

CONSERVE

MSU FORESTER



Department of Forestry
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2019

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Front cover: Cordillera Azul National Park in Tarapoto, Peru (photo by Lauren Cooper, Program Director of the Forest Carbon and Climate Program)

Inside left: Baker woodlot

Back cover: A student in Dr. Andy Vander Yacht's Fire Ecology and Management class (FOR 491) learning ignition techniques while conducting prescribed burns at the Tree Research Center on MSU's campus.

SAVE THE DATE

MSU FORESTRY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HOMECOMING TAILGATE WEEKEND

9.25-26.2020

MSU VS. MIAMI

A NOTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Dear MSU Forestry Alumni and Supporters,

For several fall semesters, I have co-taught a freshman seminar with Dr. Andy Vander Yacht entitled “Contemporary Issues in Forests and the Environment.” We begin and end the course with readings from Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*. As many of you know, Aldo Leopold was a forester, scientist, author and careful observer of nature. Though he may have been better served by enrolling in Michigan State Agricultural College’s forestry program, he instead completed an undergraduate forestry course at Yale’s Sheffield Scientific School from 1907-08 and then completed a post-graduate course in forestry at the Yale Forest School in 1909.

Leopold reminds us that conservation has long been integral to forestry. In fact, a lack of regard for conservation was the major motivation for the establishment of academic forestry programs, including MSU’s Department of Forestry in 1902. Leopold’s words still ring true today. He saw conservation as a state of harmony between humanity and nature – that is, humans are part of and dependent on nature. Deriving essential products and services from nature while preserving its integrity go hand-in-hand and is in our best interest – this is the essence of professional forestry.

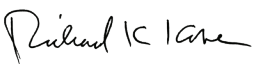
“Conserve” is the theme of this issue of the MSU Forester: finding that harmony between nature and humanity is integral to our work. We highlight just a few of numerous examples:

- Professor David Rothstein’s team is researching sustainable harvests of jack pine forests of northern Michigan to provide the young habitat required by the rare Kirtland’s warbler.
- Alumnus Jacob Slusser’s (MS 2011) work in Panama is empowering people to restore tropical forests and their livelihoods.
- Academic Specialist Dan Brown (BS 2015) is leading MSU’s Sustainable Wood Recovery Initiative – trees that are removed from campus are made into heirloom-quality products by Michigan artisans (see www.msushadows.com).

We also are pleased to share with you the news of two significant gifts. Leighton (MSU Marketing 1962) and Peggy Miller have documented a \$900,000 bequest that will fund an endowment to support the education of future MSU Forestry students. And a realized bequest of \$332,916 will add to the Eleanor M. and Wilhelm M. Beckert Forestry and Horticulture Endowed Scholarship Fund, supporting scholarships for first year students. These gifts help ensure the education of future generations to work towards that state of harmony between humanity and nature.

We welcome and appreciate your engagement, feedback and support. I hope to see you in East Lansing or during my travels. Go Green!

My best,



Richard Kobe,
Professor & Chairperson

DIRECTING YOUR IRA REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION FOR IMPACT IN MSU FORESTRY

(An MSU Forestry alum / donor discovered this way to give and suggested that we share this information.)

Here are a few things to know about Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) gifts, commonly referred to as IRA charitable rollovers:

- Donors must be age 70 1/2 or older on the date of the gift and may give up to \$100,000 from an IRA directly to a qualified charity, such as MSU.
- Donors pay no income taxes on the gift. The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.
- An IRA charitable rollover gift can satisfy all or part of a required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.
- Charitable transfers must be made to public charities, not to donor advised funds, private foundations or supporting organizations.

To learn more, contact the MSU Office of Gift Planning. We can help with the steps you’ll need to take and help the process run smoothly.

WILLIAM D STRIFFLER | BS '52

I knew I wanted to go into forestry, so when I graduated from high school in 1947, I applied to Michigan State College (MSC). I was not accepted, as MSC was being swamped with veterans on the GI bill. My first year of college was at Kent State in Ohio. I applied again in 1948 and this time was accepted. MSC had constructed a Quonset village composed of surplus Quonset huts. I was assigned to hut 95, the last one in the village. Each hut held 14 students.

