GO BLAZERS
GO BIRMINGHAM
HOW THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY ENRICHES THE COMMUNITY
uab.edu/campaign
When Birmingham was founded in 1871, its economic future was rooted in industry – in the mining of the elements needed to make steel, and in the manufacturing of steel itself.

When UAB became an independent university in 1969, steel was still the city’s primary economic driver. But as the steel industry waned over the next decade, an urban university in the heart of the city was on the rise. Today, UAB is Birmingham’s largest single employer, with more than 23,000 employees – and is also Alabama’s largest employer. And our economic impact — more than $5 billion annually — reaches far beyond our campus, using our intellectual capital to help create jobs, move discovery to the marketplace, and prepare students to lead.

As president of the university where I earned my engineering degree – in the city I have always called home, even when I lived elsewhere – and now as chair of the Birmingham Business Alliance, I have the privilege of working with city leaders, the business community and our university’s leadership team to find ways to leverage our mutual strengths and address our common challenges.

Some of those ways are visible to all. Our campus has strategically expanded north in recent years as we have sought to connect UAB more closely to what has again become a vibrant downtown. Our academic, cultural and athletics programs continue to grow because of investments from corporate partners as well as generous individuals, and our students enjoy a vast range of opportunities to connect to future employers through internships and mentoring programs.

Birmingham and UAB are intertwined in ways that strengthen both. As one prospers, so does the other. The Campaign for UAB’s continued progress toward our $1B goal reflects that connection.

Sincerely,

Ray L. Watts, MD
President
UAB School of Nursing graduate Abby Vinson, BSN, RN, said that wherever her nursing career takes her, she will strive to be a nurse leader.

“I will absolutely pursue best practice,” she said, “regardless of whether I’m working a hospital shift now or teaching in the future.”

To come to this way of thinking, Ms. Vinson credits her education at the UAB School of Nursing, and gives a special salute to her experiences as one of the carefully selected students going through the School’s Nursing Honors Program.

“Through Nursing Honors, I was exposed to leaders in nursing and other health professions,” she said. “This opened my eyes to limitless possibilities in the health care field.”

“Hearing this makes me smile from ear to ear,” said Celia A. Wallace, Chairman of the Board of Mobile-based Southern Medical Health Systems, Inc. Mrs. Wallace, a member of the School of Nursing’s Board of Visitors, created the Endowed Fund for Nursing Undergraduate Honors in 2005 in honor of her daughter and son, Kristen Celia Wallace Rudolph and Gerald Leon Wallace, Jr., PhD.

“This is wonderful for us,” she added. “Our goal was to stimulate thinking among these honors students. I’m glad that goal is being fulfilled.”

The faculty coordinator for the School’s Nursing Honors Program is Assistant Professor Shannon Morrison, PhD, CRNP, FNP-BC. Noting that the Wallace fund touches some 30 Nursing Honors students at any given time, she says the endowment supports events featuring experts in health fields; promotes scholarship by helping fund students’ research posters and abstracts; and helps recruit future honors students.

She said the endowment’s role in opening Abby Vinson’s eyes to “limitless possibilities” matches her own views about learning. “I view learning as a ladder without rungs — that there’s no limit to how high you can go.”

For information: Jeannie E. Horton, jhorton@uab.edu; 205.975.2443
The decline of vision that often accompanies aging can be a life-limiting factor, especially for those with age-related macular degeneration, which leads to blurred or no vision in the center of visual field. While it does not result in complete blindness, loss of central vision can make it hard to recognize faces, drive, read, or perform other activities.

Thanks to the Dorsett Davis Discovery Fund in the Department of Ophthalmology, UAB researcher Cynthia Owsley, PhD, is on the path to learning why some people are at higher risk of AMD.

Dr. Owsley recently concluded a National Eye Institute-funded study that was the first to show that older adults whose eyes require a longer period of time to adapt to the dark are at higher risk of AMD. “The retina allows us to see in different levels of light – night, day, low, bright,” she said. “Our study followed 600 people over three years whose retinas were normal, and determined that those with longer dark adaptation are at higher risk of AMD.

“Our next step is to look at why that is – the biological basis – and the Dorsett Davis Discovery Fund will provide resources for us to explore that as we prepare to submit our grant for continued funding.”

The Dorsett Davis Discovery Fund was established by Jim and Jo Davis of Birmingham, and is named for Mr. Davis’ father. “My father, brother and grandmother all had AMD,” said Davis, a longtime member of the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama board and a member of its predecessor board for the Callahan Eye Foundation Hospital. “We have a fabulous resource in the Department of Ophthalmology, with national recognition of people who are the top in their fields, and I am proud to support the research efforts there.

“I believe the Department has the ability to move the needle with meaningful research in AMD, and the talented people to do it.”

The Dorsett Davis Discovery Fund provides spendable resources either for seed projects or, as in Dr. Owsley’s case, for transitional funding. “To secure grant funding, the investigator needs funds for proof of concept,” said Christopher A. Girkin, MD, Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and EyeSight Foundation of Alabama Endowed Chair. “Philanthropy plays a big role at that stage of discovery. In this case, with a project that is ready to move to the next level, these gift funds come at a different stage along the way, and are equally important to our success.”

For information: Jackie Wood, jfwood@uab.edu; 205.996.0815
As an infant, Alison and Jim Gorrie’s daughter, Alie B. Gorrie, was diagnosed with optic nerve hypoplasia – a form of vision impairment that includes underdeveloped optic nerves. The condition can cause a variety of vision problems, such as lack of peripheral vision and blindness. Alie B. Gorrie has severely limited vision in one eye and has 20/80 vision in the other.

