

Opportunity scholarships provide immediate and long-lasting support

Donors and students benefit from gift that blends financial support with mentorship

ANU DAIRKEE HAD A PLAN, and she followed it perfectly: pre-med, medical school, internship, residency, fellowship. But something didn't feel right. "I quickly realized that to effectively advocate for better and more equitable health care, a law degree would be of immense help," Dairkee says. Loyola University Chicago School of Law, with its renowned health law program, seemed like the next step.

However, there were serious considerations to weigh. "Making the choice to go back to school at a later stage in life with two children was a challenging one," Dairkee says, "because of the time commitment and the financial commitment."

A key factor in her decision to enroll at the School of Law? Receiving an opportunity scholarship. This unique scholarship model combines long-term support with mentorship. Donors commit to an annual gift of \$10,000 for three years and also assist their recipients in other ways, such as by offering career guidance or making introductions to their professional networks.

Dairkee is the second recipient of the Ed and Bobbi Walsh Opportunity Scholarship. The Walshes were among the first

donors to establish a scholarship when the program launched five years ago. "What appealed to us most was simply helping a law student in need," says Ed Walsh (JD '73). "The law school was extremely generous to us when I was a student. I consider it almost a moral imperative to give back to Loyola."

A tool for recruitment

Like the Walshes, Freddi Greenberg (JD '75) gives back to the law school on a consistent

and generous basis. In 2015, she established an endowed scholarship. And when she learned about the opportunity scholarship, Greenberg saw a way to make a different kind of impact.

"I love the idea of making the School of Law available to a very fine student who could not afford it otherwise," Greenberg says. "This scholarship encourages talented people to attend Loyola."

Greenberg also was impressed with the scholarship's three-year duration. "I like the certainty

it provides, as well as the possibility that a student can take time that might have been spent working and instead spend it in an internship or extracurricular activities."

Kathleen Kivarkis, the current recipient of Greenberg's opportunity scholarship, agrees with this assessment. As a child of parents who arrived in the U.S. as refugees, Kivarkis grew up watching her parents struggle to find an economic foothold. For Kivarkis, scholarships represent more than reduced tuition. "[They've] granted me a sense of financial security, a feeling I have rarely felt," she says.

While every scholarship at the School of Law opens doors, not all scholarships operate in the same way. For example, Greenberg appreciates the permanence and longevity of her endowed scholarship—it will last in perpetuity—but as a function of that setup, she won't meet every recipient of her generosity. With the opportunity scholarship, she will.

"Since it's initially given when an individual is starting law school, you can develop an ongoing rapport," Greenberg says. "You can be a resource, offer connections and advice,

hear how it's going right from the beginning. You can see how you're making an immediate difference in someone's life."

Meaningful mentoring

The mentoring relationship at the heart of each opportunity scholarship makes it distinctly different from a traditional scholarship gift. While it's up to the donors and their recipients to determine the nature of the mentorship, many donors say that getting to know their scholars is one of the best parts of the experience.

"What I've done with each of my students is set them up with various lawyers and judges whom I know, who might be able to give their perspectives and their thoughts on the practice and the profession," Walsh says. "It's a way for the student to gain insight and direction from longstanding practitioners."

Walsh follows his students' cues when offering networking assistance; he knows his scholars are juggling many demands. One of the Walsh scholarship's stipulations is that the recipient be a parent of a young child or children, as Walsh was when he attended the School of Law.

"I know how extremely difficult and demanding law school is, and it becomes qualitatively more difficult when you have a family," he says. "We take great comfort in knowing that we're making that challenge just a little bit easier for our students."

Starting this fall, the Walshes will be the first donors to financially and professionally support two students simultaneously.

"We have not forgotten how Loyola was there for us when we needed help," Walsh says. "For us to stand up and give back as we are makes us feel like we're surely doing the right thing."

Reverberating impact

Amanda Wayne, the inaugural recipient of the Bran Harvey Opportunity Scholarship, has four donors on standby to provide encouragement and professional support. Ryan Bush (JD '10), Donald Cole (JD '09), Matt Glavin (JD '09), and Chip Leen (JD '09) established their opportunity scholarship in

memory of a dear friend and classmate, Bran Harvey (JD '09).

"We are very grateful that Bran's name and memory will be associated with helping other people because that's what Bran did for all of us," Glavin says. "He was like an older brother. He was the kind of person who was always making life easier for others."

The friends decided that the mentoring aspect made the opportunity scholarship a fitting memorial for Harvey. They knew that Harvey would have been the first to volunteer his time, wisdom, and connections.

It also was important to the group that the recipient be a "striver"—someone who maybe didn't have the easiest path to law school but never gave up. Wayne fit this description.

"Becoming a lawyer was something that never seemed attainable, given my family's poverty and lack of education," Wayne says. "The Bran Harvey Opportunity Scholarship was an amazing and unexpected gift."

The four friends look forward to future get-togethers with Wayne, Harvey's wife, Lisa, and their two children.

"Amanda is working really hard to make law school a reality, just like Bran did," Glavin says. "We plan on using our relationships to network on her behalf and help foster her career. We're proud of our gift, but we want this to be more than just writing a check."

While this opportunity scholarship is the first established by a group of people, Glavin hopes it won't be the last. He'd love to see annual donors join together to give back in this way.

"An endowed scholarship requires a larger financial commitment; this option matched the level where a lot of us were," he says. "It was a more accessible way to have an impact."

As with all opportunity scholarships, there's no limit to the impact it can make. "I hope alumni understand how much good these scholarships can do and how much they mean to the recipients," Wayne says. "I grew up in the foster care system, and I am planning to use my law degree to make positive changes for future generations of vulnerable children. This scholarship has helped make that opportunity possible." —*Kelsey Schagemann*



OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to the Ed and Bobbi Walsh, Freddi Greenberg, and Bran Harvey opportunity scholarships, the School of Law offers:

Steven Lisker (JD '80)
Opportunity Scholarship

Kelli Moll (JD '93)
Opportunity Scholarship

Carol and Terry Moritz (BS '66, JD '70)
Opportunity Scholarship

Anne Pollard (JD '93)
Opportunity Scholarship

Morton Sennett Memorial
Opportunity Scholarship

To learn more about opportunity scholarships, visit LUC.edu/law/GiveBack.