Investor and philanthropist Leon Cooperman and his wife, Toby Cooperman, graduates and sweethearts from the Class of ’64, have donated $25 million to Hunter College—the largest gift in Hunter’s history.

They gave $10 million to endow student scholarships and $15 million to support the renovation of Hunter’s 68th Street library, which has been renamed The Leon and Toby Cooperman Library. The gift, made on the occasion of the Coopermans’ 50th wedding anniversary and 50th Hunter reunion, is first and foremost a thank you to Hunter College and a way to give back to future generations of Hunter students.

Both Leon and Toby recall fondly the first-class educations they received at Hunter—he for $24 a semester, she, as president of the class, largely for free.

Acknowledging that tuition at Hunter today, though still a bargain, can place a financial burden on many students and even prevent them from pursuing an education, Leon and Toby created a game-changing $10 million scholarship fund that will ensure student success and inspire others to also support current and future generations of Hunter students. After all, long before Leon became one of the world’s leading financial wizards and one of Forbes magazine’s “400 wealthiest Americans,” he was, in his words, just “a plumber’s kid out of the South Bronx” whose dreams were made possible at Hunter.

By donating $15 million to the library renovation, Leon and Toby are recognizing that the shift from books to online materials is not the only mark of a modern library. A library dedicated to student success, and one where students can gather to study, collaborate, and socialize, is critical, particularly at a commuter school like Hunter.

The Coopermans’ record-making gift is not their first to Hunter. In 2009, they announced a gift of $1 million to create the Leon Cooperman Pre-Business Program at Hunter College, which provides talented Hunter students with the financial support, skills, and self-confidence to compete for admissions to leading business schools and to pursue successful careers in business. (See page 2 sidebar.)

In all these ways, Leon and Toby are literally investing in students’ futures. And Leon’s record proves that he only makes investments that yield exceptional returns. As he told the Wall Street Journal for an article on the Hunter gift, “I don’t like wasting money.”
From the President

Every year our generous and caring donors outdo themselves in opening their hearts and pocketbooks to fund the dreams and aspirations of the next generation of Hunter students. But the biggest fundraising news of late – Leon and Toby Cooperman’s gift of $25 million, the largest gift in Hunter’s 143-year history – is a true game-changer. This is true not only because of what the gift will fund, but also for the far-reaching effects such a public endorsement will bring about.

It’s a perfect example of what I call the complex power of philanthropy. The immediate impact of the Coopermans’ gift is straightforward: $15 million will help modernize our main library, which now bears their names. This gets us very close to finishing the $45 million renovation of our library into a high-tech center.

Providing our students with a state-of-the-art library represents a cultural watershed for a commuter college in the heart of Manhattan, which lacks the kind of traditional campus where students mingle and make new friends. The new library will become just that – a place where students learn, do research, and create new relationships.

Furthermore, because Hunter now has a significant endowment dedicated to student scholarships, we will generate new revenues and a new level of certainty in awarding scholarships, since we can be confident that there will be funds to provide them year after year. That’s another game-changer for a public college with no history of major alumni endowments.

The Coopermans’ philanthropy is also invaluable because of the powerful messages it sends to key audiences. Leon has a genius for identifying undervalued assets. Giving Hunter $25 million tells the world that our college is a value investment. All of us at Hunter knew that already because we offer a first-class education at a price working- and middle-class families can afford.

But it is one thing for us to know this. It is quite another when one of Wall Street’s most successful investors sends this message to the world. We are fortunate to have so many loyal donors whose regular support – along with this phenomenal gift from the Coopermans – sends a message to the thousands of Hunter College alumni that giving what they can to the College is a tremendously worthy cause.

Finally, there is the impact on those who study in the new library – the future Leon Coopermans. They’ll see that the son of a Bronx plumber who attended Hunter for what he calls “the princely sum” of $24 a semester now has his name on the door. These students – one perhaps the son of a janitor, another the daughter of a cab driver – will have a living example of someone from a similar background whose education helped him achieve the American Dream and who has been so generous to the college that made his education possible.