Over the past 22 years, the Gorries have become dedicated advocates for vision research. Most recently, the Gorrie family gave $500,000 to the Alie B. Gorrie Low Vision Support Fund in the UAB Department of Ophthalmology.

Jim Gorrie said the family’s personal journey through diagnosis and treatment was made easier by doctors at UAB, especially Alie B.’s doctor, Martin Cogen, MD, Chief of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and Dawn DeCarlo, OD, director of the UAB Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation, a joint program of UAB’s Department of Ophthalmology and School of Optometry.

“We were very thankful for our doctors and advocates at UAB who have helped us navigate the challenges that exist for people with low vision,” Gorrie said. “We are very fortunate to have such a comprehensive resource right here in Birmingham. Part of our continued work will be to help develop peer groups and general information to raise awareness of options for families who may not know where to turn.”

The Gorrie fund provides resources for a support group for children and their families, and offers orientation and mobility services to help patients navigate their environment more independently and safely. “These services are not covered by insurance, and there is very little availability elsewhere, with long wait times for services,” Dr. DeCarlo said. “The funds also allow financially needy patients to receive devices, even high-tech bioptics and electronic magnification, which will enhance the quality of their lives.”

Gorrie said he hopes the funding will help continue to raise awareness of options for those families who may not know where to turn. Thanks in part to the great care she received through UAB, Alie B. recently graduated from Belmont University with a BFA in Musical Theatre and moved to New York City to pursue her career.

“We hope the Low Vision Support Fund will help families get the help they need and deserve,” he said. “We know the importance of raising awareness, and we also believe there continues to be a large unmet need in Alabama.”

For information: Jackie Wood, jfwood@uab.edu; 205.996.0815
When her son Alan Wayne Barnett turned 51 years old in July 2013, Betsy Cooper was there with birthday balloons and a cupcake. She recalls taking pictures, and then cheerfully and off-key singing “Happy Birthday.” And then she leaned in and told him, “I’ve done this so, when you wake up, I can prove to you that I didn’t forget your birthday.”

Alan had been in a car accident on June 15 of that year, suffering a traumatic brain injury. During the months of hospitalization, he only spoke once, Mrs. Cooper recalls. “I said ‘Do you know who I am?’ And he said ‘Shorty.’ He called me ‘Shorty.’ I said ‘Do you know who you are?’ And he said ‘Alan Barnett.’”

On September 26, 2013, Alan Barnett passed away. In December 2015, Mrs. Cooper and her husband, Joe, gave a gift to establish the Alan Wayne Barnett Endowed Support Fund for Brain Injury Research in the UAB Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. The gift was made through a charitable Individual Retirement Account rollover, which allows donors to redirect up to $100,000 of their required minimum distribution from an IRA to qualifying charities without counting that distribution as taxable income.

“I was inspired to do something for brain research,” Mrs. Cooper said. “I want that money to be there to grow so it can go toward research and development. They may find a trigger that will be the thing that provides an answer.”

Before making the gift, the Coopers met with Assistant Professor Candace Floyd, PhD, to learn more about her team’s efforts to find new treatments for traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury.

“This fund will enable us to test additional ideas for therapeutic development,” says Dr. Floyd, whose volunteer work as an emergency medicine technician inspires her work. “The more good ideas we can test, the more likely we are to discover a new treatment or approach.”

For Mrs. Cooper, the fund is a way to help someone like her son. “If we can find new and better ways of treating brain injuries, this is going to help someone,” she said. “I want to do something so maybe the next person who has all this damage might be able to survive.”

For information on using your IRA to make a gift to what you care about most: Kimberley S. Coppock, kcoppock@uab.edu; 205.975.5970; uab.planmylegacy.org
At 59, **Cynthia Howard** said goodbye for the last time to the people she loved most in the world. In 2012, a devastating lung disease robbed her of the years many find the most rewarding in life.

“My mom died wanting to live to see her grandchildren grow up and to be a part of their lives,” said her son, **Robert Howard**, then chief information officer at Armstrong State University in Savannah, Ga. “Even as each day brought a heavier realization that, outside of a miracle, Mom would not be coming home, there was comfort in her faith, and there was hope. She said, ‘I want to get better. After all, I have every reason to want to live.’

“She was worried that our year-old twins, Eva and Preston, wouldn’t remember her. I promised her I would not let her memory fade.”

One of the many ways in which Howard – who was named UAB’s Deputy Chief Information Officer in November 2015 – and his wife, **Casey**, have kept his mother’s memory alive is the endowment they have established at UAB. The **Cynthia Howard Endowed Support Fund for Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis Research** funds research into the condition that took Mrs. Howard too soon.

“We could have put this money in so many other places, Casey and I wanted to help back this important research in some small way,” he said. “We also wanted to begin our tenure at UAB and in Birmingham giving back to the community. We want to raise our children with the mindset that we should give back and serve the community in which we live. We want to help end this horrific disease and spare other families the grief of losing a loved one too soon. With these things in mind, we dug deep and committed to fund the endowment.”

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) causes tissue deep in the lungs to become thick and stiff over time, depriving the brain and other organs of oxygen. IPF and related conditions affect more than 100,000 people in the United States and five million worldwide. “This disease is relentless,” said **Vicoor J. Thannickal**, MD, the Ben Vaughan Branscomb Chair of Medicine in Respiratory Disease and director of UAB’s Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine. “The median survival rate is less than three years, and only 20 percent of patients survive five years beyond diagnosis.

“Our group is actively studying novel strategies to treat this devastating disease,” he added. “This gift will serve to not only advance the science and understanding of IPF, but ultimately, the care of our patients.”

