

Monday, Oct. 2, 2017

Blank Foundation gifts \$1 million to UGA College of Pharmacy to support students in need

Athens, Ga. – The University of Georgia College of Pharmacy has received a \$1 million gift from the Molly Blank Fund of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation to establish the Max and Molly Blank Student Enrichment Endowment. According to Svein Øie, dean of the College of Pharmacy, this donation will help alleviate financial burdens that may impede pharmacy students in need from entering or completing their studies.

“We are extremely grateful to the Blank family for helping us create this endowment at the College of Pharmacy,” said Svein Øie, dean of the College of Pharmacy. “Because of the Blanks’ generosity, current and prospective pharmacy students who are experiencing hardships will receive support so that they can pursue their education and career aspirations. In turn, these students will give back to society by using their acquired knowledge to serve the health care needs of others.”

Emergency funds will be distributed to pharmacy students in need at the discretion of the dean and an appointed internal committee.

The Blank’s gift to the College of Pharmacy honors their family members who have had careers in the pharmaceutical industry. Max Blank, Arthur’s father, was a pharmacist in New York, and Arthur’s brother, Michael, is a retired consultant from the generic pharmaceutical industry.

“My brother Michael and I are pleased to be able honor our mother’s legacy through a gift to the Pharmacy School at the University of Georgia from the Molly Blank Fund,” said Blank. “It is very appropriate that this endowment is named for our father and mother, as they were both deeply engaged in the pharmacy business. Our parents would have been gratified to support students who face financial challenges as they endeavor to be pharmacists.”

“Support from organizations such as the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation is key to our mission to support the welfare of our students,” said Dana E. Strickland, the College of Pharmacy’s executive director of external affairs, who was instrumental in securing the gift from the Blank Foundation. “We thank the Blanks for their contribution, especially on behalf of the students who will be the beneficiaries of their generosity.”

Strickland prepared the grant application that secured the funding, along with College of Pharmacy faculty members Danielle Vitale, director of recruitment; Trina Von Waldner, director of postgraduate continuing education and outreach; and Vivia Hill-Silcott, director of diversity outreach and academic support.

Strickland added, “It has been my distinct privilege to work with Staci Brill, philanthropic and fundraising consultant for The Eplan Group, a philanthropic advisory group from Atlanta, and Lea Bond, program associate with the Blank Family Foundation, during the process of securing this gift. They have made this experience a pleasure, and we have been impressed with their professional service.”

In addition to the College of Pharmacy donation, a gift of \$500,000 to UGA from the Blank Foundation will create the Angela and Arthur M. Blank Scholarship Fund to support educational opportunities for students residing in the Westside communities of Atlanta. Three first-year students and two additional undergraduates enrolled at the university this fall have been awarded the scholarships.

The Blank Foundation’s \$500,000 gift will be matched by an additional \$500,000 from the UGA Foundation through the Georgia Commitment Scholarship Program, which was announced by Morehead in January to increase the number of need-based scholarships available at UGA. Including these five scholarships, the university has established more than 130 Georgia Commitment Scholarships to date.

Formed in 1995, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation promotes innovative solutions to transform the lives of youth and their families, seeking results that move communities beyond what seems possible today. Blank, who is chairman of the foundation, co-founded The Home Depot, the world’s largest home improvement retailer, in 1978 and retired from the company as co-chairman in 2001. Through the foundation and his family’s personal giving, Blank has granted more than \$300 million to various charitable organizations.

The Blank Foundation created The Molly Blank Fund in 2015 to honor the memory of Blank’s mother, who was committed to various community causes and organizations. She was known to often share with others, “Everything we strive to do in life is a gift. It’s our responsibility to share it, to give back to the world.”

About the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy: Founded in 1903, the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy delivers high quality education, research opportunities, experiential programs and service learning in order to advance the pharmacy profession, as well as the pharmaceutical and biomedical sciences. As the largest pharmacy school in the State of Georgia, the college offers a Doctor of Pharmacy degree (PharmD), along with several graduate programs and one undergraduate degree. For further information, see <http://rx.uga.edu/>.

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