Already, our youngest graduates are getting the message. Inspired by the example of Hunter Foundation Chair Lisa Witten ’81, who spurred them on by agreeing to match them dollar for dollar, the Class of 2013 raised enough money to create scholarships for two deserving Hunter students. The organizer of the gift, Eric Yanez ’13, was so effective that we offered him a job in our development office, where he works today.

To Leon and Toby, to Lisa, to Eric, and to all who have given generous, life-changing gifts to the college, we say thank you and once again express our gratitude to our devoted alumni and committed friends, who share our vision of making Hunter not just the best public college in New York, but a university to rival any in the world.

Jennifer J. Raab
President

The Third Floor of the Leon and Toby Cooperman Library at Hunter College Opens to the Hunter Community

Since the third and main floor of the Leon and Toby Cooperman Library at Hunter College reopened its doors in June, students have been pouring in to take advantage of the upgraded facilities and communal study and research spaces. The first completed phase of the library’s renovation, its transformation into a beautiful, high-tech, state-of-the-art center of study, learning, and collaboration has paved the way for the rest of the $45 million project, made possible almost exclusively by private donations from alumni and friends of the College.

Aside from contributions from the Manhattan Borough President’s Office and the New York City Council, funding for the project has come entirely from individuals and families who believe that Hunter students deserve a study and learning environment as world-class as that at any private institution. “Every contribution is a belief in the quality of Hunter students and their future professional success,” said Hunter Foundation Chair Lisa Witten, who leads the library campaign.

Of the many personal stories behind the gifts to the library, some of the most moving involve donors who have given to honor members of their family. For example, the Gilder Tirschwell Information Commons, a high-tech welcome and information area, is a gift from Richard Gilder, co-founder of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, in honor of his sister Peggy Tirschwell, Hunter’s assistant provost.

“The Information Commons is to me a perfect gift,” said Tirschwell. “It celebrates technology, tech-savvy students, and of course libraries, recognizing them as sources of the world’s knowledge in all its forms. It has been a thrill to see the commons in action, and to listen to the reaction of our students as they discover its potential.”

The Anne Spitzer Reading Room and the Florrie and Paul Kagan Study Center are likewise among the library’s centerpieces, places where students gather individually to study or in groups to collaborate and socialize, when they aren’t people-watching down Lexington Avenue through the floor-to-ceiling windows. Bernard Spitzer and his sons could not have chosen a better way to honor their wife and
The Third Floor of the Leon and Toby Cooperman Library

“My family has always appreciated Hunter as one of the finest schools in the country,” said Lang. “The library is a very important part of the college, and it has been a privilege to contribute to it.”

The third floor also boasts a prominent new reference desk, thanks to a $500,000 gift from Hunter College Foundation trustee Dr. Susan Bershad ’75. “The college library was where I studied, spent time between classes, and found resource materials,” said Bershad. “With today’s technology, the library is so much more. It is the heart of the academic community, a place where Hunter College faculty and students collaborate with one another and connect with the world. My gift was to express my gratitude toward the library of the past and my excitement about the library of the future.”

The college will move forward this summer with the next stage of the renovation: the seventh floor Student Success Center, a $5 million gift from Klara ’54, MA ’56 and Larry Silverstein. Renovation of the sixth floor, funded with a $2 million gift from Witten and her husband, Richard, will also begin; it will include several new features, including a School of Education library, the result of a $3 million gift from Lew ’67 and Bobbie Frankfort.

“Nothing is more worthy of assistance than the gifted students of Hunter College who will use the library to the advantage of society and to themselves,” said Anne.

World-renowned media investor and analyst Paul Kagan ’58 and his wife, Florrie, donated the Study Center to commemorate the great tradition of Kagans at Hunter College. Like Paul, his late brother Sheldon ’56 and his sister Bea ’69 — who is, appropriately enough, a librarian — graduated from Hunter. (See sidebar.)

From the day it opened, students have filled the booths of the “diner with whiteboards”-style Barbara Lang Student Commons adjacent to the main library entrance on the third floor. Eugene Lang, whose philanthropy earned him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, donated the center in honor of his sister Barbara ’57, a retired elementary school teacher. Lang’s donation is in some ways a continuation of a library fund Barbara started in 1966 with a $2,000 gift in honor of their mother, Ida, Hunter Class of 1915.