A month after his mother’s death, the Howards received unexpected news; the following March, Ella Cynthia Sue Howard was born. “Ella, which means ‘bright light,’ because she is a bright light in a time of darkness and sorrow,” he said. “Cynthia to honor my Mom, and Sue to honor Casey’s mom.

“I will spend the rest of my life helping people reach their full potential, because that’s really what Mom was about. And it’s a good way to spend a life.”

**To honor someone you love by supporting research:**
Megann Bates Cain, mbcain@uab.edu; 205.934.7408
When Richard J. Whitley, MD, accepted his first faculty position at UAB in 1976, he made a list of things he wanted to accomplish in the first five years. He slipped it into an envelope and tucked it away in a drawer.

“When I opened the envelope five years later, I realized I had accomplished those things in three years at UAB,” Dr. Whitley said. “UAB has allowed me to develop my own career. I don’t think there are many institutions in the country that provide the academic freedom to allow an individual’s career to grow and mature.”

Having brought millions of dollars in research funding to UAB over his 40 years on faculty, Dr. Whitley has now made a significant gift back to the university that he believes has given him so much. Named in memory of his parents, the Helen and Robert Whitley Endowed Chair of Pediatrics will help recruit a faculty member who will focus on research in pediatric infectious diseases and expand the collaboration between UAB’s Department of Pediatrics and Children’s of Alabama.

“I want this endowed chair to serve as an opportunity for the institution to grow,” said Dr. Whitley, who holds the Loeb Eminent Scholar Chair in Pediatrics and is co-founder/co-director of the Alabama Drug Discovery Alliance. “And the only way institutions grow in the 21st century, with resources being as tight as they are, is through endowments.”

Dr. Whitley and his team are currently researching how herpes simplex can kill tumor cells in the brain and working on a study of treatments for emerging infections such as SARS, MERS, and Ebola. Much of the donation came from money he has earned through his work with Gilead Sciences, Inc., a pharmaceutical company that has developed antiviral drugs to combat HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

“The most remarkable thing for me in the journey is the people I’ve gotten to know,” he said. “When you can work with people who are smart and reliable and trustworthy, it makes this journey ever so easy.”

Dr. Whitley grew up in Nutley, N.J., attended undergraduate school at Duke and medical school at George Washington University. “And then I really came south and moved to Alabama,” he said. “I can be cute and say I forgot to leave, but the people here in the department made it very easy for me to stay,” Dr. Whitley said.

“It’s not an individual effort. It’s a team effort. There’s an old African adage I love: ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’”

For information on supporting outstanding faculty at UAB: Tom Brannan, tbrannan@uab.edu, 205.934.0177
An endowed research fund in honor of James H. Halsey, Jr., MD, former Chair of the Department of Neurology, has been converted to an endowed professorship through additional gifts from Dr. Halsey and his wife, Ellen, and other generous donors. The James J. Halsey, Jr., Endowed Professorship in Neurology is held by Toby I. Gropen, MD, who heads UAB’s Comprehensive Stroke Center.

Efforts are underway to fund an endowed chair in honor of Kirby I. Bland, MD, who served as Chair of the Department of Surgery for nearly 16 years. Gifts totaling nearly $1 million have been committed to date, including lead gifts from Dr. Bland and his wife, Lyn; the Pleiad Foundation; and Barry and Catherine Morton.

The John C. Hauth Endowed Professorship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine honors Dr. Hauth, who served as Director of the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine for more than 10 years. Established in November 2015, the professorship will be used to recruit or retain an academic leader.

An anonymous gift has funded the Christine S. Ritchie, MD, Endowed Chair in Palliative Care Leadership, to which Rodney O. Tucker, MD, has been appointed. Dr. Ritchie led UAB’s Center for Palliative and Supportive Care for 10 years; Dr. Tucker now holds that position.

Jean B. Morris, a founding member of the Spain Rehabilitation Center Women’s Committee and a stalwart supporter of UAB’s rehabilitation medicine programs, established an endowment in 2007 to honor Dr. Chi-Tsou Huang, a noted UAB clinician, teacher and researcher focused on spinal cord injury. Gifts made since Dr. Huang’s passing in 2012 led to the conversion of the endowment to the Jean B. Morris Endowed Professorship in honor of Chi-Tsou Huang, MD, for Excellence in Clinical Care, Research and Teaching in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

The University of Alabama Health Services Foundation has made a lead gift to establish an endowed professorship in honor of Peter D. Waite, DDS, MD, MPH, chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in the School of Dentistry.
Since time began, civilizations have been drawn to flowing bodies of water and their promise of food and fertile land, ease of transportation, and a thriving trade system. It has long been accepted that a river at the heart of a city is necessary for success.

And yet Birmingham – with its lush, green topography of ridges and valleys and no river – is in the midst of the kind of cultural and economic renaissance that invites the imagery of rivers. Rushing. Surging. Flowing.

When Kate Nielsen, and her husband, Claude, made a $500,000 commitment to establish the Nielsen Innovation Lab at UAB, she spoke of how UAB, with an annual economic impact of more than $5 billion, is the source of much of the progress flowing through the city.

“Throughout history, cities that thrive usually have a river,” said Mrs. Nielsen, who served as president of the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham for 13 years. “What we’re coming to find is that urban universities are the river. A university brings vibrancy to the urban core. UAB is driving everything in the most positive ways: health care, business, education. Can you imagine anything more important in a city?”

“This is the new river.”

UAB alumnus and Birmingham Mayor William A. Bell, Sr.
agreed. “UAB plays a vital role in Birmingham’s success by driving further growth and improved quality of life,” said Mayor Bell, who earned a BS in psychology at UAB. “The City of Birmingham takes pride in acknowledging UAB’s strengths in research and healthcare as well as well as academics and business.”

