Polly says she came from a practical family. That practicality gene led her to also pursue and receive certification in secondary education.

After graduation, Polly moved to California. She performed in plays, experimented with comedy in a local nightclub, began teaching high school drama and modern dance, and enrolled in the UCLA theater program.

In 1964, she returned to Connecticut and applied her theater expertise and finely honed listening skills to the field of social work. “I had a few behavior issues when I was growing up,” says Polly. “Thanks to inspirational teachers, I was able to refocus my energies into drama and later into a YWCA counseling training program.”
Get a Head Start on the Year End (continued from page 1)

**Donor Advised Fund (DAF)**
Make a tax-deductible gift to a DAF. This gives you the ability to direct grants to your favorite charities this year and in the future.

**Zero-Tax Gift and Sale**
If you are planning to sell an investment or property, use part of it to make a charitable gift. You can avoid paying capital gains tax on the entire sale and possibly receive cash back.

**Provide for Your Children**
Use almost any asset you own to establish a charitable remainder trust so your children receive income for life. You receive tax advantages (plus possible estate tax benefits), while supporting charitable organizations like UMW.

If you would like further information about any of these end-of-year planning strategies, please contact the UMW Office of Gift Planning. We can help create a plan that meets your needs and goals.

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**OTHER TAX-SAVING TIPS AND HINTS**

*MAKE YOUR JANUARY MORTGAGE PAYMENT IN DECEMBER.*

*DEFER INCOME OR A YEAR-END BONUS UNTIL NEXT YEAR.*

*SELL SOME STOCK FOR A LOSS AND REBALANCE YOUR PORTFOLIO TO OFFSET ANY CAPITAL GAINS.*

*MAKE EARLY PAYMENTS TO OPTIMIZE ANY DEDUCTIBLE EXPENSES.*

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**Performing Miracles (continued from page 1)**

Those experiences translated well into professional positions with the Girl Scouts and throughout her 33-year career with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. “I’ve always felt kids of all ages should have someone pulling for them,” says Polly.

Her philosophy of caring for and helping young people – plus memories of her own struggles – led Polly to establish a need-based scholarship at Mary Washington. “Money was tight at home,” says Polly. “My Aunt Weezie lived in Richmond and knew Dr. Simpson, so that’s how I ended up at Mary Washington. I worked to pay my expenses, and my parents sacrificed a lot to cover my tuition. Then, my dad lost his job. Miraculously, an anonymous donor and other family and friends provided funds so I could complete my education.”

To celebrate her 40th reunion in 2001, she established the **Polly Updegraff Champ ’61 Scholarship** in honor of her parents, Rolland Ruch and Virginia Blasingame Updegraff; her aunt and uncle, Eloise Blasingame and Richard Florence; her junior high school guidance counselor, Mary Lou Aiken; and that anonymous donor.

Polly’s generosity and nostalgic feelings for Mary Washington continue. She still supports the **Claudia Read Scholarship** and the **Fund for Mary Washington**, and she has made plans in her estate to provide additional funds for her scholarship endowment.

In June, Polly attended her 55th reunion and the groundbreaking ceremony for the amphitheatre restoration. “Being back there and remembering what it was like when I was a student was so inspirational,” she says. “I decided on the spot to write a check equal to my class year so it could be matched by another $1,961 in the Amphitheatre Challenge.”

Polly and her husband, Dan, are enjoying their retirement. She remains involved in theater, opera, and church near their homes in Connecticut and Florida, and she continues to work as a professional dresser. “I’ve helped dress celebrities and professionals in Broadway touring shows, operas, rock shows, and even wrestling,” she says. “That’s one thing about a liberal arts education from Mary Washington. It provides you with a strong background so you can be flexible and adapt to challenges and opportunities at different times in your life.”

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From the 1961 Battlefield, Polly Updegraff Champ ’61 and Debby Klein

*PAGE 2* HERITAGE FALL/WINTER 2016
The Amphitheatre Challenge

Fundraising and planning are still in progress for the restoration of Mary Washington’s historic amphitheatre. With a $3 million goal, the University needs to secure about $400,000 more to make this project a reality.

The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation in Richmond, Virginia, recently offered a $125,000 grant to support the restoration, but it comes with a challenge. To “unlock” the special grant, UMW alumni, parents, and friends must make NEW gifts to the Amphitheatre Challenge totaling at least $125,000 by May 1, 2017.

