DEAR FRIENDS,

As we put another successful year behind us and gain momentum for the next, I write to you with much gratitude.

On February 8, 2013, we had a colorful and enthusiastic public launch of our six-year, $250 million campaign—Fueling Innovation: The Campaign for IIT. The launch event embodied all things great about IIT: a shared vision for success, dedicated Board of Trustees members, talented students, energized staff and faculty, and our greatest cheerleaders—proud alumni and friends.

I am happy to report that as of October 15, 2013, we are at nearly 60% of our campaign goal. This momentum is fueled by generous support from friends like you. Your philanthropy empowers us to ask: “together, what can’t we do?”

Take a look at the donors featured in this magazine. While their personal journeys are diverse, like you, they all have chosen to make an investment in the university’s future. Your thoughtful generosity allows IIT to chart the course for the coming years while remaining true to its legacy as a university that is internationally recognized in distinctive areas of education and research.

Capital projects are a key priority for the Fueling Innovation campaign this year. These include planning for a new academic building—the Innovation Center—and the revitalization of two core campus buildings—the Life Sciences and Engineering (Life Sciences and Engineering) page 4 and 5). Upon completion, these projects will have a profound impact on our students and redefine how we educate the next generation of innovative thinkers.

Your support enables thousands of bright and gifted students to choose IIT. I hope you share my pride in these young minds who will one day transform the world in which we live.

I am inspired and humbled by all that you have done and continue to do for this university. On behalf of President John Anderson and our team, I thank you for giving IIT momentum.

Sincerely,

Betsy Hughes
Vice President, Institutional Advancement
hughes@iit.edu

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Impact
“Illinois Institute of Technology is an institution on the rise. My family has a rich legacy of supporting it, and being a part of it is important to me,” says A. Steven Crown, Board of Trustees member and third-generation Crown family member to take on a leadership role at the university. He is following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Colonel Henry Crown, who served on the board in the 1950s, and his uncles, Robert and John Crown, who served in the 1960s and through the 1990s, respectively.

The Crown family’s tradition of supporting IIT through service and transformational gifts dates back six decades. In 1954, Col. Crown and his family made a gift to construct a visionary new building on Main Campus—S. R. Crown Hall—named after his brother Sol. He funded one-third of the building’s construction cost “in the hope that it would persuade others to give generously.” In 2005, Col. Crown’s son, Lester, made a significant gift to restore this iconic building.

Steven Crown continues this family tradition of investing in IIT. A significant contribution from the family allowed the university to flesh out plans for its next landmark building, which will serve as the university’s center for innovation. It is an investment that he hopes will inspire others to give generously. (“For more on plans for the Innovation Center, see page 5.”)

“The Innovation Center is a game changer,” he says. “It will raise the university’s stature in the academic world and will become a point of pride for students, alumni, and the entire Chicago community.”

Steven Crown firmly believes that an investment in IIT today is an investment in the students who will redefine the future of this city and the nation. He credits President John Anderson for putting the university on a track to success by getting it on a strong financial footing. “I like being a part of IIT’s evolution and enjoy seeing it become a vibrant university again. Perpetuating the legacies of those who preceded me is my legacy,” he says.
Fueling Innovation: The Campaign for IIT is providing the impetus for three significant capital projects that will transform Main Campus and strengthen our tradition of providing a distinctive education that emphasizes innovation and entrepreneurial thinking.

Innovation Center: Bringing all the elements of a distinctive IIT education together, the Innovation Center’s mission is to nurture the advancement of creative ideas, to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and to create a culture that enables innovative thinkers to flourish. The center’s programs will embody the university’s key strength—educating graduates who are entrepreneurs and the visionaries of tomorrow. This new academic building will be home to the Institute of Design, the Knapp Entrepreneurship Academy, Self Leadership Academy, and Interprofessional Projects (IPRO) Program, among others.

John T. Rettaliata Engineering Center: A significant lead gift from Caryl Pucci Rettaliata is allowing the university to begin the transformation of the Engineering-1 building into a twenty-first century facility. To be renamed the John T. Rettaliata Engineering Center, it will provide students with dynamic learning environments where technology aligns with top-notch faculty and cutting-edge research. The renovations will ensure that this building remains the “heart and home” of IIT Armour College of Engineering for decades to come.