THE UNIVERSITY THAT ATE BIRMINGHAM

UAB’s physical presence – at 100 city blocks, 25 percent of the downtown footprint – is the most visible sign of its impact on the city. The university’s nearly five decades of growth across downtown’s Southside long ago inspired the joke that the letters UAB stand for the “University that Ate Birmingham.”

But conversations with university leaders, Birmingham’s political and business leaders, up-and-coming entrepreneurs, and top researchers reveal the truth behind the easy joke: UAB feeds Birmingham, and Birmingham – through philanthropy, community partnerships, and the dedicated support of citizens – feeds UAB, too.

“We have an estimated 80,000 people working downtown,” said Brian Hilson, CEO of Birmingham Business Alliance, the leading economic development organization for the seven-county Birmingham region. “We’ve seen more than $700 million of capital invested in renovated and new facilities downtown. We’re seeing residential growth through new and renovated properties. We’re seeing good balance between government, finance, utility, insurance, education, and research. UAB will continue to be a driving force in all of that.”

UAB’s growth is having a positive impact on property values in areas adjacent to campus, where private developers are paying up to $80 per square foot, up from $40 to $50 per square foot just a few years ago. A refreshed campus master plan revealed in early 2016 calls for continued growth of UAB’s physical presence, though much of that growth will be “vertical,” as in the addition of five floors to the School of Nursing building (see page 12).

BUILDING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Regional economic revitalization is a priority for UAB. One of the key players in this mission is the Bill L. Harbert Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, launched in 2013 to support education through experiential learning and foster the creation of new companies, products, and licenses. In 2015, the Joy and Bill Harbert Foundation gave $5 million to name the institute. “The fortunes of the city are directly tied to the fortunes of UAB,” said Billy L. Harbert, who oversees the family foundation.

Harbert Institute Managing Director Kathy Nugent, PhD, said philanthropy is crucial to the program’s success, noting the Harbert gift as well as a $2 million gift from Mike and Gillian Goodrich. “When federal funding has been decreased, it’s important for us to be able to provide funding when there are gaps,” Dr. Nugent said. “These gifts play a vital role in our ability to accomplish our mission.”

Nearly every research institute comparable to UAB has created technology transfer institutes to convert scientific and technological advances into marketable goods or services. “Once you’ve got something with commercial potential, you’ve got to be nimble and quickly decide the best path forward,” Dr. Nugent said. “The economy to a large degree is dependent on innovation. If you don’t know how to get your innovation out there, you lose it.”

She describes the Harbert Institute’s role in UAB’s technology transfer as the hub of a wheel.

“There are innovation clusters across campus, places that are the most likely to have innovative products and technologies. We are at the center of this. We keep the wheel moving,” Dr. Nugent said. “We want the faculty,
researchers, and students to continue to do what they do best, keep chasing the science and innovation. It’s up to the Harbert Institute to develop commercial strategy plans and move products and new technology out into the community as efficiently as possible.”

UAB’s commitment to economic diversification is also visible at Innovation Depot, a public-private business incubator operating in partnership with UAB. According to the Innovation Depot’s 2014 report, Innovation Depot companies posted $137 million in gross sales with a total five-year impact of $1.33 billion. Twelve companies moved out of the incubator in 2014, and 26 patents were filed from Innovation Depot companies that year.

The UAB Innovation Lab – housed at Innovation Depot – gives UAB students the opportunity to create start-ups and benefit from real-world experience as they prepare to enter the workforce after graduation. UAB iLab Director Kathleen Hamrick emphasizes that in the UAB iLab, students are connected with the entrepreneurial community, a vital part of keeping talent in Birmingham. “The resources here and the relationships they form with companies, CEOs, and organizations through networking are invaluable,” Ms. Hamrick said. “We pull in organizations that provide additional training. We support students as they pursue their education, and we identify emerging talent.”

“In addition to providing student venture incubation services within the UAB iLab, we provide students with hands-on-for-credit internship opportunities with Innovation Depot member companies. This has been a tremendous boon for our Innovation Depot entrepreneurs and students as they prepare for their careers.”

Innovation Depot CEO Devon Laney says this partnership is helping drive the growth. “Fast Company magazine recently named Birmingham as the No. 1 city in America for millennial entrepreneurs, and the partnership between Innovation Depot and UAB is a driving force in the growth of young entrepreneurs in our community,” he said. “Innovation Depot, UAB, and our other partners are helping to promote and advance the technology ecosystem in our community, with a major part of that effort being the vision and development of the UAB iLab here.”

Joel Dobbs, Entrepreneur in Residence for the Collat School of Business, said fostering a culture of entrepreneurship is the best way to create new jobs in Birmingham. “Almost all new jobs in the US are created by start-up companies,” he said.

Dobbs said part of the UAB iLab’s strategy over the next decade is to develop a cohort of people with experience in the start-up environment, either working in or starting their own companies, who will be in a position to take on new companies as they need experienced managers, thus setting a sustainable cycle of business development in motion.

Hilson, the Birmingham Business Alliance CEO, said there is no doubt UAB is helping drive economic growth through startups, by retaining existing businesses and, in some cases, by recruiting new companies that want to partner with the university.

“InUB’s relevance, in terms of direct impact and how it positions us to retain and grow tech-based companies and employment opportunities is really remarkable as we look to the future,” Hilson says. “The way senior leadership of UAB has built programs around economic development fits very well with what we do at the BBA. This approach has been embraced by community and state leaders who also recognize the enormous potential UAB has.”