The summer of 1950 I attended the Dunbar forestry camp in the UP. When I began, the forestry program was a five-year program, but later switched to four years, but I went ahead and completed the five year requirements. At commencement, I was surprised to receive two diplomas, a BS and a BSF. After three years of military service, I completed MS and PhD degrees at MSU, worked six years in Northern Michigan with Lake States Forest Research Station, three years in Eastern Kentucky with Central States FRES before joining the faculty at Colorado State University in its new Watershed Management Program. I retired in 1995.

ROBERT J. (JACK) GOULD | BS '55

I graduated in Dec. 1955, and was immediately drafted into the U.S. Army. I served at Redstone Arsenal (Huntsville, AL) in the Ordnance Guided Missile Section teaching NATO Officers. I was discharged in Dec. 1957, and by April 1958 was employed by the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Experience was gained in both piedmont and coastal plain timber types, and both forest management and fire control procedures. I began working within the Headquarters Administration of the agency in 1972, and worked within all areas of the agency. In 1989, I was selected to become State Forester, the Director of the Agency, a state agency employing 615 employees.

My first year as State Forester was when Hurricane Hugo struck South Carolina and created the most

severe forest damage ever witnessed anywhere in the U.S. I retired in 1993, and still live on Lake Murray, a large lake located in the central part of the state that hosts some famous fishing tournaments. After retiring, time was spent fly fishing locally and out west, and touring Europe and the US with my beautiful nurse wife, Mary Ann.

In 2012, leukemia ended our nearly 54 years of marriage. However, I am still, at an active 87, residing here on Lake Murray, and welcome any classmates that may still be “hanging on” to call or text me at 803-608-5499.

LEON ERBE | BS '59

Leon Erbe is now a 60-year member of the Society of American Foresters. Leon graduated in 1959 with his BS in Forestry. Soon after, he began working for the State of Michigan in the Department of Agriculture. After six years in MDA, he then joined the Department of Natural Resources as a Service Forester, covering a large area of Northern Lower Michigan. He retired from the DNR in 1984 and entered the forestry consulting business. He became active in the Michigan Forest Association and served several years on the Board of Directors, and remains a member today. Now retired from forestry, Leon is still an active outdoorsman. He is an avid deer hunter and still puts on the snowshoes to hunt hares with Oscoda County friends every winter.

PAUL BIGFORD | '72

Paul and family have been named 2019 Michigan Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year by the Michigan Forest Association and the Michigan Tree Farm Program.

The tree farm is co-owned by Paul, brother Doug and son Kyle, also MSU grads. The 150 acre property has been home to five generations, not counting a new generation of eight grandchildren.

Paul lives on the property, has served 40 years as Sweetwater Township Supervisor, 10 years as president of the Pere Marquette Watershed Council, chairperson

IN MEMORIAM**ROBERT J. GIBBS | BS '51**

Robert James Gibbs passed away, Oct. 23, 2019 at age 101. Robert worked for and retired from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. His 25-year career in the Parks Division coincided with the State's expansion of the state park system, many of which he helped design and build. Through his long life, he gathered around himself an enormous community of friends, family and admirers who appreciated and loved him. He will be missed by all.

Full obituary: obituaries.record-eagle.com/obituary/robert-gibbs-1077637204

A LETTER FROM THE FAA VICE PRESIDENT

of the Mason-Lake Conservation District, chair of the MDNR Zoning Review Board for the Pere Marquette Natural River and VP of the Baldwin Promise Zone. 231-898-2633.
paulbigford@hotmail.com

CARL WORKING | BS '72

Now retired in Owensboro, KY with farm/forest as a back yard. Large oaks, tulip, ash and sweet gum (and poisonous ivy BlackBerry, etc on forest floor!) Sub teacher and recruiter for 2020 census. Looking forward to winter trip to NZ, Australia and Figi January (their summer) to see southern hemisphere fauna/flora. (Dendrology lesson?) New cell phone: 270-231-3466. Visited campus last month...wow, the changes!
-Carl Working "72" Old Forester (like the whiskey)

MARC ABRAMS | PhD '82

Forest ecology and physiology professor and recent winner of a lifetime achievement award at Penn State. I received my Ph. D. in 1982 with Don Dickmann. Don, I hope you are well.

