Scholarship gift honors the Wrights  By Kate Villars

As James Wright stepped down from the presidency of Dartmouth College earlier this year, the College received almost $16 million in gift commitments in honor of Wright and his wife, Susan Debevoise Wright. Among these was a $1-million gift from Peter and Helen Fahey to establish the Susan DeBevoise and James E. Wright Scholarship Fund at Dartmouth Medical School.

Peter Fahey, DC ’68 and Thayer ’70, is a Trustee of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and cochair of both the Transforming Medicine Campaign and Dartmouth College’s Campaign for the Dartmouth Experience. Fahey was also a member of the Dartmouth College Board of Trustees in 1998 when it appointed James Wright as the College’s 16th president. Now, 11 years later, the Faheys’ gift is a tribute to Wright’s achievements.

“The cause at Dartmouth that is closest to Jim Wright’s heart is financial aid. Student scholarships assure that the most talented people come to Dartmouth regardless of their ability to pay,” explains Fahey. “Medical professionals take an extraordinarily long time to train, and they routinely enter the profession with six-figure levels of debt, so I think they need all the help they can get.”

The Faheys, whose four children are also Dartmouth graduates, have been leadership donors to the College and the Medical Center, supporting a range of priorities. Over more than 35 years of giving, they have supported a number of facilities projects, endowed an undergraduate scholarship, established an endowment for Dartmouth athletics, and provided generous unrestricted support through the annual funds. In 2006, the College opened the new Fahey Residence Hall on Tuck Mall and the Fahey Advanced Design Laboratory in the MacLean Engineering Sciences Building at Dartmouth’s Thayer School of Engineering.

Honored role
A dedicated alumnus who has given countless hours of service to Dartmouth in addition to his philanthropic support, Fahey views DMS and DHMC as tremendous assets to the College. “I think Dartmouth Medical School has a very honored role within the Dartmouth community,” says Fahey. “People interact with Dartmouth through Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and the services it provides to the local and bi-state community. On a national level, the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice is arguably Dartmouth’s most significant intellectual voice right now, as a result of the insights it has developed related to healthcare costs.”

“I know the talent of students at Dartmouth Medical School is extraordinary,” adds Fahey. “Through our gift to support scholarships at DMS, Helen and I saw the opportunity to help sustain that excellence, while also honoring Jim and Susan Wright in a way that has real meaning to them.”
Class acts: DMS reunion giving

As Dartmouth Medical School alumni prepare to return to campus for their reunions in October, a friendly competition is heating up. Several of the reunion classes are vying for top honors in this year’s class giving to the Fund for DMS (FDMS).

Led by enthusiastic reunion-giving volunteers, the Classes of ’69, ’79, ’84, and ’94 will try to outdo one another to reach the highest participation level in this year’s reunion giving campaign. Kudos will also go to the class that makes the largest gift to the FDMS. Over the last several months, committee members have been busy shaking the bushes—writing and calling their classmates to make the case for support.

As the Medical School’s annual fund, the Fund for DMS provides critical unrestricted support that can be put to use wherever the need or opportunity is greatest. Its goal for FY10 is $600,000. DMS faculty, staff, parents, and friends join alumni in supporting the fund.

Dr. Scott Zashin ’84 is chair of the 25th Reunion Gift Committee. As a student at DMS, he gained an appreciation of the role alumni play in supporting the School when John Moran ’55 invited him to participate in soliciting annual fund gifts from alumni. Zashin made his first gift to the FDMS the year he graduated and has been a loyal donor ever since.

Positive impact
Zashin encourages his classmates to give for the same reason he does: appreciation. “I enjoy giving to Dartmouth Medical School,” Zashin says, “because it has had such a positive impact on my life—first, giving me the opportunity to become a physician, and then helping me to be the best doctor I can be. Supporting the annual fund is a way for each of us to give something back to the School in appreciation for what it’s done for us.”

Competition among classes extends to past record holders. Can this year’s 30th reunion class top last year’s 30th participation rate of 54%? Can the Class of 1994 exceed last year’s 15th reunion gift of $38,000 from the Class of 1993? Can this year’s reunion classes together surpass last year’s totals?

The overall records for reunion giving are held by the Class of 1980 for its 25th reunion gift of $222,550, and the Class of 1952 for its 75% participation for its 55th reunion in 2007. Zashin hopes the Class of 1984 will top that with 100% participation this year.

Some reunion gift committees have found creative ways to encourage classmates to give. In 2007, Dr. John Houde ’92 issued a matching challenge to his classmates and distributed bumper stickers that read “DMS ’92 15th Reunion: Make Houde Pay.” This year, the Class of 1984 is encouraging its members to make 25th reunion gifts in honor of their favorite DMS professors. Many reunion gifts are multiyear pledges; the total counts towards the reunion gift but donors can establish a payment schedule that meets their needs.

The reunion classes will present their class gifts to Dr. William Green, DMS’s dean, during the October 2–4 reunion weekend. What will the winners receive? A dose of class pride and the knowledge that they are helping to provide the next generation of doctors and scientists with the best education and training possible.

If you add a little to a little, and then do it again, soon that little shall be much.
—Hesiod, 8th-century B.C. Greek poet

Raising the bar
The financial goal of the Transforming Medicine Campaign for Dartmouth Medical School and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is to raise $250 million by 2009. Even more far-reaching is its goal of “raising the bar” in medicine. Of questioning assumptions—respecting tradition but not following it blindly. Of erasing boundaries—translating science from the lab bench to the bedside by connecting researchers with clinicians. Of creating solutions to the nation’s most critical health-care issues. Of transforming medicine.

Campaign update
Gifts and pledges to the Transforming Medicine Campaign for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, totaled $40 million, bringing the Campaign to over $236 million. Almost 31,000 donors gave to the Campaign during the past 12 months, topping participation in any previous year.

Dartmouth-Hitchcock’s vision of achieving the healthiest population possible is generating excitement and strong support from donors. Recent commitments to the Campaign include $2 million from Richard and Barbara Couch of Hanover for the Dartmouth Institute’s new Center for Population Health. A gift from Hank and Lynn Hope-man is providing three years of seed funding for a new health promotion initiative that will integrate and build on an array of existing disease prevention programs across DHMC and the Norris Cotton Cancer Center.

Learning more
For more about the Transforming Medicine Campaign, visit http://transmed.dartmouth.edu.