**LEADING THE WAY IN DISCOVERY AND PATIENT CARE**

Philanthropy is also helping fuel UAB’s collaboration with Southern Research and the Alabama Drug Discovery Alliance. Tokyo-based Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company, Limited, and Birmingham-based Protective Life Corporation announced a $2 million gift to the ADDA that will “play a vital role in enhancing UAB and Southern Research’s reputation as leaders in research and
development and help boost economic development in our city and state,” said UAB President Ray L. Watts.

The collaboration has an impact on the economy as well as patient care through the process of developing new treatments, and potentially cures, from groundbreaking research. UAB’s School of Medicine, the NIH-funded Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences, and the Comprehensive Cancer Center are all crucial collaborators.

“This program has succeeded beyond my expectations,” said Richard J. Whitley, MD, Loeb Eminent Scholar Chair in Pediatrics and ADDA co-founder/co-director. “You absolutely have to go outside the institution and have these partnerships. You can’t do it without UAB and Southern Research trusting each other. Where else in the country do they have the resources for drug development like we do at UAB and Southern Research? You’re not going to find it anywhere but here.”

Dr. Whitley said the ADDA’s impact also comes through grant funding. “How much does the ADDA contribute to the portfolio of our institutions: eight grants, five funded by the National Institutes of Health, three by private organizations,” he added. “These are not insignificant amounts. It means jobs in Birmingham, it means work for citizens.”

Since 2008, UAB’s Center for Clinical and Translational Science has strategically invested just over $1 million in 36 pilot projects resulting in $33,772,319 in new grants — a return on investment of 32.5:1.

**IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Beyond science labs and business incubators, UAB supporters have given $2.65 million to support UABTeach, an effort sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, and the School of Engineering to boost the number of highly trained science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers in secondary classrooms. Multiple funders are supporting UABTeach, including $1 million from The Max and Lorayne Cooper Foundation; $1 million from The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham; and significant gifts from The Mike and Gillian Goodrich Charitable Foundation and The Belk Foundation.

UABTeach has the potential to make a significant dent in Alabama’s science and math teacher shortage and, ultimately, better prepare Alabama students for a workforce growing increasingly reliant on STEM skills.

And beyond the classroom, UAB helps foster a vibrant city through arts and culture. The Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center, one of the Southeast’s premier performing arts center, not only attracts thousands of metro-area residents each year to performances, but also has provided free or low-cost arts education to more than 70,000 children and adults through workshops, classes, and residences. UAB is also home to WBHM, the National Public Radio station that serves north central Alabama, and the Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts, home to the Department of Art and Art History and University Galleries.

Recently, supporters have committed more than $17 million in private and public investments to support the return of football, rifle and bowling, and $1.5 million from BBVA Compass for a new soccer stadium.

BBVA Compass Birmingham City President Alan Register pointed out the broader impact of the soccer field and that it will contribute to the continued revitalization of Birmingham as a destination city. “UAB is vital to the economic and cultural future of our community, and an investment in its continued growth and prosperity is one of the best ways to support Birmingham and Alabama,” he said.

“It’s important to Birmingham and the entire state that UAB be at its best,” said Hilson, the BBA leader. “The success of the Campaign for UAB allows the university to be at its best. If you calculated the return on investment that Birmingham and Alabama achieve through UAB, it is enormous, and it is unrivaled.”

**The success of the Campaign for UAB allows the university to be at its best. If you calculated the return on investment that Birmingham and Alabama achieve through UAB, it is enormous, and it is unrivaled”**

-Brian Hilson
NEW SCHOOL OF NURSING BUILDING
CREATE REAL-LIFE SETTINGS FOR TEACHING, LEARNING

A five-story, $32 million School of Nursing building project set to begin in September 2016 – with 44,000 additional square feet and the renovation of 25,700 existing square feet – creates learning spaces that mirror the environments in which students will practice, with a goal of giving them the knowledge and confidence they need to succeed.
State-of-the-science simulation labs replicate the settings in which nursing students will provide 24-hour care for patients, such as a pediatric hospital patient room; an apartment in which home health care would be delivered; and a suite in which mothers and newborns would be cared for. These and other technologically advanced spaces – including a tele-health suite, faculty and team workspaces, multi-purpose interactive classrooms, a dedicated Student Commons, and The Leadership Institute for specialized nursing education in the Deep South – are designed to hone skills and decision-making, stimulate thinking and support excellent teaching by SON faculty.

The project will:

- Increase capacity to attract the best and brightest students into advanced practice nursing and educate them through accelerated pathways for individuals with associate degrees or baccalaureate degrees in other fields.
- Prepare more doctoral-educated nurses to serve as clinicians and faculty here, and in hospitals and nursing schools across our state and country.
- Increase capacity for graduate nursing education programs that combine distance-accessible learning with on-campus experiences.
- Create new space for faculty who are highly accomplished and promising nurse educators, clinicians, and researchers.
- Increase access to quality care for Alabamians through tele-health outreach and education.

The new building has been efficiently designed to maximize the use of both new and renovated spaces, with an open staircase between the new and existing buildings that provides circulation and connections at all levels. An atrium visually integrates the first three floors, while a student commons on the second and third floors provide study and collaboration space just off a new entry from the walkway over University Boulevard on the plaza level. Faculty and staff collaboration spaces are located at the link between the new and existing buildings at levels 4 and 5. A combination of new and renovated space on the ground floor concentrates classrooms, skills labs and the Nursing Competencies Suite on one level.