COLLIN WASSINK | BS '08

After 10 years working as a Forester for the Colorado State Forest Service, I have taken a position with the USDA Forest Service. I am now the Assistant Airtanker Base Manager at the Jeffco Airtanker Base. My wife Nia and I still reside in Longmont, CO.

As I sit quietly in the darkness of my hunting blind, I wait with great anticipation for the potential opportunities that may appear after first light. I woke early with much excitement and arrived at my blind about an hour too early. Sitting in the dark while struggling to stay warm, my mind races with thoughts of past hunting experiences and hopes for future encounters. One of many thoughts racing through my head is my kids. As a father of a 2 and 4 year old, my future hunting experiences will hopefully involve them. To my surprise, now, the thought of experiencing the thrill and tradition of hunting and gathering with my children by my side, excites me the most. As our family grows, I think about how I can conserve the tradition of conservation.

I wasn't raised in a hunting family. My hunting and conservation story took a different path. Fortunately, I was influenced by several conservation minded individuals; my father - a man of methodical tradition, a friend who was a talented angler and a Forestry Professor/Christmas tree extraordinaire. All taught me valuable lessons in the outdoors. Intertwining the tradition, work ethic, diligent and patient practice of conservation, I began my career as a Forester and an outdoor conservation enthusiast. Quickly, forestry, fishing, hiking, morel gathering, small and big game, upland bird and waterfowl hunting became a dominant focal point of my life. Like then, and still today, I am learning more and more about the conservation efforts that went into and continue to be put forth in promoting our wild critters and landscapes.

It is and always will be my goal, as a dad and consulting forester, to promote the wise conservation of our lands. Giving my time to the MSU Forestry Alumni Association (FAA) is just one of the ways I hope to contribute to the overall goal of conservation and land stewardship. As a board member of FAA, I strive to contribute to our profession as well as motivate others to advance service, philanthropy and professional engagement throughout the Forestry and Conservation focused professions.

As you prepare for the long winter ahead, make time to get out snowshoeing, skiing or enjoying a little late season Steelhead fishing, and consider what you are doing to help conserve our wild places throughout this state. If you feel so inclined, reach out to us here at the MSU Forestry Alumni Association with any ideas of a conservation activity in your area that FAA could promote or participate in. Please don't hesitate to reach out! We are eager to connect with more MSU Forestry friends to learn how we can better contribute to the profession.

Your friend in conservation,

Jason Darling

*Vice-President, MSU Forestry Alumni Association
Owner - Darling Forestry, LLC*



MSU alumnus Leighton Miller, of Pine Beach, New Jersey, recently visited campus for the first time in over 50 years. His last time on campus was for his graduation from the MSU Business College. “When I went back there last year for the first time since 1962 I was just amazed at the transformation,” Leighton Miller said. “It sure has changed over the years.”

He was so impressed that he and his wife, Peggy, documented a \$900,000 bequest – a future gift to create **The Leighton and Peggy Miller Forestry Scholarship**. Once the gift is received, this new endowed scholarship will support MSU Department of Forestry graduate students. “My wife and I thought it would be very good if we both donated to our alma maters,” Leighton said.

Although Leighton Miller grew up in New Jersey, he recalls visiting his grandparents and relatives in Michigan frequently during the summertime. It was during these summers spent in Michigan that he developed a special connection to the state, and eventually, to MSU. “I’m grateful for very fantastic experiences at school. I just loved it, and I didn’t even mind the winters! We still keep in touch with many of the people I went to college with,” he said.

After graduating with a business degree in marketing from MSU in 1962, Leighton went into retailing with the Army Air Force Exchange Service out of New York City. From there he moved to Dow Jones where he was responsible for market research for a few years. Eventually, he built a career as a state park ranger in the New Jersey park service. Through this career, he found a love and devotion for nature and the environment. “I got more into the environment than I had previously been – although I had always been one to worry about recycling,” Miller said.



When they decided to both donate to their alma maters, Leighton and Peggy wanted to be sure to make a gift with the most impact for their respective universities. Being one concerned about the environment, Leighton decided to direct his gift to his area of passion – forestry and natural resources.