“From the day it opened, students have filled the booths of the Barbara Lang Student Commons…” — Eugene Lang

Clockwise from top left, Paul, Shel, and Bea Kagan

Susan Bershad ’75 unveils the Bershad Reference Desk.

Richard and Lisa Witten ’81 celebrate the opening of the Library’s new third floor.
Dzens of New York’s best lawyers, from many of the city’s top law firms, gathered at Hunter on March 12 to watch two renowned Hunter attorneys debate one of the most controversial class-action lawsuits in recent memory: the case against the NFL brought by former players who suffered brain injuries during their careers. The event, a benefit for Hunter College’s Pre-Law Program, was a celebration of the great tradition of Hunter lawyers — past, present, and future.

Representing Hunter’s legal legacy onstage were friends and rivals who often find themselves on opposite sides of the courtroom: preeminent lawyers — past, present, and future. They were joined by distinguished legal colleagues: former general counsel at Quinn Emanuel, and Christopher Seeger, Founding Partner, Morrison & Foerster.

The debate was moderated by Arthur R. Miller, the nation’s leading civil procedure scholar.

Hunter’s Pre-Law Program was created in 2005 by President Jennifer Raab specifically to help Hunter students face the challenge of getting into law school, and more broadly as part of a strategy to expand pre-professional advising across the College. When Raab became president in 2001, Hunter had only one pre-professional adviser to serve the needs of every undergraduate interested in a career in law, business, or medicine — a task far too great for one person or program to handle sufficiently. Today, each of these fields is represented by its own adviser, and the extent of resources and services available to students has increased exponentially.

Lawyer and dedicated alumna Julie Ross ’83 (left) was crucial to the strategic development of the Pre-Law Program and its advisory board, which she chairs.

“For many students who have had little exposure to the professional world, the prospect of acquiring the experience and the tools necessary to go to law school can seem daunting,” said Ross, who was not only a principal organizer of the debate, but also one of its premier sponsors. “Navigating the complex law school application process can be overwhelming and expensive, while the opportunities for gaining meaningful remunerative experience at distinguished law firms and other legal institutions during college can be slim. That’s where the Pre-Law Program comes in.”

Other leading sponsors of the debate included Joseph S. Allerhand of Weil, Gotshal & Manges and the firms of Seeger Weiss and Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson.

But the real stars of the evening were the young and future Hunter lawyers whose careers were made possible by the Pre-Law Program, and the audience members who supported them with mentorships, internships, volunteer hours, and funding for LSAT prep and legal experiences.

The program has changed the lives of students like Israel Burns ’08 and Francesca Corbacho ’10. Burns grew up in foster care and worked overnight shifts as a CUNY safety officer while attending Hunter. His involvement with the Pre-Law Program helped earn him an acceptance to Rutgers Law School and a position at Seyfarth Shaw. Corbacho enrolled at Hunter in her mid-30s, after dropping out of college and spending years supporting her family with odd jobs. Thanks to the Pre-Law Program, Corbacho was accepted to NYU Law School and received an international human rights fellowship. She currently serves as a legal fellow with Human Rights Watch, and will soon clerk for Chief Judge Theodore McKee of the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

Other recent alumni expressing their thanks were Alex Kohen ’09, who went on to NYU Law and is now an associate at Davis, Polk & Wardwell; Marie Ndiaye ’09, an immigrant from Mauritania who graduated from Harvard last year and is now with the Legal Aid Society; James Ganley ’12, one of seven children from a working-class family, who turned down Harvard Law to accept a fellowship with NYU’s program in law and business; and Evelyn Pérez ’08, a Macaulay Honors College graduate who went on to Cardozo and is now an associate at Kelley Drye.

Under the leadership of the program’s director, Elise Jaffe, Hunter students’ LSAT scores and law school acceptance rates have increased significantly. In recent years, Hunter students have been accepted into every one of the top 14 law schools in the country.

