



# Significance

CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH CHARITABLE GIFT PLANNING

## The Scrantons: Acts of love

In 1968 when George and Claire Scranton began their 50-year journey with the Theatre Department at Seattle Pacific University, it was a modest enterprise with but two faculty members. George was expected to teach, as well as pull double and triple duty as director and scenic designer.


“Three times in George’s career at Seattle Pacific, we considered going elsewhere,” says Claire. “But we just never felt right about leaving.”

In 2015, after acting in 30-plus productions, directing 100-plus shows, and teaching stagecraft and acting to many hundreds of students, George directed his last play, the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Talley’s Folly*.

But it was hardly the Scrantons’ last hurrah. During those decades at SPU, they frequently hosted students in their home for meals, readings, receptions, and rehearsals. Several students moved in. Those relationships endure.

“Setting a table and cooking for others was an act of love. We never sought it,” George says. “It was

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A photograph of George and Claire Scranton sitting in the foreground, smiling at the camera. They are in a theatre setting, with stage equipment and lights visible in the background. George is on the right, wearing a dark suit and glasses, and Claire is on the left, wearing a dark blue sweater and red-rimmed glasses.

The Scrantons enjoy excellent seats in E.E. Bach Theatre, where George had a hand in scores of productions. Behind them are the early stages of the set design for the spring play, Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

TECHNOLOGY:  
A BLESSING OR A CURSE?



When I first started my career in gift planning, all of the calculations to determine the charitable deduction for a planned gift had to be done manually, using government tables and a good calculator.

Thankfully, computers and specialized software came on the scene, and made the calculations quick and simple.

Yet, there is far more to gift planning than running calculations. Family and inheritance considerations, the type of assets being considered, financial needs, medical concerns — these and other important matters also factor into gift planning.

Most people who consider a gift plan — whether it be a simple charitable bequest through their will or a more complex life income plan such as a charitable trust or gift annuity — want to know that their future gift will really make a difference and will further the important work of the causes they want to support.

You can be assured that gift plans for Seattle Pacific do make a difference! Important programs are enhanced and students are able to complete their education as a direct result of these gifts.

If you would like to discuss the possibility of setting up a gift plan for SPU that meets your particular needs and interests, please let me know. You can reach me at 206-281-2257 or at msandlin@spu.edu.

Blessings,

Marlon Sandlin  
Director of Endowments and Gift Planning

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whoever had need.” Word of mouth took care of the rest. George, ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church, once married a young couple at his home. The bride made her entrance down the Scranton staircase and 100 guests filled the house.

SPU students captured the Scrantons’ hearts. “It was a religious experience,” notes George. “To see the movement of God in our lives and through theirs was to see the unique and strange ways in which he leads.”

Despite George drawing a modest wage in those early years, the Scrantons have learned over time that God has their backs. Their first home purchased for \$22 thousand sold for \$104 thousand. Their current home on top of Queen Anne Hill, purchased for \$216 thousand in 1986, was recently appraised at \$3 million. George says they gulped at the price when considering buying the nearly 6,000-square-foot home. “I remember we sat across the street and said if we got it, it was a gift from God that we were required to share.”

Divine provision meant that in 2013, they were able to establish the George A. and Claire E. Scranton Theatre Scholarship Endowment. They, and others, have added to it since, providing financial help for new generations of theatre majors. “So many theatre students are financially strapped,” says George. “We want to help as many as possible get that education. In a practical sense, my SPU education was my salvation.”

The Scrantons believe in tithing and say that includes SPU, as well as their local church. They view any monies they receive as not theirs, but belonging to the one who has blessed their years together.

Claire first laid eyes on George in 1967 when they were juniors at Seattle Pacific. She was Claire Markham then and curious about George. One day, when she saw him almost leaping down the steps of Marston/Watson Hall in a top hat and tails, she thought, *If I’m going to continue getting to know him better, I can’t be embarrassed by ... this.*

Then shy and quiet by nature, “this” was no small thing for Claire to ask of herself. “But I felt really comfortable with George,” she says. “We became good friends. We’ve grown individually since, and been blessed to grow together.”

Their attraction quickly moved from coffee meetups in the Student Union Building — “Claire didn’t particularly like coffee,” — to an official first date of hamburgers after both



had ushered for a Messiah concert. George remembers that food has often played a role in the Scranton legacy. When daughter and Whitworth College graduate Lindsey brought their future son-in-law home to meet the parents, George cooked rabbit for the occasion. He quickly learned that while he thought “tasty specialty,” the young man thought “Easter bunny.” They laugh about it now.