“It all stems from my care for the environment and work over the years. It just seemed like the most impact for the money,” Leighton said. “It’s a very, very strong feeling I have to take care of the planet. It’s hard to describe until you work with people who don’t appreciate what they have.”

“By establishing this endowed scholarship in forestry, the Millers are empowering future Spartans and future generations of Spartans to understand and conserve our natural environment and use natural resources sustainably,” said Richard Kobe, MSU Department of Forestry chair.

The full-length article can be found at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/planned-gift-to-create-future-forestry-scholarship-endowment>



JACK PINE & THE RETURN OF KIRTLAND'S WARBLER



MSU researchers Dr. David Rothstein and Daphna Gadoth-Goodman have been working with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MIDNR), US Forest Service (USFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to sustainably manage jack pine plantations that serve as essential breeding habitat for the Kirtland's warbler.

The Kirtland's warbler nests in stands of young jack pine forests in Northern Michigan and Wisconsin; however, once the trees are older than about 20 years, they no longer provide a suitable nesting habitat. The warblers were one of the original species listed when the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973.

Concerted efforts by MIDNR and USFS to establish a continual supply of new jack pine plantations every year has led to growth in the population from a low of 167 singing males to more than 2,300 today. As a result, the Kirtland's warbler was removed from the endangered species list in 2019. Nevertheless, this species requires continuous management in order to maintain its population into the future.

“For our state, what we do can make or break whether this species survives or doesn’t.”

DR. DAVID ROTHSTEIN



In 2015, Rothstein's team began working on a new project to create a more economically sustainable approach to managing Kirtland's warbler habitat. A significant problem with the current approach to habitat management designed in the 1980s is that it has much higher costs, and results in a lower value product, compared to a traditional approach to jack pine silviculture. Timber receipts are instrumental in generating revenue to support habitat creation, but revenue from sales of dedicated Kirtland's warbler plantations are far less than the costs of establishing new plantations.

Rothstein and Gadoth-Goodman are working on new approaches to jack pine management with the goal of producing more marketable forest products, while still conserving this rare species. “In order to make this sustainable, we have to have a product to sell,” Rothstein said. To do this, the team is experimenting with changing planting densities, changing rotation lengths and pre-commercial thinning after stands age out of suitable nesting habitat.

For MSU Forestry researchers, this has been a unique project because they are dealing with both tree and bird populations and working alongside many other collaborators such as US Department of Agriculture, and MIDNR who are funding their research along with other researchers from Wayne State and Michigan Tech.

The conservation of the Kirtland's warbler is a unique challenge for Michigan since more than 90% of the known population breeds exclusively in this state. Jack pine forests also provide important habitat for many other plants and animals in addition to the Kirtland's warbler.

It's an exciting opportunity and a great responsibility for MSU researchers to sustain the broader ecosystem of jack pine forests and manage the survival of the Kirtland's warbler. “For our state, what we do can make or break whether this species survives or doesn't,” says Rothstein.



MSU Forestry alum Jacob Slusser (MS '11), Panama Coordinator for the Neotropics Training Program, tells us a bit about the incredible work he has been doing with The Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative (ELTI).

Can you tell me about ELTI?

ELTI is a program of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (F&ES) that trains and supports people from all sectors and backgrounds to restore and conserve tropical forest landscapes. We take a unique approach to capacity building for conservation and restoration by mentoring people who manage or influence these landscapes in Tropical Asia and the Neotropics. With our training and support, they design and implement a range of strategies that improve the environment and enhance their livelihoods.

What does your average day entail?

I work approximately 50% in the office and 50% in the field. In the office, I focus on the development of our training sites (experimental and demonstration areas), training materials (presentations, guides, case studies) and training activities for both our field-based and on-line training programs. Additionally, I often meet with other host-country institutions and organizations to coordinate trainings for their staff or landowners who they support.

In the field, we facilitate field courses at our Training Landscapes, a network of privately-owned farms, each of which has unique demonstration and teaching potential. These sites located on Panama's Azuero Peninsula integrate years of applied research to provide participants a place-based experiential learning opportunity. I teach participants about forest ecology and degradation and the range of

restoration strategies to restore forest cover in agricultural landscapes.