Donors have already stepped forward with naming gifts for several spaces in the new facility. Sue Ellen and Mike Lucas have named the Pediatric Patient Room Competency Lab and adjoining Control Room, and Alacare Home Health and Hospice has named the Home Health Apartment Lab. The School’s Board of Visitors has named the first floor classroom, and the Junior Board of Visitors has named the Mother/Baby Competency Lab. Rick and Barrett Brock MacKay have named the Nightingale Scholars Gallery, a multi-purpose meeting/conference room with archives and visual displays of the SON’s efforts to make a difference both locally and globally.

“We are grateful to those who share our commitment to ensuring that the students who come to us receive the best possible education and become leaders in all areas of health care who make a difference in the lives of those we serve,” said Doreen C. Harper, PhD, RN, FAAN.

For information: Jeannie E. Horton, jhorton@uab.edu; 205.975.2443.
As Founding Director of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, John R. Durant, MD, laid the foundation for what is now one of the nation’s leading cancer research and treatment centers. After his passing in 2012, his widow, Mary Sue Durant, chose to honor his memory and his legacy of leadership with a commitment to name a space in the recently renovated Wallace Tumor Institute.

“I want his name to live on, and so when meetings are held in the John R. Durant Educational Facility, his name will be there,” she said. “He loved UAB — it was his heart.”

A native of Ann Arbor, Mich., Dr. Durant earned his medical degree and completed residency training at Temple University. He came to UAB in 1968, where he won designation from the National Cancer Institute for the newly established UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center in 1972, with the help of a large fundraising campaign in honor of Alabama Gov. Lurleen Wallace, who had died from cancer. UAB was one of the first eight National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the nation.

In 1982, Dr. Durant returned to Philadelphia, where he served as president of Fox Chase Cancer Center for six years before returning to UAB in spring 1988 as senior vice president for health affairs.

In hindsight, that timing seems not to have been a coincidence. “My first husband, Hugh Dillon, was chair of pediatrics at UAB, and had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma,” she said. “His doctor, Al LoBuglio (who succeeded Dr. Durant as Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center), had been consulting with John about Hugh’s case, and when Hugh learned that John was returning to UAB, he was so excited, because John knew more about multiple myeloma than anyone. In July 1988, Hugh died, and John’s wife Marlene died that September after a heroic battle with breast cancer.”

After several months, Dr. Durant asked her to dinner. “He said he just didn’t want to eat alone, and I knew how that felt,” she recalled. They were married in January 1990, and had 23 happy years together. “We both had lost someone we loved so much, and all of a sudden, by the grace of God, we were brought together. And we had a great time.”

Mrs. Durant used the IRA Charitable Rollover option to fund a portion of the naming gift. The rollover allows qualifying donors to re-direct up to $100,000 of their annual required minimum IRA distribution to a qualifying charity, instead of taking the distribution as taxable income.

“My financial advisors suggested the IRA option as a way to support the Comprehensive Cancer Center, which means so much to me, and also receive a tax break,” she said. “I hope others will look into it as a way to support a cause that is meaningful to them. It’s truly a win-win, and I’m so grateful I could do it.”

For information on using your IRA to support what you care about most: Megan Wilson, meganwilson@uab.edu; 205.934.0759; uab.planmylegacy.org
For nearly half a century, Woodward House has been filled with the sounds of small events and big celebrations, formal dinners and grand receptions. Thanks to a donation from Jacquelyn and Leo Shaia, Woodward House’s gatherings can also be filled with the sound of live piano music.

The Shaias had the piano in their Birmingham home for about 16 years before moving to a new house where they no longer had room for the instrument.

“I’m a graduate of UAB. I work at UAB. I have been to the Woodward House so many times,” said Jacque Shaia, JD, PhD, an assistant professor in the College of Arts and Sciences. “We wanted to find its next home, and it was just natural that it would be Woodward House.”

Woodward House has served as the official residence of UAB’s president since the late 1960s. The Mediterranean-style villa, built in the early 1920s, sits atop Red Mountain and boasts a stunning view of the city. The house was designed by California architect Reginald Johnson for businessman Allan Harvey Woodward and his wife Annie Hill Jemison Woodward. At the time it was built, Woodward House was the largest home in Alabama.

“We are appreciative to the Shaias for donating this beautiful piano to Woodward House,” said UAB President Ray L. Watts. “It will be thoroughly enjoyed at many UAB events in the years ahead.”

Teaching at the college level since 2002, Dr. Shaia is an assistant professor at UAB and an expert in areas of public relations, leadership, media law, politics and media, crisis management, and ethics. Leo Shaia is the owner of Leo A. Shaia Properties and serves on several business and not-for-profit boards.

The Shaias’ donation seems right at home tucked into one end of the house’s large living room. The piano that previously occupied the space was moved to the Department of Music in the UAB College of Arts and Sciences.

“We never considered giving it to anyone else,” Dr. Shaia said. “We love UAB. We love Birmingham. It was just meant to be.”

Longtime UAB supporters donate Steinway grand piano to Woodward House

Do you have something of value to share with UAB? Contact Kimberley S. Coppock, kcoppock@uab.edu; 205.975.5970; uab.planmylegacy.org
“State-of-the-art facilities are key to attracting quality students and faculty alike,” said Optometry Dean Kelly K. Nichols, OD, MPH, PhD. “There is tremendous excitement and anticipation surrounding the effort to renovate and update the students floors in the Peters building – the first major renovation to those floors since the building’s 1974 opening.”

Plans include expanding the Clinical Evaluation of Visual Systems area to include 15 exam lanes, one of which will be an exact replica of the National Board Examination Room. An adjoining classroom offers video access to each lane. Standard classrooms will be replaced with flexible classrooms, allowing for more small group discussions, analysis, and collaboration.

