

SPRING
2025

Gift Planning

C O N N E C T I O N S

INSPIRING AND CREATING A LASTING IMPACT FOR MARY WASHINGTON'S FUTURE

Formula for Success

Chemistry scholarship proves to be a defining element in UMW senior's college career



Alex Bindon '25 felt a rush when he received his Experimental Methods exam. His task? Identify a chemical compound by comparing charts, graphs, and spectra from lab instruments.

"It turned out to be glucose," said Alex, who discovered a passion for analytical chemistry at the University of Mary Washington. "It feels like I'm a detective in an investigation."

Alex found a fitting formula at UMW, where he earned the Jacqueline C. Kane Scholarship in Chemistry. It was an honor, he said, to receive the award established by the late Irene Piscopo Rodgers '59 in memory of a chemist friend who passed away in 2014.

"It was tremendously helpful," said Alex, who has worked hard at Mary Washington and has always appreciated guidance from faculty members. When he struggled with organic chemistry his first semester, he reached out to Professor Janet Asper.

"She said that when fighter pilots take off from aircraft carriers, they drop down before they fly up," he said. "Then she encouraged me to read the textbook and apply myself so I can take off without flying into the ocean."



Alex Bindon '25
Photo by Karen Pearlman

The analogy resonated with Alex, who grew up near the world's largest naval base in Norfolk, Virginia, and catapulted him to success in college.

His perseverance also helped him land an internship last summer with the Hampton Roads Sanitation District, where he contributed to the purification and treatment of wastewater to keep the bay clean and prevented sewage from entering harbors. After graduation, he hopes to find a job there or at a chemical plant in Richmond, Baltimore, or Pittsburgh.

Alex recently connected with Christy Copper '91, a professor at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, who teaches analytical chemistry. He sought her advice after attending her talk to UMW chemistry majors last fall.

"It's so important to show alumni your true, hard-working self," Alex said. Of Christy and Irene, who established the scholarship that was a catalyst in his college career, he said: "I'm so grateful to those who have supported me so I can take off."

For more information about creating scholarships now and through your estate plans, contact UMW's Office of Gift Planning at advancement@umw.edu or 540-654-1024.

Planning for Peace of Mind

Now is the perfect time to update your will



As you focus on spring cleaning tasks this season, consider making time for perhaps the most important organization project of all: preparing or updating your last will and testament. Approximately 65% of Americans currently do not have a will, and many pass away every day without having created this critical document to give their surviving family and friends peace of mind.

If you were to pass away today, ask yourself who would inherit your property? Who would care for your minor children until they are mature enough to make sound life and financial decisions? What charities would you want to support and carry forward your legacy?

If you were to pass away without a last will and testament – which is legally known as dying “intestate” – major decisions would be left up to your state of residency. This includes appointing guardians for your children and distributing your assets, potentially causing disharmony among your loved ones. If your family has experienced any important life

events since your plan was last updated – such as marriages, divorces, births, deaths, or changes in financial situations – now is the perfect time to make adjustments.

There are significant incentives to clearly outlining your personal wishes, especially regarding child custody, distribution of real estate or assets, planned charitable giving, and passing on your values. A carefully prepared will can also help reduce expenses, estate taxes, and taxes on retirement plans, while minimizing conflicts relating to settling your estate.

You can prepare your will using CresWill, a free, online will-planning tool that guides you through easy-to-understand prompts. Create a valid will that can be downloaded and printed in just minutes, securing your legacy and your family's future this spring.

Visit <https://umw.giftlegacy.com/> or contact UMW's Office of Gift Planning at advancement@umw.edu or 540-654-1024.

Chemistry on the Court

Alumna establishes endowments to support science faculty and women's tennis

When **Christy Copper '91** reflects on her four years at Mary Washington, a few names come to mind.

Ed Hegmann, UMW's longtime athletic director and women's tennis coach, taught her about leadership and accountability. Former President William Anderson and wife Jane rooted on her tennis team through two national championship wins. Professor Emeritus of Chemistry Ray Scott helped her secure a research internship that paved the way for graduate school.

"Mary Washington changed my life," said Christy, who earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry there before pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee. "So many people cared and wanted me to be successful."

