CWA’s 25th Anniversary Special Guests

W&M Provost Michael Halleran, Associate Vice President for Alumni Engagement Marilyn Midyette, and Associate Vice President for Development Earl Granger joined CWA President Fritz Ober at our 25th Anniversary Celebration on April 15. Granger spoke eloquently and gratefully of CWA’s generous donations to W&M over the years, whose investments total $1 million and greatly impact student life at the College.

Pictured from left to right: Provost Michael Halleran, Fritz Ober, Marilyn Midyette, and Earl T. Granger (Photo by Keith Reagan)
Christopher Wren Association Supports William & Mary

The College Relations Committee of the Christopher Wren Association identifies and proposes ways in which the Association can partner with the College. One of our major activities has been to invite, review, and recommend grant proposals from a wide range of William & Mary academic programs and schools. Our funding recommendations are then presented to the Christopher Wren Association Board for its consideration and approval. This enables CWA to support learning and lifelong learning opportunities while working cooperatively in partnership with the College. We would like to share with you some of the worthwhile programs being funded in our 25th anniversary year.

CWA assists VIMS by supporting their annual public Marine Science Day. It’s filled with exhibits, lab tours, a seafood cooking demonstration, mini-lectures, children’s activities, and much more. There is something for everyone and all activities are free. CWA helps to underwrite some of the expenses.

CWA grants also help sponsor some of the educational opportunities connected to the Muscarelle Museum of Art exhibit, gallery talks, and lectures. CWA and Muscarelle Museum have a long history of cooperation, including the wonderful CWA classes taught by Muscarelle docents.

The largest percentage of CWA grants usually goes to student fellowships, scholarships, internships, and summer grants. These grants make a significant difference to the academic life of many students.

The Reves Center for International Studies, in collaboration with the Charles Center for Academic Excellence, distributed CWA grant funds for six students last summer. They completed internships in China, South Korea, Laos, South Africa, Taiwan, Zambia, Bolivia, and the U.S. For example, Junior Victoria Johnson, who hopes to pursue a career in teaching, was in South Africa with WorldTeach, an NGO that partners with governments in developing countries to provide volunteer teachers to meet local needs and promote citizenship. As Stephen Hanson, the Vice Provost for International Affairs, writes, “Financial obstacles can often prevent many of our students from taking an unpaid internship. They are enthusiastically grateful to CWA for the financial support that allowed them to explore international career opportunities.”
Using funds provided by CWA, the School of Law is able to fund the CWA Summer Public Service Fellowship that provides much needed help for legal organizations and the Greater Williamsburg community they serve. Last summer, for example, three CWA Fellows interned with the Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia’s Williamsburg office. They assisted by providing free legal services to low-income clients. Two other CWA Fellows interned with the Williamsburg/James City County Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office.

In 2014/15, the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Community Engagement were able to support 10 students working on projects such as promoting community archaeology in Richmond, developing a high school leadership program, improving reading strategies and access to textbooks in a Haitian orphanage, an on-the-ground cholera mapping project in Ghana. A group of five students worked with the Heritage Department of the Coushatta Tribe in Elton, Louisiana on a language revitalization project for the tribe’s ancestral language, Koasati. The students edited and improved educational resources, obtained audio and video recordings of the Koasati language with English translations, and created several online language-learning games.

Natalia Kuznetsova is the recipient of the 2016 School of Education Christopher Wren Association Scholarship. She is a first year, part-time doctoral student. Natalia writes that she is “passionate about bringing music to every child’s life. Your [e.g. CWA] financial generosity has allowed me to be one step closer to my goal and has inspired me to help others by giving back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their goal just as you have helped me.”

In the coming year, we are planning a Town and Gown program so you can hear in person some of the impressive stories of these amazing students. The Christopher Wren Association has contributed to their futures and, as an organization, we can be proud of the expanded educational opportunities we have helped to support.

Current members of the College Relations Committee include: Jay Brown, Don Darnton, Berna Heyman (Chair), Mike Kerley, Judy Knudson, and Sue Voigt.

Respectfully submitted,

Berna Heyman
Christopher Wren Association College Relations Chair