



YOUR LEGACY

Newsletter - Spring 2025



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

"I did the best I could. That's my legacy."

Jim Parsons was the first in his family to graduate high school and university.

His parents taught him that education is important. "Get your education, and everything will be okay," Jim recalls his father telling him.

He completed his post-secondary education, eventually graduating with a PhD before coming to teach at the University of Alberta, where he stayed for over 40 years. He started a faith-based PhD program at the U of A, and was involved in many research projects across Canada and around the globe.



Jim Parsons and Denny, the family dog.

Today, Jim writes and teaches part-time at the U of A from his home in Comox, BC.

Years ago, he decided to start two scholarships at the U of A. To do this, he took out two life insurance policies, naming the U of A as the owner and sole beneficiary of each.

One of the policies was cashed in, allowing Jim to put it to use in his lifetime. He's helping students through the Jim Parsons Leadership Award in Faith-Based Education. He hopes the award recipients know that their studies matter, and that they feel a sense of recognition, knowing that somebody cares enough to support them.

And through his legacy at the U of A, Jim wants to make a meaningful difference by supporting PhD students now and into the future.

"I believe that the world needs help. And as we work together, we have more opportunities. I'm fortunate. And in a million ways, I'm blessed. I want to share those blessings with others. As I encourage my grad students, 'Don't you want to be involved in something important?' Who'd say no?"

For Jim, making a difference means communities working together, engaged by their sense of agency, and the belief that we can all make a difference in this world through our service to others.

"I've made mistakes in my life. But Erik Erikson, a psychologist, came up with the eight stages of life. And he basically said, in stage eight, when you get to be old, do you look back and say, 'I did what I could'? I did the best I could. That's my legacy."

Canadian literary scholar shares her reasons for leaving a legacy

"I associate the U of A and the prairies with high standards of mutual support and neighbourliness," says Eva-Marie Kröller, a member of the Order of Canada (CM).

Eva-Marie emigrated to Canada in 1973 and obtained her PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta in 1978.



Eva-Marie Kröller

"Recently, I have been sorting the many letters I wrote to my family from the U of A between 1973-1978. They faithfully saved them all. The letters remind me in some detail of how I benefitted intellectually and socially from this environment and how, as a result, I prospered," says Eva-Marie.

While she left the prairies shortly after graduation, Eva-Marie went on to

shape Canadian literature as a decorated writer, editor and educator. Notably, she was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2022 for her significant contributions to our country.

When she discovered that other alumni and donors had designated their RRSP/RRIF as a gift to the U of A, she decided to do the same. And she chose to designate her gift to support international students.

"My studies at the U of A, some of my teachers there, the fellow students I befriended, and Albertans generally made a life-changing, enduring, and positive impression on me. It seemed only right to want to give back," Eva-Marie shares. "I hope my gift will assist future students to have an experience as positive as my own."

When alumni and donors like Eva-Marie support students at the U of A through bursaries, scholarships and awards, they remove financial barriers that stand in the way of talented, ambitious students, enabling them to make the most of their potential.

They can also help students have access to experiential learning. Through her gift, Eva-Marie hopes to help international students develop and diversify their abilities as extensively as possible.

She adds, "I'd consider my gift and its possible impact to be a kind of generational relay and, therefore, a logical continuation of the work I did as a teacher, researcher and administrator at the University of British Columbia for over 40 years. It was always important to me to set a positive example to my students in every possible way, and the principle of reciprocity as it applied to my career is part of this effort."

And to fellow alumni and supporters who may consider including a gift to the U of A as part of their estate plans, she says, "I would encourage prospective donors to think about the experiences that shaped their lives and achievements the most and make their decision based on the resulting 'balance sheet.' For me, the tilting point toward U of A was provided by the personal growth that resulted from my time there."

A special thank you

"I'm only here because of your generosity. Your support of my academic journey has motivated me to continue to work hard – thank you."

These are the words of Ariana Olivera. She recently graduated from the University of Alberta's Augustana campus.

Originally written in a heartfelt thank you letter to supporter Marion Wandio, Ariana permitted us to share her message to demonstrate the importance of financial support to U of A students.