Visit giving.umw.edu/achallenge to learn more about restoration plans and how you can help meet the challenge for this cherished landmark.
Understanding IRA Required Minimum Distribution

You may appreciate the annual income from your required minimum distribution (RMD). However, as time goes by, higher withdrawal requirements actually may push you into a higher tax bracket.

Late last year, Congress made the IRA charitable rollover permanent. The rollover law allows taxpayers who are required to withdraw money from their IRAs to give directly to charitable organizations. Because the rollover counts against your required minimum distribution, making an IRA rollover gift to an organization like the University of Mary Washington could help reduce your income and taxes.

The IRA rollover is a great way for you to support your favorite causes. While you won’t receive an income tax deduction for a rollover gift, you also will not pay any income tax on the transfer.

The transfer works only for IRAs, and not other retirement accounts. You may be able to roll over your 401(k) or other plan into an IRA and take advantage of this strategy. Check with your tax advisor or contact the UMW Office of Gift Planning to learn more about how you can use your RMD to support good causes while lowering your taxes.

Rollover Requirements

* You must be age 70½ or older.
* You must transfer money directly from your IRA to a qualified charity.
* You can give annually up to $100,000 from your IRA.

On the evening of August 28, 2016, hundreds of UMW students attended the traditional Eagle Gathering in Ball Circle. President Troy Paino led the group in this special ceremony to kick off the 2016-2017 academic year.
In May 2016, Claire J. Ashur of Vienna, Va., graduated Summa Cum Laude with a bachelor of arts degree in music, election to Phi Beta Kappa and Kappa Delta Pi, and multiple student awards. She also performed as vocalist with the UMW Jazz Band and – during her junior and senior years – was the proud recipient of the June Davis McCormick ’49 Scholarship for vocal performance. Currently pursuing a UMW master’s degree in special education, Claire now is the NEW recipient of the Anne Ross Parks ’46 and Dolores May Ross ’49 Teachers Scholarship.

While both scholarships were created by Heritage Society members and alumnae from the Class of 1949, a connection also exists in the way Claire intends to use her musical talents and interest in special education. “After graduating with my master’s degree, I hope to teach high school students with autism or multiple disabilities,” said Claire. “I can use my singing in working with students and, in my spare time, I plan to start my own jazz combo and perform at local venues.”

A transplanted Virginian now living in St. Louis, Mo., June Davis McCormick received letters and video links showcasing Claire’s vocal ability and her inspirational service work. The geographic distance, however, kept the two from meeting in person. Fortunately, June’s classmate and good friend Dolores “Dee” Ross of Kilmarnock, Va., faithfully attended UMW’s annual Heritage Society and Donor Appreciation Luncheons to meet recipients of the Ross scholarships; so, as she had done in previous years, Dee acted on June’s behalf to meet Claire and pose for photos.

“What a lovely surprise arrived in my mailbox today,” June wrote to the UMW Advancement staff. “This is a welcome picture of dear Dee meeting with my current recipient, certainly a cute Claire. I really appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending it.”

In May, the two ’49ers learned that Claire had been awarded the Ross scholarship for teachers for the 2016-2017 academic year. Dee, a lifelong educator, was thrilled. “Well, Claire had an undergraduate scholarship from one member of the Class of ’49, and now she can finish her master’s degree with mine. Isn’t that just dandy?”

Regrettably, Dee passed away this past summer, but the legacy of the Fabulous Forty-Niners continues as Claire – and students for generations yet to come – continue to accomplish good deeds and great works at Mary Washington and beyond.

### Spotlight on Claire

In addition to the honors noted above, Claire also received:

- the **Justin Steinberg Scholarship** established by Heritage Society members Arthur and Donna Steinberg;
- the **Prince Woodard Outstanding Leader Award** for a graduating senior who, throughout his or her UMW career, has made a substantial impact while exemplifying the values of honor, leadership and service;
- the **Anne and Sidney Hamer Music Award** (also established by Heritage Society members) for the highest GPA in the music department’s graduating class;
- the UMW award for outstanding overall achievement in a club or organization for her work with the Best Buddies program; and
- the **Clara Boyd Wheeler Award** for a graduating senior who exemplifies grace, a spirit of service, and the ability to change lives.
Heritage Society Recognition

There are many ways to plan your estate so that your legacy continues in a manner that pays tribute to you and your loved ones, while supporting the next generation of students at Mary Washington. The UMW Heritage Society has more than 500 members. If you have already made arrangements to include Mary Washington in your will or through other estate plans, please contact the Office of Gift Planning and join the Heritage Society today.