If you would like to support the Pre-Law Program or get involved by providing internships, mentoring students, participating in moot court, or volunteering in any other way, please contact Elise Jaffe at 212.772.4889 or elise.jaffe@hunter.cuny.edu.

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Funds raised support activities like moot court, in which pre-law students gain courtroom experience by arguing cases before “judges,” i.e., leading attorneys who serve as program board members and volunteers.

Pre-Law student Dan Blondell presents his case to Evan Chesler ’73 (Cravath, Swaine & Moore) and Advisory Board Chair Julie Ross.

GIVING @ HUNTER
Now in its sixth year, the Zabar Visiting Artist Program brings internationally renowned painters, sculptors, photographers, and filmmakers to Hunter. Each semester, Zabar Visiting Artists meet individually with graduate students, take part in MFA seminars, and deliver lectures to the Hunter community and a broad public audience. The program is sponsored by Judith Zabar ’54 and her husband, Stanley, both talented artists themselves.

“Creating the Visiting Artist Program was especially meaningful for us because we felt strongly that providing opportunities for art students to have personal contact with contemporary working artists was rare, and that the exposure and contact would be an invaluable experience and inspiration for their work,” said Judy. “We couldn’t be happier with the program, the artists who have participated, and the overwhelmingly positive response of the students.”

During their residencies at Hunter, the Zabar Visiting Artists work directly with MFA students in both classrooms and studios. Student interaction includes master classes, critical seminars, and private tutorials, which have provided students with rare opportunities to interact with top practitioners in their field and to engage personally with artists they have known only in books and magazines. “The Zabar artists have been exceptionally generous with their time and ideas,” said Howard Singerman, chair of the Department of Art and Art History. “The conversations they have begun in the studios and seminar rooms continue to resonate through our students’ work long after their visit.”

Each semester, the classroom and studio sessions are filled to capacity, as are the public lectures. Each lecture is followed by a lively discussion between artist and audience, and many have been taped, preserving the discussion for future generations of Hunter students. “The roster of artists who have come as Zabar Visiting Artists is remarkable,” said Singerman. “The program has helped raise the profile of Hunter’s MFA program internationally. It helps in attracting those future generations.”

Past Visiting Artists

Vito Acconci • Janine Antoni • Xu Bing • Peter Doig • Charles Gaines • Alfredo Jaar
Joan Jonas • Jeff Koons • Glenn Ligon • Sharon Lockhart • Inigo Manglano-Ovalle
Christian Marclay • Kerry James Marshall • Tracey Moffatt • Wanggechi Mutu
Gabriel Orozco • Elizabeth Peyton • Paul Pfeiffer, MFA ’94 • William Pope.L • Walid Raad
Doris Salcedo • Shahzia Sikander • Fred Tomaselli • Nari Ward • Carrie Mae Weems
It’s hard to believe a year has passed since I became chair of the Hunter College Foundation. What a rewarding year it has been. I am deeply grateful to the Hunter community for welcoming me to this position and for your dedication and generosity to the College.

Throughout the year, I have had a firsthand opportunity to work with many members of the board and staff as well as interact with a number of students, who always remind me why Hunter is so special.

As co-chair of the library campaign, I could not be more thrilled and enthusiastic about the support that we have received from alumni and friends of the College. When the campaign was launched with a $45 million goal, we knew it was ambitious yet reachable. However, we never guessed that by the start of the 2013-14 school year, we would already have raised $36 million! We know that the support we are seeing is not only because of the energetic efforts of the campaign team but also because of the huge number of donors—every one of whom has made a contribution that has made a difference in our ability to support so many programs at Hunter.

Your contributions make so many programs possible and provide our students with the resources they need, from scholarships to updated facilities to new academic and professional opportunities. We are committed to perpetuating and enhancing the superior quality of education at an affordable price that has distinguished Hunter since its very beginning in 1870.

It is our hope that you continue to include Hunter in your giving plans so that we can carry on our tradition as a premier model of urban public higher education.