A sociology major, Claire graduated number two in her class. Within three weeks of getting married, she was first hired by the State of Washington as a case worker assigned to families on public assistance, then as a foster care licenser. In 1977, she gave birth to son Trevor, who grew up to graduate from SPU, Class of 2000. By 1980, Claire facilitated adoptions for the state, and following retirement in 2001, invested 11 years in the work of domestic adoptions for one of the largest nonprofit adoption agencies, the World Association for Children and Parents.

To hear Claire tell it, “I seriously flunked retirement.”

Now, it’s time for the next phase of their lives — downsizing. They will sell their home of 32 years, likely move to a condo, and plan a month-long cruise of the Mediterranean. In addition to planning for a portion of the sale of their home to come to SPU to increase their endowment, they have also included a bequest to SPU in their will for this fund, ensuring even more students receive scholarships in the future.

“We’ve got to figure out what to do with my collections before the move,” says George. These include a number of original paintings, 250 Nativity creches, and 40,000 postage stamps.

Claire smiles beneficently. She’s still curious about her George, who can juggle, sword fight, and has written more than a dozen plays. She muses that not only have the Scrantons lived a full life, she has even learned to like coffee.

PHILANTHROPY SPOTLIGHT



Virginia (Ginny) Murray and Jeanne Boardman:  
**A Shared Commitment to Christian Education and Service**

There is an expression that says “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” That would certainly be true with respect to Ginny Murray. Like her mother before her, Ginny had a strong belief that the world needed schools like Seattle Pacific University; schools that are dedicated to Christian higher education. It was only natural for her to express that belief through her strong financial investment in Seattle Pacific programs and students.

Her mother, Jeanne Boardman, served as her model. As a long-time member of Seattle’s First Free Methodist Church, Jeanne knew many SPU students, faculty, and staff,

◀ Virginia and her mother, Jeanne

# DANIEL HOUSER: Seeking Answers to His Prayers



In 2002, a 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck nearby Daniel Houser's childhood home in Central Asia. The 7-year-old watched his missionary father spearhead

a team whose repeated trips into remote areas began to help the locals rebuild their homes. The mud and brick construction common in much of the rural home-building of that region utterly collapsed, resulting in damage and death. In the aftermath, the will to change surged among the survivors and a new, more durable wall construction emerged.

"Many people lack the engineering knowledge to construct a safe home," says Daniel, today a Seattle Pacific University senior about to graduate from his double major in general engineering and mechanical engineering. "What if I came alongside and gave them the tools and the know-how to create the change that works best for them?"

Son of career missionaries, Daniel showed natural aptitude in math and science, and looked for a small Christian university with strong programs in engineering and psychology, two of his strongest interests. Overshadowing even those considerations, and in light of his family's modest income, was the need for generous financial aid.

"I have family in Seattle," says Daniel, "but without scholarship help, I simply could not have gone to Seattle Pacific."

His SPU financial aid package not only included merit scholarships, but also the Summit Seeker's Scholarship for children of current or past missionary parents — a \$20,000 award over four years. Daniel has since become good friends with Summit donors Ray and Gay Brook. They share occasional meals together and Daniel wants them to meet his fiancé.

Daniel appreciates the care the Brooks have shown him. "We talk about each other's lives and it really puts a face to the scholarship — on both sides. I'm excited to know them, people who love Jesus and helping others."

Daniel's mind buzzes with engineering's potential to improve the quality of life for millions. In his junior year, he helped develop the concept of a gravity-powered radio for emergency situations when the power grid goes down. This year, his senior design project is Solairo, a solar-powered heating and cooling unit that was entered in this year's Social Venture Plan Competition. He and his Solairo teammates are excited about its potential.

The vision for Solairo was inspired by the great need of 80,000 Syrians living in Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp. In winter, camp temperatures drop to 40 degrees F; in summer, they soar to 110 degrees F. What is needed is a relatively cheap unit in each living space to regulate the indoor climate. Solairo is not only an inexpensive boon to human comfort, says Daniel, but has humanitarian applications in medical treatment and even in allowing refugees to establish some normalcy in their lives by providing hospitality to others.

"I've learned through my time at SPU that Christ came for people who don't fit in," says Daniel, who hopes to interest a foundation to take Solairo into production and actual distribution. "If my understanding of who I am in God doesn't make room for people on society's fringe or for those who live in substandard conditions, then I must think again."