What drives you to do what you do?

First and foremost, I am driven by the incredible people of Panama, who have been part of my life for the past 15 years, ever since I arrived in Panama as a Peace Corps Volunteer. They are very generous people and have been some of the best teachers a young man could have asked for in his formative years.

Additionally, my 2-year-old daughter and the world that her generation is inheriting, is an urgent driver for the work I do. While our program is small and grassroots, I believe that educating and empowering a diversity of land-use decision makers to conduct more informed ecological practices will help us achieve the resilient landscapes that are necessary to adapt to climate change.

Was there any particular course or aspect of your time at MSU that lead you to the work you are doing now?

I had the great fortune of being part of the last silviculture course that Professor Donald Dickmann taught at the Forestry Department. During the course it was clear that Professor Dickmann had over a half century of knowledge, but it was his undeniable passion about forestry that still inspires me today as I find myself in the similar position of teaching decision makers here in Panama. In addition, I had wonderful advisors like Dr. David Skole, Dr. Runsheng Yin and Dr. John Kerr (Dept. of Community Sustainability), whose international experiences further inspired me to go back abroad after finishing my master's degree and utilize forestry as an empowering tool for sustainable development and poverty alleviation.





SUSTAINABLE WOOD RECOVERY INITIATIVE & MSU SHADOWS

The MSU campus is a beautiful setting, largely as a result of the intensity and abundance of its tree cover. MSU has over 5,000 acres of densely treed campus along with more than 3,000 acres of forested farmlands around the main campus.

There are 24,200 trees belonging to 1,885 different taxa represented in the MSU Campus Arboretum, which occupies the 2,100 acres of the developed campus.

The trees not only contribute to a very beautiful campus environment but are also a vast and invaluable resource for teaching, studying and conducting research.

MSU is very committed to the care and preservation of its campus trees, and there is a dedicated staff of qualified professionals assigned to that important task. However, despite extraordinary care, MSU Landscape Services must remove trees due to safety, disease, insects or construction.

In the past, when trees were removed from campus they were converted into wood chips, used as biofuel or sent to a landfill. In 2014, MSU formed the Sustainable Wood Recovery Initiative (SWRI) to process “wood waste” into heirloom-quality works of art crafted by Michigan artisans: the MSU Shadows Collection, managed by Dan Brown, MSU sustainable bioproducts specialist.

The SWRI promotes environmental responsibility and creates an enclosed loop of sustainability. After campus arborists remove trees, they undergo a three-month process of milling and drying. Then, the lumber is categorized and made into products. Proceeds from sales help plant new trees throughout campus, completing the cycle and providing an even greener MSU.

MSU students gain hands-on learning experiences working with urban wood management, processing, repurposing and marketing. The SWRI is also applied in the classroom and the community for activities on urban wood management and utilization. Students learn why trees are removed, how to process wood for maximum value, determine the best use of lumber and how to market urban wood products. In addition, the portable wood mill is used as an outreach tool with community groups.

Shadows’ most recent projects include new furniture items in the president’s office suite in the Administration Building, installation of a remembrance wall for Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS), decking of the Monet Bridge in the 4H Children’s Garden and remodeling Cowles’ House for incoming President Stanley.

For more information, or to purchase your own campus keepsake, please visit msushadows.com.



AKIHIRO KOYAMA

Assistant Professor, Soil Microbiology and Biogeochemistry

Dr. Koyama holds a Ph.D. in Natural Resources, an MS in Forest Resources and a BS in Forest Science. His research goal is to better understand plant-microbe interactions in the rhizosphere and their roles in ecosystem processes.

ANTONIO SANCHEZ

Videography Technician, U.P. Forestry Innovation Center

Antonio Sanchez moved to Bark River, MI from Dallas, TX this past January. He worked as Technical Director for NBC and Telemundo Dallas, and ran his own Video Production and Photography business before working for MSU. Antonio works at MSU Extension in Escanaba, MI as a Technical Videographer, producing forestry videos and working on a special assignment about the maple syrup production in North America.