A chemistry professor at the United States Naval Academy, she believes it's critical that faculty have access to resources, equipment, and professional development so they can teach today's students. That's why she established the Christine L. Copper '91 Endowment for Chemistry Research and the Athletic Endowment for Women's Tennis at the University of Mary Washington through her estate plan.

"If you can make faculty feel valued and supported, it ensures a better experience for students," said Christy, citing other influential professors she had like Bernard Mahoney and John George. "They were always available to help in the lab."

Hailing from Pennsylvania, Christy and her mother found Mary Washington in a college tennis guide and dropped in on Coach Hegmann while touring schools. His enthusiasm for the tennis program, along with the regional scholarship Christy earned, quickly won her over.



Christy Copper '91

Photo courtesy of Christy Copper

"I wanted to be at a small school like Mary Washington, engaging in hands-on research with my students. I hope I can make as much of an impact on them as my professors did on me."

At Mary Washington, she worked hard on the tennis court, contributing to the team's two national titles, which later secured her a spot in UMW's Athletics Hall of Fame. But she also had fun, making lifelong friends both on the team and with fellow chemistry majors, while

earning top grades and scoring graduate admission to the University of Tennessee.

"In the post-9/11 era, we were looking at poisons in drinks, explosive residue in the environment, and better ways to analyze ink on paper," Christy said.

Now in her third decade at the U.S. Naval Academy, where she also serves as the faculty athletics representative, Christy explores human physiology and biochemistry, helping athletes and officers train and perform better.

"I wanted to be at a small school like Mary Washington, engaging in hands-on research with my students," Christy said. "I hope I can make as much of an impact on them as my professors did on me."

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Opportunities



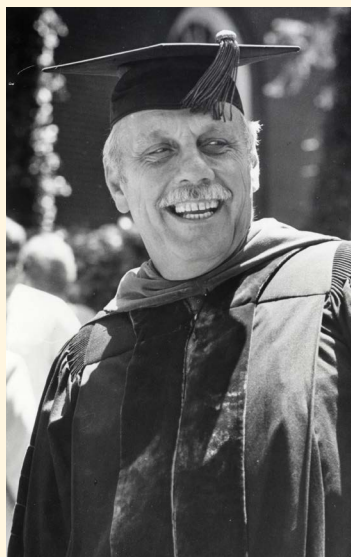
A Message from President Troy D. Paino

Dear Alumni and Friends:

As spring unfolds across our beautiful campus, I'm filled with gratitude for our Mary Washington community. The recent Student Showcase and Scholarship Luncheon was a powerful reminder of how your thoughtful planned giving creates impactful learning opportunities for our students. These opportunities not only enhance their educational experiences on campus, but they continue to provide benefits throughout their lives after Mary Washington.

Soon, we'll celebrate the Class of 2025 at Commencement. I know so many of you still remember the pomp and circumstance of your own ceremonies at this time of year. Whether you graduated from Mary Washington or another institution, I'm sure you were surrounded by family, friends, and faculty and staff on that special day. Some of you may be present at our ceremony on Saturday, May 10, while others will be there in spirit. Either way, I hope you know that your steadfast support and dedication will be felt and appreciated by everyone in attendance, especially our students. Thank you for remaining "forever true" to them and to Mary Washington.

Philosophical Philanthropy



George Van Sant

*Photo by University Archives
Centennial Collection*

After serving his country as a Marine Corps officer, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Philosophy George Van Sant was a dedicated faculty member at Mary Washington for over three decades, earning the Grellet C. Simpson Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in 1986.

When he passed away in 2013, Professor Van Sant's own life insurance policy helped fund the Dr. George Van Sant Scholarship, established by friends, colleagues, and former students, led by Marsha Lynn Wilkins '62, who also set up an endowment for the Department of Classics, Philosophy, and Religion in honor of her late professor.

"Receiving this scholarship alleviates the financial burden and allows me to concentrate fully on my education," said Martina Nicholson '25, a philosophy: pre-law and communication and digital studies major. "Being given the opportunity to learn about the evolution of human thought and progress has further fueled my passion for law and journalism."

Visit umwheritage.org to learn more about establishing scholarships.



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