

A Tale of Two Scholarships

Support for
undergraduates and
graduate students

By Jeff Cruikshank

One of the most important priorities of the Campaign for Boston University is to increase scholarship support for BU students. Nearly 300 endowed scholarships have been created in the course of the campaign—many in memory of family members, former professors, spouses, life partners, and others who changed the lives of those around them. Those established within the last year include the Benjamin F. Lambert Scholarship, which will support undergraduates, and the Alexis Gavras Graduate Scholarship, which will support graduate students.



Raymond L. Baubles Jr. (right) established a scholarship in memory of his long-time partner, Ben Lambert (CAS'55) (left). Baubles says the gift, which will help the disadvantaged and celebrate a 34-year relationship, seemed like a fitting tribute to Lambert, who died in April 2016 at age 83.

The Lambert Scholarship

The Benjamin F. Lambert Scholarship in the College of Arts & Sciences was established this spring by Raymond L. Baubles Jr. in memory of Benjamin F. Lambert (CAS'55). The scholarship will be awarded based on financial need to undergraduate students majoring in chemistry or the natural sciences. Preference will be given to students who have overcome a personal challenge, are from a historically underrepresented student group, are the first generation in their family to attend college, or are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

In a recent conversation, Baubles talked about his long-time partner, Ben Lambert, and why this gift—with its stated

preferences—seemed like a fitting tribute to him. Lambert died in April 2016 at age 83. “The first thing you need to understand,” Baubles notes, “is that Ben grew up in Lowell, Mass., an African American, one of six kids raised by a widowed mom. Although the Lamberts didn’t feel poor, they certainly weren’t privileged.”

Despite that lack of privilege, Lambert enrolled at BU in the fall of 1951 as a day student, commuting from Lowell every day. His outstanding work in chemistry as a freshman earned him the prestigious Augustus Howe Buck Scholarship, which—beginning in his sophomore year—covered his full tuition and provided a stipend, and helped him continue his studies and enjoy the full spectrum of college life, including chorus, glee club, the student-faculty assembly, and Scarlet Key.

After graduating from BU, Lambert earned a master's in chemistry from Brandeis University, and then went to work for several pharmaceutical companies. "Eventually," Baubles says, "Ben decided he wanted to get into patent law. So he earned his law degree at Seton Hall, and then moved into the legal department at Johnson & Johnson. I'm pretty sure he was the first black patent attorney in their legal department."

In the early 1980s, Baubles was on the faculty at Western Connecticut State University. A graduate of Fordham University, he'd earned advanced degrees in Victorian literature and Victorian history. Lambert was then living in New York City, where Baubles visited frequently. The two met at a party, and clicked—and so began a relationship that continued for more than three decades.

In 2004, Lambert endowed the first permanent colloquium series in BU's department of chemistry. "I have very strong feelings about the chemistry department at BU," he told the *B.U. Bridge* that spring, "and this is a way of giving back."

The Lambert Scholarship qualifies for the campaign's Century Challenge match, whereby the University matches the payout on an undergraduate scholarship fund for 100 years. "That was a compelling interest for me," Baubles says, "because it effectively doubled the value of whatever contribution I made. So, yes, it played a major role in how I came to think about the gift."

But the real point of the Lambert Scholarship, Baubles emphasizes, was to honor Ben Lambert's memory and acknowledge his strong commitment to Boston University: "He was a proud and private man, and he was accomplished in so many ways. But he never forgot the help that BU had extended to him, and that's what this gift celebrates."

The Gavras Scholarship

The Alexis Gavras Graduate Scholarship Fund—to be shared by Metropolitan College and the School of Medicine—was established last December by Haralambos Gavras and Irene Gavras in memory of their son Alexis (CAS'93, MET'04).

Income from the fund will be used to support up to two deserving graduate students who are enrolled in MET and are focusing their studies on computer sci-

Scholarships honor family, friends, partners

ence, or are enrolled in MED's Division of Graduate Medical Sciences and are pursuing studies in biomedical research. In either case, preference will be given to a Greek graduate student who has completed undergraduate studies at the University of Patras in Peloponnese, Greece, or who has received an undergraduate degree from an accredited Greek college or university; or to a Greek American graduate student who has completed undergraduate studies at any accredited college or university.

Reached by phone at their home north of Boston, the Gavrases talked about what Boston University meant to their late son, a double Terrier. "When he first got to BU," says Irene, "Alexis wasn't sure what he wanted to do, but he chose economics, and ultimately earned his first BU degree in that. But he was also very talented musically, so—after earning a degree in film scoring from Berklee—he moved to Los Angeles. He found it tough to make a living at that, so he came back to BU and got his master's degree in computer science. But I think he saw a lot of overlaps

across his various interests. He told us that writing for computers was just as creative as writing music."

The Gavras family has long-standing ties to BU. Haralambos Gavras, a MED professor emeritus of medicine, was recruited in 1975 by Aram V. Chobanian (Hon.'06), then a MED professor of medicine, who became dean and provost of the Medical Campus and later was the ninth president of Boston University. Gavras became chief of the hypertension section and pioneered the use of medications blocking the renin-angiotensin system for the treatment of high blood pressure and heart failure. He won numerous awards for his work, and served as president of the American Society of Hypertension between 2002 and 2004.

Irene Gavras, a MED professor emerita of medicine, was for many years a practicing cardiologist and internal medicine specialist. She also taught cardiovascular pharmacology to MED students, and conducted clinical research studies through the hypertension section, working closely with her husband in his BU research—enrolling patients in research protocols, preparing reports, and working on grant proposals and publications.

Both Irene and Haralambos Gavras are Greek immigrants, and are pleased to be able to help future generations of Greek and Greek American graduate students. Undergraduate education in Greece is free, but graduate study is not—and many Greek students struggle financially in their pursuit of higher degrees. "Both Irene and I received support for our postgraduate studies," Haralambos recalls, "and that support, modest as it was, made a big difference for us."

"So this is meaningful for us in many ways," says Irene. "We carry forward the tradition of helping deserving students work toward their degrees, even as we honor Alexis' memory."