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## Engaged. Generous. Selfless.

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# Engaged. Generous. Selfless.

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Saturday April 23, 2022

By Eric F. Spina

***(The University of Dayton celebrated the induction of new members into the John Stuart Society for making gifts of \$100,000 or more over their lifetimes in support of UD's aspirations and the dreams of students. University of Dayton President Eric F. Spina made these remarks at the April 22 dinner in Curran Place.)***

Thank you, Marty!

For those of you who were able to join us for a tour of The Hub at the Dayton Arcade this afternoon, you saw firsthand what a community and a University can accomplish when we join forces and pursue the loftiest of ideas.

The naysayers saw the renaissance of the long-mothballed Arcade as a pipe dream — just wishful thinking — but the visionaries and dreamers saw the possibility of a rebirth, a bold transformation, a statement of what's possible when we dream big.

Tonight, we pay tribute to you — our very own visionaries and dreamers. People who believe in the transformative power of a University of Dayton education. Those who believe we can change the world, one graduate at a time.

Thank you to our 2022 honorees — 26 couples and 17 individuals — for being so dedicated to the mission and future of our great university that you have invested, over your lifetimes, more than \$100,000. We are proud to have you as members of the John Stuart Society — and to welcome back to campus our donors who make up this special group.

This is our first in-person John Stuart Society celebration in three years, and it feels wonderful — really wonderful — to share this special night with all of you. We will formally induct the new 2022 members and give special recognition to the 2020 and 2021 inductees who participated in virtual ceremonies.

Many of you are supporting scholarships — expanding access and opportunity for first-generation students, talented low- and moderate-income students, women in traditionally underrepresented STEM fields, student-athletes, and students pursuing majors across the spectrum, from accounting to engineering.

**Bill and Jan Tweed**, who are advancing to the St. Mary's Circle tonight for lifetime giving of more than \$5 million, were among the first to see the potential of the Flyer Promise Scholars Program — and step up and support it. Now a signature program on our campus, Flyer Promise removes the financial barriers for high-achieving, underrepresented students at partner high schools as it moves UD toward becoming a more diverse, inclusive campus. Bill, a first-generation college student from Cleveland, received financial help to attend UD. Here on this campus, he found a supportive environment that gave him the confidence and the competence to carve out a rewarding career and life. Today, he and Jan are turning around and giving a helping hand to others who depend on scholarships and a supportive campus to realize their dreams. **Thank you for opening the doors for such promising students.**

Other inductees are providing invaluable hands-on learning and community building experiences for our students, such as support for ETHOS, a School of Engineering program that has made an impact domestically and globally. Beyond projects in our own backyard, hundreds of engineering students have traveled to developing countries, where they've helped build sustainable farms, develop clean water systems and implement renewable technologies. It's a life-changing experience. **These students, whether here or abroad, develop a deep passion for the common good and justice for all.**

In the College of Arts and Sciences, **Bob and Bernita Daley** helped build an endowment for the nationally renowned Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, which allows our students to interact with and learn from Pulitzer Prize winners, *New York Times*' bestselling authors, and some very funny comedians. The workshop honors the legacy of legendary UD graduate

Erma Bombeck and illustrates how one professor can change a student's life. Erma first heard three magical words, "You can write!" from Brother Tom Price, her English professor. That encouragement and support helped launch her career as one of the great American humorists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

I share that story because it beautifully illustrates the Marianist philosophy of education. Through the caring mentorship of encouraging professors, students discover their potential, pursue their passions, and embrace their place in the world. This is a University where students blossom. A number of you, such as **Ben Miller and Tracy Ruymann**, have supported endowed scholarships that have allowed our students to **learn from faculty who inspire them to reach high and become the best version of themselves.**

Beyond your generous gifts, so many of you donate your valuable time by serving on the Parent Leadership Council, helping to raise money for class reunion gifts, attending alumni and athletic events, and living out the UD spirit for more than half a century as members of the Golden Flyers.

Engaged. Generous. Selfless. Individually and collectively, you embody the spirit of John Stuart, the Dayton farmer who took a leap of faith when he sold his 125-acre farm to the Marianists for a St. Joseph's medal and a promise of repayment. I hope you will treasure the St. Joseph's medal you receive tonight as a tangible symbol of your faith in our future. And our faith in you.

At the University of Dayton's core, we are a school founded on faith — and shaped by an enduring belief in what's possible if we raise our sights and think creatively and boldly together.

You have my deepest personal gratitude for your generous spirit and, on behalf of the entire University of Dayton family, I thank you for your leadership in building a culture of philanthropy. You are helping us imagine and build a remarkable future of impact, and no doubt, inspiring others to follow your lead.

I now invite Father Jim Fitz, vice president for mission and rector, to lead us in prayer before we enjoy this delicious meal. Thank you!

*(Photo by Chelsea Hall)*