Daniel does a lot of dialoging with God about his future and the ways he can be faithful with all he's been given. Those who have modeled this for him include donors to SPU, such as the Brooks. "I cried out to God for my college finances and he answered through them and others," says Daniel. "That's a beautiful example of the church. We are to be the personal answer to someone else's prayer."

Daniel Houser's solar-powered Solairo heating and cooling unit received the \$3,000 second prize and \$1,000 People's Choice award in the recent SPU Social Venture Plan competition.

and provided regular gifts in support of student scholarships. Of special note, Jeanne understood the importance of educating students who felt a unique calling to Christian ministry, and had a desire to lead others to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In 1990, she informed then-President David Le Shana of her intention to leave a bequest to SPU to establish the Jeanne Boardman Christian Ministries Scholarship Endowment to provide scholarships to undergraduate students preparing for Christian service as missionaries, pastors, or in other Christian

service careers. When she passed away in 2005, this endowment was funded through her estate.

Ginny had her own plans in place for Seattle Pacific. In addition to her annual gifts, she also established a Charitable Remainder Unitrust to benefit SPU and named the University as beneficiary of a life insurance policy. In both cases, her future gifts would also go to support the Boardman Endowment. When she passed away in 2015, Ginny's wishes were fulfilled. This endowment — important to both mother and daughter — is currently valued at about

\$221,750, and provides nearly \$3,400 in annual scholarships. Through this fund, the legacies of Ginny Murray and Jeanne Boardman live on and will provide much-needed support to SPU students for years to come.





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**NATIONALLY RANKED** — SPU is the only private university in the Pacific Northwest to make *U.S. News & World Report's* 2018 "Best National University" list.



## INTRODUCING our new website



## legacy.spu.edu

Providing a user-friendly resource was a top priority for the Office of Endowments and Gift Planning when we recently launched a new website — [legacy.spu.edu](http://legacy.spu.edu). Giving it a simple web address was also important, so that it could be easily remembered. Whether you arrive by way of this address or a link from the SPU main website, you will find helpful information and engaging stories designed to guide you in your thinking as to how you can make a difference at SPU and at other charities you support. When you visit our new website, here is what you will find:

1. **Stories** — about people like you who have chosen to establish a scholarship endowment or plan a future gift to Seattle Pacific.
2. **Tools for planning a gift** — a review of different types of tools and techniques for planning a gift to SPU. Don't worry! We've simplified some rather technical material to be more easily understood.
3. **Short videos** — that explain various gift-planning ideas.
4. **Gift calculator** — that will allow you to create your own hypothetical gift illustrations. Of course, we are here to help you with any gift illustrations that interest you. Contact us anytime.
5. **Basic will-planning information** — with videos and printed materials available on request.
6. **Online will planner** — create your own password-protected account and fill in your data online. You will then have the option of printing your data, emailing it to your attorney for document preparation, or submitting it to an attorney from an attached list who is prepared to receive your information and work with you to create your estate plan, often at a reduced cost.

**Check out our website today and discover new ways of fulfilling your legacy!**

## Benefits of a Charitable Bequest to SPU

Leaving a final gift to Seattle Pacific through a will or trust has long been favored by our loyal supporters from our earliest days as an institution. With a sense of love and appreciation for who we are and the values we represent, it is only natural for many to want to leave a bequest to the University just as they would want to leave a final estate gift to their own family.

So, what are some of the benefits of leaving a bequest to SPU? Here are just a few to consider:

- It is easy to do and is revocable, meaning you can change you bequest plan at any time.
- You can make a gift to SPU of a specific property, amount, or percentage of your estate.
- It avoids estate tax and, if the gift is made by designating SPU as a beneficiary of an IRA account, it will also avoid income tax.
- Your bequest to SPU may be unrestricted or designated for endowments or programs you care most about. In either case, it will help future generations of SPU students receive the highest-quality Christian education.

**For more information on making a bequest gift to SPU, please visit our website at [legacy.spu.edu](http://legacy.spu.edu) or contact Marlon Sandlin, Director of Endowments and Gift Planning at 206-281-2257 or [msandlin@spu.edu](mailto:msandlin@spu.edu).**



### Planning to Create or Update Your Will?

We can help! Our FREE booklet *Planning Your Legacy — a Christian Guide to Providing for Your Family and Supporting the Causes You Care About* will assist you in designing the perfect estate plan. Request your copy today at [legacy.spu.edu/estateplanningguide](http://legacy.spu.edu/estateplanningguide).



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