

Rescue, Renewal and Possibility

How donors have built the Bucknell we know today.

By Theresa Gawlas Medoff '85, P'13

It was the midst of the Depression, and the University was already suffering financially when it received another devastating blow. Fire raged through Old Main (now Roberts Hall), completely destroying the central portion, severely damaging both wings and rendering the entire building unusable. Classrooms, dormitories, the University's only large assembly room and most of its administrative offices had all gone up in flames.

With no money to rebuild, the administration was forced to make do in other campus spaces, while what remained of Old Main was roofed over to preserve the building's remnants until a hoped-for miracle. That miracle came over the next several years, as two University trustees stepped forward with major gifts to supplement smaller amounts of monies being donated by alumni and friends to a rebuilding campaign. Together, trustees Charles P. Vaughan and Daniel C. Roberts

gave more than 40 percent of the Old Main reconstruction cost. The new building was completed in 1937, and as Bucknellians know, Roberts Hall remains an important part of campus life to this day.

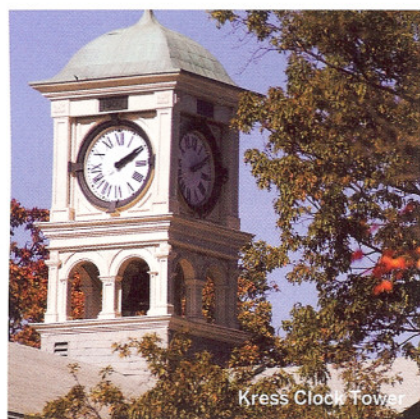
Stories such as this abound in Bucknell's history. A new building is needed, scholarship resources must be increased, an academic or athletics program needs support, and donors step forward to make the difference. Read how they have done so.

Building a University The University came into existence not only because of the determination of its founders, but also because so many different people — 4,484 to be exact — reached into their pockets and gave what they could. To obtain a charter, the University at Lewisburg, as it was originally known, needed to prove that it had \$100,000 in supporter subscriptions. Pledges ranged from \$1 to the \$12,500 given by David Jayne & Sons (inflation-adjusted values today of approximately \$25 to \$35,000). The majority of donors gave less than \$20 (or about \$500 in today's dollars).

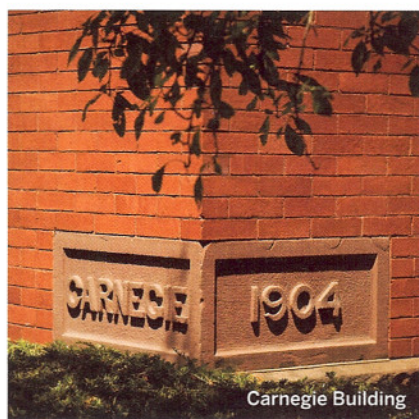
Twenty years after the University was founded, the president and the Board of Trustees initiated a new campaign for endowment. With more than 20 percent of the goal still to be raised, the campaign was running out of steam until John P. Crozer stepped forward with a substantial gift. Crozer stipulated that his gift be used to endow a professorship, and thus originated Bucknell's first endowed chair, the Crozer Chair of English Literature, currently held by Professor of English Harold Schweizer. Today, Bucknell has 21 named chairs, professorships and faculty fellowships. These named positions not only confer honor and scholarly resources upon the faculty recipient, but also ensure that the position will endure and free monies for the improvement of

other University programs.

One of the University's most storied contributors came to the rescue in 1880 when the school was on the verge of bankruptcy. The aftereffects of the Civil War, escalating operating costs, and the "dismal failure" of an endowment campaign compelled a desperate President David Hill to approach early donor William Bucknell for a bailout. He agreed to give, on the condition that the University obtain a matching amount from other donors. Alumni and friends came through, and the University was saved. Grateful for the University's salvation, the Board of Trustees voted in 1886 to rename the school Bucknell University.



Kress Clock Tower



Carnegie Building



Bertrand Library

Other Historic Gifts

Bucknell giving history was made in 1886 when the University received its first bequest, from the estate of alumnus **William H. Backus**. Then, with her bequest in 1926, **Katherine B. Larison**, Class of 1867, became the first woman in the University's history to give a major gift independent of a spouse. Larison, who was the beloved, longtime head of Bucknell's Female Institute, had been a generous donor throughout her many years at the University.

