Music experiences on campus provide passion behind Caldwells’ $4 million U-M campaign gift

As Ford Motor Company’s chief financial officer, Will Caldwell (BA ’48, MBA ’49) of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, drew daily on business principles learned in college and the workplace. It was his former University of Michigan speech and drama professor, however, who served as a motivation for his recent $4 million Michigan Difference campaign commitment.

Together with his wife, Jeanne Caldwell, Will is providing the School of Music, the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, the Stephen M. Ross School of Business, and the Comprehensive Cancer Center with gifts of $1 million each. The gifts to LS&A and Business honor the late professor Richard Dennis Teall Hollister; the gift to the Cancer Center will fund research and patient support efforts.

The Caldwells’ School of Music contribution reflects an ongoing passion that Will traces back to his years on campus, when he was a Choral Union season ticket holder—first row, balcony. At Hill Auditorium, he attended every May Festival concert with memorable performances by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

“My experience with music at U-M was first class,” he said. “Although I had been in the Navy and had several semesters of college, my time at U-M was key to my personal growth and maturation. In particular, I came of age through music—through Choral Union concerts, May Festival, and performances by students in the School of Music. My Michigan experience was shaped by the accessibility of music on the campus.”

Their gift benefits the School’s 125th Anniversary, construction of the Charles R. Walgreen, Jr. Drama Center and Arthur Miller Theatre, career development, and discretionary spending for the dean.

For now the Caldwells look forward to watching their generosity put to great use. “Happily, Jeanne and I have been able to pass on our deep appreciation of music to our children and grandchildren,” Will said. “To have an opportunity to inspire others through our support of the 125th Anniversary Celebration was a natural for us. We are pleased to be able to share our love of music and the outstanding variety and quality of performances with the Michigan campus community as well as Southeast Michigan and beyond. Music is the universal language.”

“There’s a lot of satisfaction that comes from seeing (the impact) first hand,” Will said. “The more direct association you’ve had with the recipients, the better.”

Based on an article from the Winter 2006 issue of Leaders & Best, a University of Michigan publication
Two recent bequests to the School of Music, totaling over $2 million, will have a significant impact on the school’s ability to attract top-notch students.

**M. Virginia Stevenson**, a long-time contributor to the Friends of Opera, passed away last March. Her estate designated the University of Michigan School of Music as a considerable beneficiary. This gift has thereby established the M. Virginia Stevenson Friends of Opera Scholarship Fund, for promising young students in the opera/voice program, and the M. Virginia Stevenson Scholarship Fund, to assist students in any School of Music program. Virginia made modest but consistent gifts to the School of Music throughout her lifetime and was a tireless enthusiast for our aspiring performers.

The School of Music lost its own **Rosemary Russell**, professor emerita of voice, in November (see obituary, Fall 2005 M@M). Rosemary, too, had included the School of Music in her estate plan. Through her generous bequest and memorial gifts made by her friends, the Rosemary Russell Endowed Scholarship Fund will support scholarships for voice majors.

For information on how you can include the University of Michigan School of Music in your estate plan, please contact Carrie Throm, Director of Development & External Relations, at 734-764-4453 or cthrom@umich.edu.