Third floor updates will bring even greater focus to the student experience. A large student lounge will create a location for daytime breaks and late-night study sessions, with a locker room and student activities offices located nearby. The Office of Student Affairs will also move to the third floor.

Several alumni have already taken advantage of naming opportunities. Howard Day, OD, and Sharon Day, OD, of Gardendale, both 1987 graduates who met in optometry school, have a long history of supporting scholarships at the School of Optometry. “We named two windows,” Howard Day said. “We remember spending four years in class with no windows, and saw an opportunity to help the next generation learn to help others through this gift.”

Associate Professor Felton Perry, OD, who graduated in 1974, also chose a space with personal meaning. “I grew up in West Birmingham, the son of a steelworker and a schoolteacher, and I wanted their name on a plaque because they put me through school and encouraged me every step of the way,” he said. “A closet seemed fitting because I am, after all, something of a packrat.

“UAB is the crown jewel of Birmingham – economic impact, international reputation, the opportunity for a first-class education. It’s a great investment.”

For information: Peggy Striplin, striplin@uab.edu; 205.934.9838.
Carl E. Dukes, MD, calls his decision to train in internal medicine at UAB “the best move I ever made.” That gratitude led him to invest in helping UAB train a physician workforce that reflects a diverse society.

The Carl E. Dukes, MD, Minority Residency Pipeline Endowed Support Fund aids UAB’s effort to recruit the most qualified minority residents by offering opportunities, instruction and guidance – the same benefits he received during his training.

Dr. Dukes came of age in Atlanta in the 1960s and was deeply influenced by the events of the time. He grew up among the children of faculty at Morehouse College and Spelman College – in his words, “Men and women who had received doctorates from top-tier universities like Harvard, MIT, and Berkeley. This exposure reinforced my sense of confidence and purpose, so I never really thought of myself as being intellectually or culturally inferior.”

After graduating from a segregated high school in 1967, Dr. Dukes studied theoretical mathematics at Cornell University and attended medical school at the University of Rochester. “My chief of medicine was really excited about what he described as a fantastic clinical program that was under the tutelage of one of his dear friends, Dr. Thomas N. James (Chair of Medicine at UAB from 1973-1981),” he recalls. “You can imagine my surprise when he told me the program was in Birmingham, Alabama. I had spent the past eight years trying to get north of the Mason-Dixon Line.”

“The clinical program was so strong and they trained you so well,” he adds. “I am of the Tinsley Harrison school, which means I can actually use my stethoscope. I know what a heart sounds like; I can do a physical diagnosis. In the days before CT scans and other technology, we had to be very adept clinicians. And we were fortunate enough to learn from the best.”

Dr. Dukes completed residency in 1979, and was UAB’s first African-American chief medical resident. He followed his UAB mentors Thomas E. Andreoli, MD, Stephen G. Rostand, MD, and Edwin A. Rutsky, MD, into nephrology, first in Houston and then San Antonio, where he operates a dialysis center.

“The training I received at UAB has kept me heads above other clinicians since I’ve been in practice,” he says. “And my clinic has been very successful. I’ve been very blessed.”

For information on supporting residency training: Mallie Hale, mshale@uab.edu; 205.975.5661
Jane Knight Lowe of Huntsville found a way to help others. Mrs. Lowe, who suffered from severe arthritis, established Jane Knight Lowe Endowed Chair in the UAB Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology in 1986 to help fund research. Gene V. Ball, MD, who was Mrs. Lowe’s physician, was the first recipient, holding the professorship until his retirement in 1997.

Current holder Kenneth Saag, MD, MSc, director of the UAB Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and Education, said the endowment has helped grow his research program at UAB. “Mrs. Lowe’s generosity has allowed my research team to make scientific discoveries that we hope will lead to improved health care for others suffering with arthritis and osteoporosis,” he said.

By 2001, the Jane Knight Lowe Charitable Foundation had contributed $1 million to complete funding for another endowed chair to support rheumatology research. Professor Emerita Graciela Alarcón, MD was the first recipient of the Jane Knight Lowe Chair of Medicine in Rheumatology. “In addition to the recognition, funds from the chair allowed me the flexibility to continue my research in lupus among minority populations in the United States, certainly the highlight of my academic career at UAB,” said Dr. Alarcón.

Jane Knight Lowe Foundation funds also support the UAB Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology’s annual Lowe Conference for current and former fellows and faculty. “This annual scientific meeting are a constant reminder of Mrs. Lowe’s dedication to rheumatology and provide a legacy of innovation and collaboration toward research excellence,” said S. Louis Bridges, Jr., MD, PhD, the Marguerite Jones Harbert-Gene V. Ball, MD Professor of Medicine.

The foundation also funds the Jane Knight Lowe Medical Scholarship for students from Madison County who have been admitted through UAB’s Early Medical School Acceptance Program or who are enrolled at the School of Medicine’s Huntsville Regional Campus. It also funds the Jane Knight Lowe Undergraduate Scholarship for Madison County students who are pursuing degrees in health-related professions.

Mrs. Lowe and her husband, Robert, owned Lowe Hereford Farm in Madison and Limestone Counties, Alabama. During her lifetime, Mrs. Lowe gave numerous gifts to educational institutions. When she died in August 1997 at the age of 95, Mrs. Lowe left most of her estate to the Jane K. Lowe Charitable Foundation.

“I think part of her interest in charitable work sprang from the fact that she devoted her life in large part to charity and trying to improve the human condition,” said Foundation Trustee John Wynn. “That passion permeated her life and was reflected in her will. She gave the trustees latitude to ‘Do what I would do.’ It’s been an honor to carry on this legacy and continue her good work.”