A real-estate gift from trustee James S. Swartz made a much greater impact than he ever imagined. In 1923, Swartz gave 594 acres of unimproved Virginia land along the Potomac to Bucknell and persuaded his British friend Henry J. Loftus to donate his adjacent 250 acres. Swartz told the Board of Trustees that he had paid \$30,000 for his property, and some time later, according to *The Virginia Lands of Bucknell University*, he reportedly said that if Bucknell should ever be offered \$100,000 for the land, "they should quickly accept this offer 'and ask no questions.'"

Instead, the trustees, foreseeing that the property would appreciate as Virginia developed further, held onto the land, selling portions of it over the years. By the time the last of the land was sold in 1955, Bucknell had realized \$1.2 million. The University's name lives on in Fairfax County, Va., which is home to the Bucknell Elementary School and the housing development Bucknell Manor.

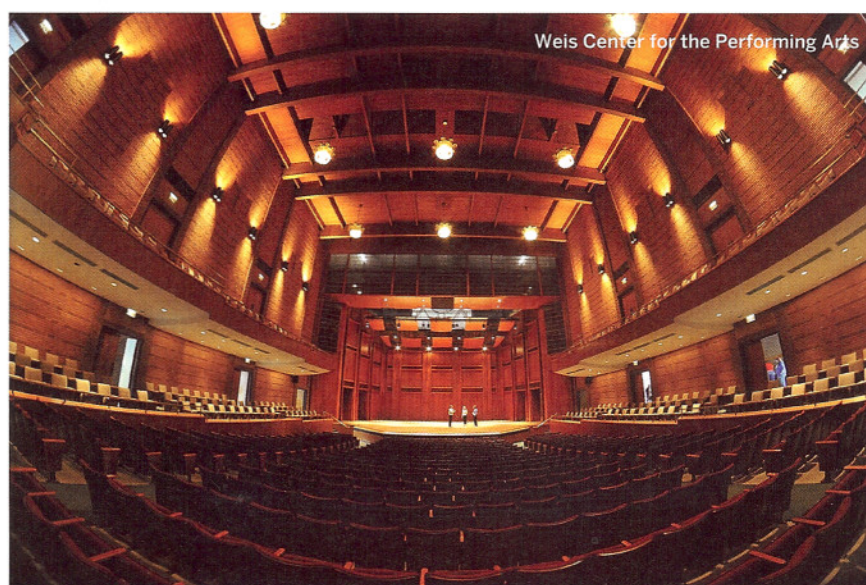
The University's centennial inspired trustee **Rush H. Kress**, Class of 1900, to contribute a full 10 percent of the University's ambitious goal of raising

money for endowment and enlargement of the physical plant. Even before that campaign, Kress had been a loyal and generous donor, and his benevolence prompted Bucknell to name a residence hall in his honor.

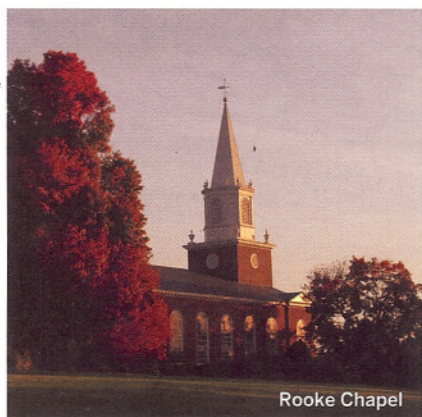
The library was established early on when William Duncan donated 42 rare books to Bucknell, but it wasn't until 1905 that the University established its first freestanding library building, Carnegie Hall, thanks to a gift from Pittsburgh steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, who was well known for supporting libraries. But by far the greatest gift for Bucknell's library — and one of the University's most significant gifts ever — came in the mid-20th century, when Ellen Clarke Bertrand began her affiliation with the University. Over a period of years, Bertrand gave much of the cost for the new, much larger library which bears her name. Recognizing that a building also needs funds on which to run, she bequeathed millions toward the library endowment. The inflation-adjusted value of that bequest, \$25,860,545, remains Bucknell's most valuable individual gift ever.

"I am thankful every day when I see Ellen Clarke Bertrand's name on this building and think of what she has done for Bucknell," says Param Bedi, vice president for Library and Information Technology. "Not only did her gifts fund the construction of the building but, half a century after she gave her bequest, the endowment that it set up supports the operations of the library, which includes books, databases, online journals and rare and unique materials for Special Collections/University Archives. The other beauty of her generous gift is that it serves everyone, for the library is the intellectual center of campus."

