

Philanthropy at Michigan
LEADERS & BEST

M UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Fall 2011

**INVESTING
TODAY
TENDING
TO THE
FUTURE**





In Memoriam

David Alger (MBA '68)
 Yeneneh Betru (MD '95)
 Brian Paul Dale (JD '91)
 Paul Friedman (MSE '83)
 James Gartenberg (AB '87)
 Steven Goldstein (AB '88)
 Darya Lin (BSEIO '91, MSE '97)
 Todd Ouida (AB '98)
 Manish Patel (AB '02)
 Laurence Polatsch (AB '90)
 Stephen E. Poulos (BMUS '77,
 MMUS '78)
 Gregory Richards (AB '92)
 Joshua Rosenthal (AB '79)
 Christina Ryook (AB '98)
 Meta Fuller Waller (BGS '73)
 Scott Weingard (BBA '93)
 Meredith L. Whalen (BBA '00)
 Marc Scott Zeplin
 (AB '90, MBA '93)

Lives lost, lives remembered

On September 11, 2001, 18 U-M alumni died: one in the Pentagon, three on hijacked airplanes, and 14 in the World Trade Center. On that horrific day, alumnus **Andrew Kaminsky (BGS '90)** lost not one, but two beloved friends and former U-M roommates: **Laurence Polatsch (AB '90)** and **Marc Zeplin (AB '90, MBA '93)**. Afterward, as the shock waves gradually diminished, Kaminsky—who had known Laurence since the first grade—and Laurence's brother, **Daniel Polatsch (BS '93)**, began to look for a way to turn their grief into something positive.

Together with others, they decided to establish a charitable foundation to preserve and honor the memory of not only Laurence, but also two of Dan's close friends and Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity brothers who died along with Laurence in the 9/11 attacks, **Greg Richards (AB '92)** and **Scott Weingard (BBA '93)**. Although very different people, all three lived life to the fullest, and they shared a common bond, both through the University and as successful professionals at the Wall Street firm of Cantor Fitzgerald, which was located in Tower 1 of the World Trade Center.

While the goal of the Greg Richards, Larry Polatsch, and Scott Weingard Memorial Fund (the GLS Memorial Fund) has always been more spiritual than financial, said Fund Executive Director Kaminsky, "we have been blessed with extremely generous

support." Dedicated to the belief that "out of difficulties grow miracles," the foundation made an initial pledge to the U-M in December 2003 establishing the Greg Richards, Larry Polatsch, and Scott Weingard



Daniel Polatsch, Laurence Polatsch, and Andrew Kaminsky enjoy one another's company in the mid-1990s.

Memorial Scholarship Fund in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA).

The scholarship pledged to assist academically accomplished undergraduates with financial need who were related either to a "first responder"—that is, a police officer, firefighter, or emergency medical technician (EMT)—or to someone who had died in the World Trade Center on 9/11. Founders of the memorial fund wanted to help the people who had tried to save their friends and family members.

And help they have. Through the foundation's continued generosity over the years, the scholarship fund has grown to a market value this past June of more than \$875,000, creating a permanent endowment for two four-year scholarships. In that time, the

foundation also broadened its eligibility criteria to include students related to a member of law enforcement, the military, or the justice department, as well as graduates of Syosset (N.Y.) High School (of which Polatsch was an alumnus) and Half Hollow Hills West, in Dix Hills, N.Y. (of which Weingard was a graduate).

The scholarship criteria ensure that recipients all have a connection back to Greg, Laurence, and Scott. And as it happens, Kaminsky said, "each of our five scholarship recipients emulates a life characteristic of either Greg, Laurence, or Scott."

The scholarship's inaugural recipient, Michelle A. Myers (AB '07), is the daughter of a Port Authority police officer, Craig F. Myers, who was stationed in New York City on 9/11. Myers made several rescue attempts in the World Trade Center that day and escaped from one of the buildings as it began to collapse.

Another GLS student, Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran Robert Fernandez, attended Michigan after his tour of duty. Fernandez is "a true American hero and an honor to GLS," Kaminsky said.

The scholarship has changed lives, much as Michigan changed the lives of Greg, Laurence, and Scott.

After fulfilling their initial pledge to Michigan, friends and family went on to create

the Laurence Polatsch Memorial Fund and the Scott Weingard Memorial Fund to help causes that touched the families of Polatsch and Weingard. "We're not going to get our friends back, but we work to make people's lives better in their memory," Kaminsky said.

The Laurence Polatsch Memorial Fund holds an annual golf tournament, where proceeds help people overcome personal obstacles to lead full lives. The annual tribute to "LP," as Polatsch was called by those who loved him, has supported not only social work programs for pediatric cancer patients, but also children living with Crohn's disease, colitis, or juvenile diabetes.

It has sponsored a children's playroom at the Mount Sinai Medical Center, a family room in the neonatal intensive care unit at NYU Langone Medical Center, and a pediatric recovery room at Beth Israel Medical Center, all in New York. It has contributed to organizations serving individuals with autism and multiple sclerosis. And it has supported the Tribute WTC Visitor Center, along with such New York organizations as the Harlem Little League, where the memorial fund sponsors a team, the LP Wolverines. In its first year, the memorial fund dedicated a Central Park bench to Polatsch with the words: "Your radiant smile and beautiful soul inspire us daily to live life as you did—generously, lovingly, joyously!"

"Laurence's love of life was evident in the way he lived every day," Kaminsky said. "He

would be very humbled by all the work we have done in his name."

The Scott Weingard Memorial Fund, founded by Weingard's brother **Rob Weingard** and their cousin **Jared Feldman**, hosts numerous annual events, including a charity poker tournament in New York City and, on a weekend near September 11, a "Play Ball" event in upstate New York. At these events, close friends and family gather to honor and remember their beloved "Scotty," an avid athlete. In so doing, they have also supported causes that are important to Weingard's family, such as Autism Speaks and a research fund at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Kaminsky sums up the efforts this way: "Ten years have passed since the day that changed our lives, but our passion has not faded. Michigan not only connected Greg, Laurence, and Scott, but taught us the value of friendship, the importance of community, and how to lead rich and fulfilling lives."

For more stories of 9/11 tributes, please visit www.giving.umich.edu/9-11

A Gift in Time



Gregory Richards



Laurence Polatsch



Scott Weingard



The new C. S. Mott Children's Hospital and Von Voigtländer Women's Hospital opens December 2011.

The patient- and family-centered facility will total 1.1 million gross square feet and contain 4.4 million feet of wire for electrical, communications, and safety-security equipment. Funded through hospital reserves and philanthropy, the project will cost approximately \$754 million and is the largest construction project in Michigan. For more information on opening events, please visit www.med.umich.edu/mott/touch/new_hospital.html