Ariana also shared, "For as long as I can remember, I have aspired to become a pediatrician. When I applied to universities, Augustana immediately

drew my attention due to its small campus. It became my goal to complete my undergraduate degree here."

She went on to say, "Unfortunately, my family underwent some financial shortcomings as a result of COVID-19. When I received my award, I gained so much hope. I was able to pursue my dreams and continue my education."

Many students like Ariana have the passion and potential, but financial barriers stand in their way.

That's why generous donors like Marion are so critical to students who need a hand of support. "I think education is very important. Especially nowadays. It's a necessity," says Marion.

When the time came for her son to go to university, Marion returned to work as a nurse to help with the costs. "I had been out of nursing for over 10

years and needed a refresher course. They were hard to get then, and I got mine through Augustana. I've always had a special place in my heart for Augustana. It's a wonderful place."

Inspired by her time at Augustana, she established the Michael Wandio Augustana Bursary in honour of her late husband. Her bursary is helping students today and will also help them in the future through a gift in her Will to endow this special award.

Thank you, Marion – you help students reach their potential and realize their ambitions. Thank you for your kindness.



Marion Wandio

Upcoming Events

May 14, 2025: We're thrilled to gather with Quaecumque Vera Honour Society members at our annual Edmonton luncheon! This signature event offers a unique way to connect with fellow legacy donors and learn about student research. If you need any assistance with your registration, feel free to reach out to our team. Please RSVP by May 1st.

September 2025: Join us for this year's **What Will Your Legacy Be?** event in Edmonton, to hear from experts about how you can make a meaningful difference for future generations while ensuring loved ones are cared for. Planning is underway and information will be available in the coming months. To learn more now or pre-register, contact Donna Ma at 780-492-6783 or donna.ma@ualberta.ca.

Did you know?

Tips from 2024 What Will Your Legacy Be? panelist Doris Bonora, KC, TEP, Partner at KPMG Law LLP:

- A Will is a love letter about your legacy.
- We are most wealthy upon our passing. The government encourages charitable estate giving by providing significant tax advantages. You can essentially self-direct your final tax bill to important causes you care about, making an impact that matters to you, and your estate will receive tax benefits.
- Designating whatever portion of your estate you are comfortable with to a charity allows you to make a transformational gift for causes you care about. Donors can make a huge impact on something that they often may not be able to do in their lifetime. As an example, donors can create an endowment at the U of A through their Will.

Planning a Legacy Gift

With careful planning, a legacy gift can even help you to make a much larger gift than you could have otherwise, while still taking care of your loved ones. And your gift can help minimize or eliminate your estate taxes. There are many ways to give a legacy gift, including through:

Gift in Will: Through a gift in your Will, you can make a significant gift through accumulated assets. The most common types are residual bequests and specific bequests. You maintain control and use of your assets during your lifetime. And your estate is entitled to a charitable tax receipt for the gift's total value.

Gift of Retirement Funds:

Did you know retirement plans with pre-tax earnings are often subject to heavy taxation when left to your children or others? If you have no spouse or dependent child to roll your tax deferred investments over to when you pass, the total value of those accounts must be reported as income on your terminal tax return. If no arrangements are made, much of your retirement money will go to the CRA.

By making the U of A the beneficiary of your RRSPs and RRIFFs, income tax on those assets could be eliminated. The tax will still have to be paid but the charitable receipt could offset most or all the tax payable.

Gift of Life Insurance:

Gifting a policy, or a portion, is a powerful and simple way to support the U of A. You'll receive a charitable tax receipt for the fair market value of the policy. Not only is it a way to create a lasting impact for a relatively modest cost, it does so without significantly reducing the value of your estate available to your heirs.

Your legacy gift may be eligible for participation in the U of A's Shape the Future campaign. You can choose to support students through one or more of our three pillars of success: financial support, experiential learning or student spaces.

To learn more about the different ways to plan a future gift to the U of A or receive a FREE Estate Planning Organizer, you can contact us or visit us online at uabgive.ca/Legacy.

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