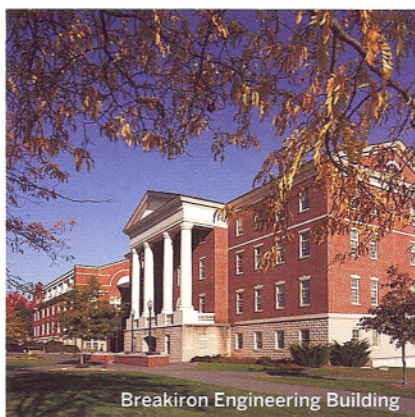
By the late 1970s, library holdings and space requirements had made the existing library building woefully inadequate, and library expansion was declared the highest priority of the Campaign for Bucknell in the 1980s. Once again, Bucknell alumni and friends came through generously, and the Ellen Clarke Bertrand Library, nearly doubled in size, was rededicated in 1986.



Weis Center for the Performing Arts



Rooke Chapel



Breakiron Engineering Building

Bucknell Continues to Grow

The names **Robert L. Rooke**, Class of 1913, and **A. Guy Freas** are familiar to alumni, and with good reason. Together these two friends and former trustees gave significant amounts of money toward the Freas-Rooke Swimming Pool built in 1955, the fieldhouse that opened in 1976 and the University's first computing center. "The two of them became good friends when they were on the Board of Trustees, and from time to time when something was needed by Bucknell, they'd get together and just say, 'Why don't we split it half and half?'" recalls Rooke's son and trustee vice emeritus, Robert C. "Bob" Rooke.

In 1963, the senior Rooke independently contributed the majority of construction costs for Rooke Chapel, named in honor of his parents, Charles and Olive. Freas paid for the construction of Freas Hall, which opened in 1965, finally completing the academic quadrangle nearly 30 years after the first portion of Vaughan Literature Building rose there.

Rooke and Freas had begun a family

tradition of giving to Bucknell that continues to this day. Bob Rooke, trustee vice chair emeritus, and his wife, Natalie, continue to be closely involved with chapel programs. The daughter of Guy Freas, **Leanne Freas Trout '50**, along with her late husband, **David '50**, has likewise been a generous supporter of facilities and programs of the University for many years, and in particular of the French and art departments, which have special meaning to French/art double major Leanne.

"My husband and I just loved our experience at Bucknell, so we were both happy to help support students who couldn't go to Bucknell without assistance," Trout says. "I am so proud of how Bucknell has grown and to see the recognition that it now has nationally."

Bucknell achieved a milestone in 1988 when it unveiled its first-ever dedicated performing arts center: The Weis Center for the Performing Arts, named in honor of the parents of lead donor and then-chair of the Board of Trustees Sigfried Weis. The philanthropy of the late Weis, whose business success came through opening

the chain of supermarkets that bear his family name, was spurred by his desire not only to provide quality education to Bucknell students, but also to make the arts more accessible to residents of central Pennsylvania.

As the years went by, the University's early buildings were not always sufficient for the changing needs of departments and colleges. Such was the case with the School of Engineering, which needed space for more sophisticated laboratories. The athletics facility, too, had become outdated in the three decades since it was built, and the construction of a new athletics and recreation facility was among the goals of Bucknell's last comprehensive campaign (1994–2000).

In both cases, generous gifts from alumni made it feasible to construct the much-needed new buildings. A lead gift from **Kenneth Langone '57** and an additional large donation from **Robert '39** and **Margaret Smith '41** covered two-thirds of the amount needed for the Kenneth G. Langone Athletics and Recreation Center that opened in 2003. The balance of funding was provided by several other significant donors. Longtime trustee **Lauren "Larry" Breakiron '52**, **GP'09** and his wife, Margit, gave the lead gift for the Breakiron Engineering Building that opened in 2004. Not only did the building provide much-needed faculty office space, it also dramatically increased the capacity for laboratories, giving students unprecedented opportunities for research and hands-on learning.

Scholarship Giving Transformed

After saving the University from bankruptcy in 1882, William Bucknell expressed his interest in students more directly by establishing the University's first endowed scholarship in 1883, launching a new way of giving to the University that has been embraced by donors ever since. Today, endowed scholarships help to support about a quarter of student financial aid grants, which total \$47 million annually (see p.28).

Lewisburg resident and friend of the University Michael M. Fremont endowed two different scholarships for students with financial need in the 1990s. Fremont intended that the first, established in 1992, foster international understanding and he therefore requested that it give preference to students who are citizens and residents of countries other than the United States. The creation of that scholarship opened up the University to a new population of international students — those whose families could not afford a Bucknell education without financial assistance.

In most years, about 40 students receive support from the Michael M. and Lillian Amber Fremont Scholarship. Current Fremont students come from all over the world, including Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nepal, Russia, Rwanda and Vietnam. In addition to their grant aid, students receive a small stipend for working with a University program or office on projects intended to increase the awareness of international issues on campus.