After 30 years, the Foundation will be dissolved and its assets distributed to UAB and five other charitable organizations. The Jane Knight Lowe Foundation is expected to distribute more than $20 million over its 30-year lifespan.
For University of Alabama System Trustee Britt Sexton, investing in education has a family connection.

“My father was a recipient of a university athletic scholarship, becoming the first in his family to attend college,” said Trustee Sexton, CEO of Sexton, Inc., an investment management firm in Decatur, Ala. “The scholarship was his foundation – his opportunity to grow into the man he became. He never lost his perspective on the importance of that gift, and he passed that insight on to me.”

Inspired by his father’s story, Trustee Sexton and his wife, Susan, established an endowed scholarship in UAB’s Honors Program, where it benefits some of UAB’s most promising students. They also made a recent gift to support the UAB Athletics Foundation.

“Our gift checked all the philanthropy boxes: the emotion when thinking of a student’s opportunity to learn in this environment; knowing that dollars are going to a good cause; the sense of urgency as it relates to athletic endeavors, and finally the faith that I have in President Watts, Dr. Vickers and the other leaders at UAB,” Sexton said.

“UAB, both the undergraduate and medical components, are extremely important to this state. Susan and I are pleased to partner with UAB in educating and supporting our new generation of doctors, leaders, researchers and entrepreneurs.”

Trustee Vanessa Leonard, an attorney in Rockford, Ala., has supported several UAB programs, including the Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center and the Alys Stephens Center. Her most recent gift – to help increase enrollment of minority students from rural areas through scholarships – has a personal connection, as it is similar to a program that she participated in prior to attending the University of Alabama. She has also been impressed with a scholarship program for underrepresented minority students at UAB, under the direction of Dr. Louis Dale, longtime Vice President for Equity and Diversity.

Such scholarships not only help the recipients, but they also have an impact on the communities from which they come, said Paulette Patterson Dilworth, PhD, UAB’s new Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. “These students aspire to succeed, and when they do, they inspire other students from those small communities to succeed, too,” she said. “Scholarships not only help these students defray the cost of education; they also recognize and reward students for their hard work and academic achievement.”

Trustee Leonard knows the power of this kind of investment. “I participated in a very similar program more than 30 years ago, and I know it made a difference for me,” she said. “I live and practice in a county of 12,000 people, with just one high school. Helping students succeed – and perhaps return to their home communities after getting a great education – is important for Alabama, and it is important to me.”

For information on supporting your favorite program at UAB: Tom Brannan, tbrannan@uab.edu; 205.934.0177
Benjamin Franklin is remembered as the father of many famous firsts – but here’s one you may not know about.

Franklin devised the first matching gift program in 1751 when he persuaded the Pennsylvania Assembly to appropriate 2,000 pounds of public money to establish Pennsylvania Hospital if the citizens of Philadelphia could first raise 2,000 pounds of private funds. He succeeded, and the hospital opened later that year.

Today, companies large and small match employee gifts to qualifying charities, including UAB. Since the start of The Campaign for UAB, more than $550,000 has been contributed by 128 companies to match gifts by their employees.

Companies view matching employee charitable contributions as part of their own charitable giving. “Vulcan Materials Company’s matching gifts program helps us invest in communities across the country through employee donations,” says Carol Maxwell, manager of the company’s foundation. “With a focus on education, we donate two dollars for every dollar donated to educational institutions by our employees. We are proud to stand alongside them in support of UAB, helping to strengthen its various educational and medical programs.

“It’s just another way we help build stronger communities.”

To see if your company matches charitable gifts, visit matchinggifts.com/uab. The impact of your gift to UAB may be doubled or even tripled, depending on company policy. Some companies also match gifts made by retirees and/or spouses.

For information: matchinggifts.com/uab
A gift of $1.5 million from BBVA Compass has funded UAB’s new playing field for men’s and women’s soccer. BBVA Compass Field’s playing surface was completed in late fall 2015; the next phase of construction includes the stadium structure.

“BBVA Compass Field will showcase one of the world’s most popular sports and serve as a gathering place for everyone in UAB’s diverse community,” said BBVA Compass Chairman and CEO Manolo Sánchez. “Our goal is to contribute in whatever way we can to the momentum that’s pushing UAB and Birmingham to such tremendous heights.”

Under the leadership of head coach Mike Getman, the UAB men’s team has won six Conference USA titles and made seven NCAA appearances. “Recruits will know they are joining a program that is first class, and that the university and our community support the team,” Getman said. “We have already seen benefits in recruiting.”

“The ability to attract ACC, Big 12 and Big 10 schools for play helps the program’s competitive growth,” said Head Women’s Coach Harold Warren, who helped coach the University of Southern California to a national championship in 2007.

UAB has named its softball field in grateful recognition of gifts given by Mary and Keith A. Bowers to support the softball program and founding head coach Marla Townsend.

Mr. and Mrs. Bowers enjoyed 50 years of marriage before she passed away Dec. 13, 2009. “Mary is the reason we decided to give this gift,” Mr. Bowers said. “She was quite an athlete in her day. We started going to athletic events when we started going together, and she got me into women’s sports, showing me they can be just as athletic as men. We supported UAB Athletics for nearly 30 years. Through this, Mary became friends with Marla Townsend and decided that with these funds she wanted to help provide an optimum experience for UAB’s student-athletes.”

The facility, which opened in 2010, seats 350 and includes recessed dugouts with restroom facilities, bullpens for each team, a scorer’s platform with public address system, and a state-of-the-art video scoreboard.

To support UAB Athletics: Brad Hardekopf, hardebp@uab.edu; 205.996.5219