RENEE TILLEY

Assistant to the Chair & Faculty

I am the mother of four pretty amazing kids; a son at MSU, a daughter at U of M, a daughter in high school, and a son in middle school. Before joining the MSU Forestry team, I previously worked as the Health & Wellness/Membership Director at the Parkwood YMCA. Healthy lifestyle will always be a passion of mine. After 20 years with the YMCA, I was ready for a new adventure and found the MSU Department of Forestry! Let the adventure begin!



MSU FORESTRY BEQUEST

A realized bequest of \$332,916 will add to the Eleanor M. and Wilhelm M. Beckert Forestry and Horticulture Endowed Scholarship Fund, supporting scholarships for first year students.

Wilhelm Beckert earned his master of science in forestry from MSU in 1958. Prior to MSU, he was a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy during World War II, serving in the South Pacific. A registered forester, he spent his career working not only to manage and preserve America's parks and wilderness areas, but also to educate people about their role in making sure those areas are in place for future generations.

Mr. Beckert started his career with the Michigan Conservation Department's State Parks Division. He was assistant state park superintendent for the Oregon State Parks and director of the Idaho State Parks. He concluded his career with Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nevada. Mr. Beckert died February 24, 1997.

Eleanor Beckert earned her bachelor of science degree from MSU in 1940. During World War II, she worked as a bacteriologist for the Michigan Department of Health in Lansing. After the war, she worked for Jackson, MI City Health Department and then the Michigan Department of Health, before moving to Oregon. Mrs. Beckert passed away in April 2019.

The Beckerts were firm believers in education throughout one's life, a legacy supported by this bequest.





Urban wood utilization:
MSU Shadows Collection



First online graduate
certificate in Forest
Carbon & Climate



First mass timber
building in Michigan



Diversity: first 3+2 agreement
between MSU and Medgar
Evers College



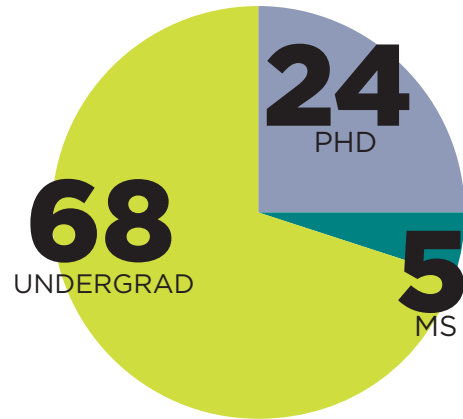
Access for all: USDA
Multicultural Scholars
Program



First SAF-university
partnership in e-learning

ENROLLMENT

97



MINORS



FORESTRY



FORESTRY FIELD
APPLICATIONS



URBAN AND
COMMUNITY
FORESTRY



CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF STUDENTS
COMPLETING THE **FOREST CARBON
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE**

RESEARCH FUNDING 2018: **\$2 MILLION**

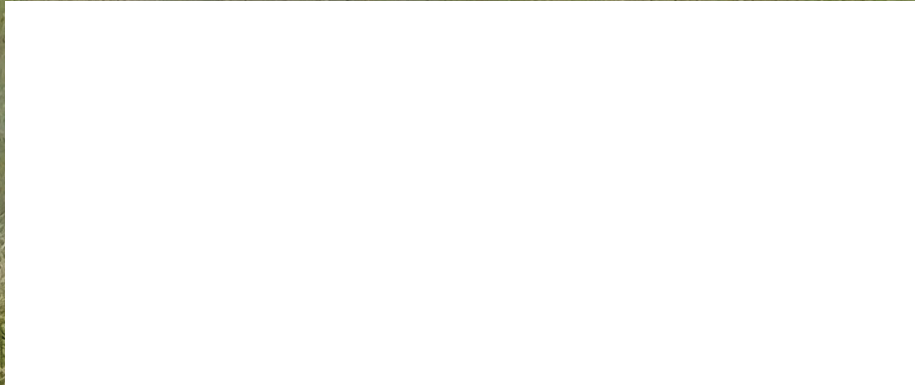


>\$76,000* IN ANNUAL
GIFTS FROM ALUMNI &
SPONSORS

\$1.23 M PLANNED AND
REALIZED BEQUESTS

*AS OF NOV 1, 2019

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