Robert A. Pritzker Research Center: A generous commitment for a challenge grant from COL (IL) J.N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (Retired) through the Tawani Foundation is allowing IIT to begin renovations to the Life Sciences building, home to the IIT College of Science. With “students first” as its mantra, this transformed facility will be the focal point for core sciences on campus with interactive spaces that enrich students’ learning experiences with opportunities to create and collaborate. The building will be renamed the Robert A. Pritzker Research Center in honor of the late Robert A. Pritzker (IE ’46, hon. Ph.D. ’84), one of IIT’s greatest visionary leaders and alumni.
This fall, Berry, who is senior vice president of Broadcast Media Services at Fox Networks Group, assumes the role of board chair from Nemcek. “Adrian is an extraordinary leader with an impeccable sense of diplomacy. I admire everything he has done,” she says.

Berry and Nemcek talk about their vision for the Alumni Association, their personal commitments to IIT, and their advice for today’s students.

Q: What is your vision for the Alumni Association?

Berry: To build a community of truly engaged alumni. And by that I mean not just alumni who write checks (which of course is very important), but also those who participate and are invested in the university’s future.

Nemcek: I would like to see our Alumni Association as one of the most successful university associations in the world—one that brings together like-minded alumni in the interest of a shared common goal: the advancement of IIT.

Q: Is there a common thread that binds our alumni other than having graduated from the same university?

Berry and Nemcek: Yes, there is. In one word: pride. Regardless of the differences in their student experiences, they are tremendously proud of the quality of education they received. They value it and are grateful for all the doors that it opened.

Q: What is the most enjoyable part of being on the board?

Berry and Nemcek: Talking to our alumni! Connecting with them, telling them about the innovative and groundbreaking things happening here, and showing them how IIT has transformed under President John Anderson’s leadership. They are hungry for news about their alma mater. They want to know where the university is headed.

Q: Why was it important to both of you to invest in the university with personal gift commitments, in addition to your service on the Alumni Board?

Berry: I established The Berry Family Scholarship Fund and the Garfield and Phyllis Jenkins STEM+ Outreach Fund (in honor of my parents) to give kids like me, who are from the South Side of Chicago, an opportunity to go to college. They need to be exposed to pre-collegiate options and know that they can do it. My parents were strong advocates of science.

Nemcek: I had a very successful career at Motorola, and I credit my education for that. Today I have the time, the experience, and the financial wherewithal to be able to give back to this institution. The Nemcek Family Endowed Scholarship Fund is meant to help the next generation of students. I want to show that true philanthropy is about remembering those that helped you and then helping someone else in return. This is my personal commitment.

Q: What is your advice to students? Why should they stay connected through the Alumni Association?

Berry: You are global students. In today’s world, you have to compete globally, you have to embrace technology, and you have to have a network of people who will help you. The Alumni Association is that network. Take advantage of it.

Nemcek: Stay connected and stay involved. Leverage the alumni network; it can open doors for you and enhance your career. Learn to contribute. You can contribute your time and energy, or make a financial contribution. It doesn’t have to be much. But give something back.

Q: If you could give a piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?

Berry (laughing): Don’t party so much!

Nemcek: Stay connected, stay involved.
The Self Leadership Academy at IIT

The late M. A. “Al” Self (1921–2013), university regent and Board of Trustees member, was one of the university’s most significant benefactors. A substantial gift from Al and his wife, Lila, led to the creation of the Self Leadership Academy at IIT. Each spring the academy identifies undergraduate students who show exceptional leadership potential and awards them with a multi-year, full-tuition scholarship. The Selfs’ legacy of generosity lives on through Leadership Academy alumni like Khanna who continue to support the university.

Goldey Khanna (CHE ’11)

As a student at the Chicago Medical School in North Chicago, Ill., Goldey Khanna’s (CHE ’11) schedule these days is packed. He is busy honing a new set of skills with countless hours of clinical rotations, training, and studying. But there is one skill he learned early on from his parents that doesn’t require any more training: the practice of giving back.

Khanna took on the role of Student Gift Committee co-chair in 2010–2011. The committee rallied students to make a gift to help complete the reserve textbook collection for Paul V. Galvin Library, successfully raising over $12,000.

“Taking on that co-chair role was my way of giving back to this school that gave me so many opportunities,” he says. Khanna says these opportunities have included a world-class education, participation in biomedical research, lifelong bonds with mentors and classmates, and most significantly, participation in the Self Leadership Academy.

“I always wanted to be a doctor. The money that I saved on tuition through the Leadership Academy scholarship is financing my dream of being in medical school. There was no way I could have done it without that financial support,” says Khanna.