"I don't know of any other university with a scholarship like this," says Jennifer Figueroa, director of international student services. "We are really lucky to have the Fremont Scholarship so that we can bring these top international students to Bucknell and support them in enriching campus life with international perspectives."

Without a doubt, the late **Ted Ammon '71** is the donor who has to date had the most impact on Bucknell's ability to offer financial aid to students in need. During the comprehensive campaign of the 1990s, Ammon put out a challenge: He would match a portion of every dollar contributed toward scholarships. By the time the campaign was completed in 2000, Ammon's challenge had spurred alumni and other Bucknell supporters to donate more than \$76 million in scholarship monies that Ammon matched 1:3.

Ammon's challenge had a dramatic impact. Before that comprehensive campaign, Bucknell was able to support fewer than 30 percent of students with University-funded grants, according to Financial Aid Director Andrea Leithner Stauffer. Today, 50 percent of students receive Bucknell grants. The increased availability of grant aid has made a long-term financial difference for recent Bucknell alumni, too. Despite the escalating cost of a college degree, the average student debt load of Bucknell graduates who borrowed for four years has held steady over the past two decades at approximately \$21,000, compared to a national average today of some \$25,000.

Endowing University Programs

Just as Bucknell relies on the generosity of donors to fund buildings and scholarships, so too does it need their interest in University programs. Over the University's history, many donors have come forward to support programs that have a special place in their hearts, and like French and art benefactor Trout, many of them happen to be alumni.

Bucknell had been established as a Baptist University with considerable support from churches and parishioners, and the school retained that Baptist reputation well into the 20th century. A gift in the 1980s from **Stuart Berelson '59, P'85** to fund the Jewish Life Center made the University more appealing to Jewish students by providing a place for them to gather and worship together and by bringing a full-time rabbi to campus for the first time. Today, 10 percent of Bucknell students are Jewish.

Trustee **William Graham '62** had been the captain of his wrestling team at Bucknell, so it naturally concerned him when he learned that the wrestling program was dropped because of both funding issues and the need to maintain adherence to Title IX requirements for men's and women's sports. Graham asked what could be done, and then he did it — coming through with the largest-ever donations to Bucknell women's athletics and wrestling. His gifts allowed wrestling to return to varsity status and continue to support both that program and women's athletics.

Other alumni donors have impacted the means for students to perform research, including Breakiron, **Ernie Kalman '56** and **Richard Emmitt '67**.

A gift from Breakiron led to the 1993 creation of Bucknell's Institute for Leadership in Technology and Management, a program for outstanding rising juniors in engineering, management and the liberal arts to take part in a six-week summer learning experience that prepares them to lead tech-oriented companies.

Breakiron says he was inspired to create the ILTM because of his own career experience as vice president for engineering at UPS. "I found that having a background in engineering hadn't prepared me fully enough — I needed public speaking skills, for example — so I wanted to create a program at Bucknell that would help bridge that gap between engineering and management," Breakiron says.

Bucknell students in every discipline have the opportunity to conduct high-level scholarly research and often to co-author presentations and scholarly articles with their professors. Opportunities for research in the sciences were given a further boost in 1999

when Kalman and his wife, Joan, established two funds for undergraduate research. The University currently has some 20 endowed student research funds in subjects as diverse as music and plant genetics.

Bucknell's College of Engineering grew in 2002 with the addition of the Biomedical Engineering Program. The fledgling program, which began with just one full-time faculty member, was given a boost through Emmitt's gift to endow a chair in biomedical engineering. Bucknell now has approximately 60 majors in this distinct undergraduate biomedical engineering major, one of only a half-dozen in existence at non-Ph.D.-granting institutions.

"Mr. Emmitt's gift to endow a chair in biomedical engineering provided an absolutely critical level of support that allowed us to finish the foundation of the program and grow into what we are today," says Dan Cavanagh, who holds the William C. and Gertrude B. Emmitt Memorial Chair in Biomedical Engineering. "Bucknell's Department of Biomedical Engineering continues a strong Bucknell tradition through its focus on providing students with an excellent undergraduate education built upon fervent hands-on laboratory and design experiences and close student-faculty interactions."

A Tradition Continues

Over the history of the University, many alumni, trustees, parents and friends have given generously to Bucknell — far too many to enumerate them all. From those first donors who believed in the possibility of creating a new university in the wilds of central Pennsylvania to the donor who made a gift just last week — they all have made a difference for the students of today and tomorrow. **B**