A NEW WAY TO TEACH SCIENCE
A new chemistry addition will strengthen education for students at all levels and fuel scientific research. (page 26)

OPENING DOORS
Gifts to the Emory College Fund for Excellence create new opportunities for students. (page 26)

EMORY COLLEGE GOAL $110 MILLION
$95.2 MILLION

PROGRESS AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

Compassion and Gratitude Inspire a Major Gift

James E. Varner Jr.’s estate gift of $15.4 million moves Emory College closer to its $110 million Campaign Emory goal. (page 27)
The Emory College Alumni Board provides leadership for programs that deepen alumni engagement, supports Emory’s fundraising efforts, and strengthens the overall efforts of the college.

This 40-member volunteer group attracts some of Emory’s most accomplished alumni, chosen for their service to Emory and leadership in their communities. I am pleased to introduce our newest board members.

Theresa Burris 88C chairs the Appalachian Studies Program at Radford University in Radford, Virginia.

Dawn Francis-Chewning 79C is a business analyst with Emory University Technology Services in Atlanta.

Kirtley Fisher 02C is a legislative aide to a congressman in Washington, D.C.

Ted Hammerman 91C is the founder of Intermediary Copyright Royalty Services in Washington, D.C.

Susan Schlein 75C is a retired librarian in Houston, Texas.

Shannon Smith 90C is a regional volunteer and business owner in Ladera Ranch, California.

Audia Wells 90OX 92C is a human resources representative for TILT Human Resource Consulting in Atlanta.

Fund for Excellence Opens New Doors for Emory Students

Considering a career in medical research, sophomore Yaseen Jamal of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, spent six weeks in Italy this summer as part of a joint study program with Emory School of Medicine and Italian Studies.

The course, “Medicine and Compassion,” took Jamal and about 30 other students through Rome, Naples, Venice, and other cities to investigate modern and Renaissance art, literature, and architecture—and through them some of the deeper meanings of compassion and healing. He was able to go because of a grant from the Emory College Fund for Excellence.

Alumni and friends who support the Fund for Excellence create a learning experience like no other, and they help Emory offer that experience to every qualified student, regardless of economic background. To invest in the Emory College Fund for Excellence, call 404.727.1157, email artsandsciences@emory.edu, or visit www.emory.edu/give.

A New Way to Teach Science

The traditional approach to science education long has been to divide students into two categories and teach them separately. Undergraduates take notes in packed lecture halls, graduate students conduct laboratory research, and the two groups rarely interact in meaningful ways. Recent research shows this division is counterproductive, says David Lynn, chair of the Department of Chemistry.

“We now know that the most powerful teaching tool we have is collaboration,” he says.

This finding is sparking a shift in the way Emory teaches science and has inspired the creation of a new chemistry addition now planned for the center of the campus. Part new construction, part renovation, and wholly innovative, the building will combine technology and design to increase interaction among students at all levels, enable problem-based learning, and connect undergraduates to the real work of science in the lab.

Lynn expects the facility, along with the new teaching approach, to enliven the community, fuel research discoveries, and attract more students to careers in science. To support the project, call 404.727.6181 or email mkontar@emory.edu.
Compassion and Gratitude Inspire a Major Gift

In elementary school, Jim Varner earned a weekly 25-cent allowance, a penny for each bundle of kindling he gathered for the family fireplace, and a basket of eggs each time he fed the neighbor’s chickens. He sold the eggs to his mother, charging more for the brown ones.

His father, an operations manager for Railway Express shipping company in Atlanta, taught him basic accounting, and the young entrepreneur began keeping a record of his transactions. And so it came to be that James E. Varner Jr. 43C, a child of Depression-era Georgia, went from saving his hard-earned pennies to making a $15.4 million unrestricted estate gift to Emory College of Arts and Sciences.

Of the gift, $14.4 million is providing an endowment for Emory Advantage, a financial aid program for low- and middle-income undergraduate students. The remainder is funding a much-needed renovation of the undergraduate chemistry lab in Emory College.

“He was so grateful that his dad was able to send him to college, and he knew there were many families who could not afford to do that,” says his widow, Mildred Price Varner. “Jim believed that everyone who wanted a college education should have the chance to get one.”

Varner worked two jobs while a student at Boys High School, majored in economics at Emory College, and earned a commission in the U.S. Navy during his senior year.

After his World War II naval service ended, he began a 40-year career in the savings and loan industry that was distinguished by his deep understanding of the business, his calm leadership style, and his compassion for employees.

“People respected his knowledge and his willingness to work with others, and they called on him for guidance,” Mildred Varner says.


Along the way, Varner hired Mildred Price to answer the phones and keep records. Dedicated and hard-working, she took courses to learn the business, advanced to the accounting department, and served as branch manager of the main office in downtown Atlanta until her retirement in 1983. Jim Varner and Mildred Price married in 1995.

“Jim believed that everyone who wanted a college education should have the chance to get one.”

Atlanta banker Jim Varner has left a powerful legacy at Emory College. Mildred Varner says her late husband wanted to help students succeed.

Tall and athletic, Varner played softball on the company team and kept up his tennis game until he was 78. Frugal and thoughtful, he lived simply and took financial care of the people he loved. He made such a remarkable gift to Emory because he was grateful for his success and wanted new generations of students to excel.

“It is a pleasant obligation to continue to contribute to Emory and make it a little easier for students who come behind me,” he said in a 2007 interview, two years before he lost his battle with cancer.

Varner’s estate gift moves Emory College closer to its $110 million Campaign Emory goal. As of September 30, 2011, alumni and friends of the college had invested more than $95 million. To learn about the college’s funding priorities, visit campaign.emory.edu/college.
ON A VISIT TO EMORY as a high school senior, David Alvarez 64C thought the campus was the most beautiful place he’d ever seen.

When his family moved from Nashville to San Francisco after his freshman year at Emory College, he chose to commute across the country rather than transfer.

“Several extended family members who are alumni of Berkeley thought I was crazy not to transfer. All these years I have been singing the praises of Emory, watching it improve and grow into an internationally known research university,” says Alvarez. He and his wife, Carole Ann, serve on the Emory College Alumni Board and have created a charitable gift annuity to help the college continue to excel.

Learn about charitable gift annuities, which provide income for life while supporting programs you choose, by calling 404.727.8875 or visiting www.emory.edu/giftplanning.

Plan to strengthen what you love.