Now as a young alumnus, Khanna continues to prioritize supporting his alma mater through annual gifts. “These are modest gifts, and hopefully I can give back more when I am established. The Selfs’ generosity gave me a leg up. My gifts are my way of acknowledging that and paying it forward,” he says.
More than 50 years ago, a young man from the South Side of Chicago, riding the "L" on the way to his job as a construction electrician, passed by IIT Main Campus every day. "I have to get an education. I need to do this so I can contribute more," he remembers thinking. At an age that most people would consider too late to enter college, 29-year-old Elmer P. Tepper (EE '69) enrolled at IIT, becoming the first in his family to go to college and embark on a lifelong journey of learning.

For 10 years, he juggled work, school, and home to complete his undergraduate degree. "The education was worth every minute and enriched my life in so many ways. It taught me to push myself," he says. Tepper credits this rigorous curriculum for preparing him to obtain his master's degree from the University of Southern California.

After a rewarding career as an engineer, followed by a brief retirement—"I only lasted 18 months in retirement," he says with a chuckle—Tepper went on to fulfill his other passion: teaching. For the past 15 years, he has been an instructor at GateWay Community College in Phoenix, Ariz. He talks to his students about his IIT experience all the time. The one piece of advice he always gives them? "It is never too late to learn."

Tepper recently designated a significant gift to IIT through his estate, becoming a member of the Frank W. Gunsaulus Society, the university's planned giving society. Such planned gifts support future generations of students and establish legacies for the donors.

"It is my honor to give back to the university. IIT was a life-changing experience for me. It accepted me at that stage in my life. I want other people like me to have a fair chance," Tepper says. (For more information about the Gunsaulus Society, turn to page 34.)
Mariah Dixon (ME 3rd year) came to IIT to study architectural engineering but quickly realized that was not her destiny. "No buildings for me," she says. "I like things that move!" Move at speeds upwards of 110 miles per hour, that is. Dixon dreams of building rollercoasters that will give even the biggest thrill seekers butterflies in their stomachs. Inspired by the movie House on Haunted Hill, she longs to see her coaster rise above the treetops of Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, Ill. With every thought of the climbs, drops, and turns she’ll engineer comes the realization that she wouldn’t have the freedom for such thoughts without the Collens Scholarship Program. "I literally jumped out of my chair when I found out I had been awarded a Collens Scholarship," Dixon says. "There’s no way my family could have made IIT work without that scholarship.

Dixon’s engineering classes keep her on the edge of her seat, and she hopes to do the same for the people who ride her rollercoasters one day. "I want mine to be the one they save for last—so it’s the last memory they have as they walk back to their cars," she says. "IIT showed me that my ‘silly’ rollercoaster dream didn’t have to be a dream—it could be a career path. Because of my Collens Scholarship and this education, I’ve learned that I can do something different, something bold."
As a student at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law in the late 1970s, Bruce M. Kohen (LAW ’79) was one motivated guy; he was excited to be in law school and focused on becoming a trial lawyer. Even at a young age, Kohen loved to debate with family and friends, so becoming a trial lawyer was a perfect fit for him.

“Representing someone, speaking for them in court, being their voice, and helping them—that is what it is all about for me,” he says.

Decades later, you can still hear the passion in Kohen’s voice when he talks about trial advocacy, calling his career as a trial lawyer “one of the most gratifying things” in his life. A retired managing partner for Anesi, Ozmon, Rodin, Novak & Kohen, he credits his success to those who mentored him.

“No one has made it in the practice of law without a lot of help,” says Kohen.

Kohen serves on the Chicago-Kent Alumni Association Board of Directors and recently provided a significant gift to help fund construction of the Bruce M. Kohen Courtroom. The courtroom enables today’s Chicago-Kent students, including his son Rob Kohen (LAW 3rd year), to practice both their advocacy and technology skills in a courtroom that is a model for courtrooms of the future. The project is a tribute to Kohen’s legacy and the highly regarded Chicago-Kent education that blends theory with practical experience.

Kohen knows that those he helps will give back to future generations of students. “It makes me feel good to know they will in turn help others.”

He lives that philosophy, mentoring young lawyers and students, and giving back as an active Chicago-Kent alumnus.

IIT Chicago-Kent celebrates 125 years

During this landmark year at Chicago-Kent, Kohen served on the 125th Anniversary Gala Host Committee, whose work culminated in an event attended by more than 850 people in February 2013, at Union Station Grand Hall in Chicago. Illinois Governor Pat Quinn honored the college by designating the date as “IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law Day.” The event was co-chaired by IIT President Emeritus Lew Collens and Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke (LAW ’83). Alumni from eight states attended, and every decade from the 1950s onward was represented.