Lisa Witten ’81
Chair, Hunter College Foundation

Hunter College Foundation Leadership Gifts

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors for their generous gifts of $1 million and above to the Hunter College Foundation during the past ten fiscal years (July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2013)

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The Hunter College Foundation
Donations received from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013

Each year the Hunter College Foundation receives thousands of welcome contributions from alumni and friends. The following list reflects contributions that were earmarked for a particular program, department, or project; for the Annual Fund; or for the Hunter College Campus Schools.

We regret that space limitations constrain us from listing contributions below $100, but would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our donors for their support. The list reflects contributions received between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013.
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We would like to express our gratitude to the following organizations for their generosity in supporting their employees who are our alumni, parents, faculty, and friends whose initial support made these matching gifts possible.

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The Hunter College Foundation
Donations received from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013

Scholarship & Welfare Fund

When Scholarship & Welfare was established in 1949, there was no tuition and no charge for textbooks at Hunter, yet there were students who needed assistance in order to attend the College. Today, the financial pressures are even greater. Many students are heads of households. The majority hold at least one job; some hold two or more. Yet they are determined to graduate. Commencement rolls are filled with those who are the first in their family to finish college — a Hunter tradition familiar to many of us.

With your support we will continue to help worthy students for years to come; they will always be here and so will we. On behalf of the hundreds of students who have benefited from your generosity and concern, we thank you.

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$20,000
Wildred Weismann

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Bequests
$75,000
Margaret B. Gluster

$42,938.77
Beatrice A. Pask

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Marie Alpert
Rose C. Erwin
Gaetana Kramer
Marjorie McCarty

$1,000 - $2,000
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Marilyn H. Savetsky
Shirley A. Whitney
Saul & Stanley Zabar
Darwin Varon

$250 - $450
Joan Brodsky
Margaret A. Bruno
Barbara J. Cohn
Berman
Patricia DeGeorges
Veronica A. Farie
Margarie M.
Fitzpatrick
Joanne Foechel
Gerald E. Gollub
Norma T. Grifin
Barbara G. Harris
Monique Hea
Joan Malanga
Gail F. Nalven
Mary B. O’Hara
Miriam N. Pressman
Edythe W. Rishin

$500 - $750
Maria J. Arroyo
Herencia
Diana C. Bartelt
Arlene Blatt
Carol Blatt
Arline L. Bronzalt

$20,000
Mildred Weissman

$8,000
Jacqueline G. Wilson

$5,000
Wanda China

$5,000
David A. Caputo
Concetta Chinico
Cecilia M. Costigan
Helen Gittelman
Helene D. Goldfarb
Marilyn JS Goodman
Bernice Hauser
Beverly Hazelmorn
Barbara J. Leader
Josie Levine
Gerald Maraden
Mary A. Mullin
Barbara R. Newirth
Pearl F. Schwartz
Barbara A. Scott
Shirley E. Scott
Virginia C. Shields
Estelle Stone
Priscilla R. Toomey
Darwin Varon

$100 - $200
George and Sandra Abbott

$2,000 - 3,000
Gene B. Abrams
Paula Knaehmens

$1,000 - 1,500
Dorothy Geller
Julia Shulman

Under $500
Carolyn K. Goldern

$1,000,260
Naomi Lorch

$25,100
Judith M. Zabar

$20,000
Wildred Weismann

$5,000
Wanda China
Donations received from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013

The Hunter College Foundation

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The list above reflects gifts received between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013. If you believe any errors have been made, please let us know by calling the Scholarship & Welfare Fund office at 212.772.4112; fax 212.772.4074.

In 1994, Hunter College established the Thomas Hunter Society to honor, memorialize, and thank those alumni and friends of Hunter who have included the College in their estate planning. If you have already named the Hunter College Foundation (the legal entity that should receive the bequest) in your will, please let us know so we may have the opportunity to thank you personally. It will be our privilege to add your name to the growing list of members whose support, dedication, and foresight are helping to ensure Hunter College’s standard of excellence for generations to come. For more information and assistance in planning your bequest to the Hunter College Foundation, please contact Institutional Advancement at Hunter College: phone 212.772.4112; fax 212.772.4074.

 Hunters College Foundation Trustee Ellen J. Odoner with student Nicole Landig ’14 at Hunter’s annual Mother’s Day Scholarship celebration. Odoner has provided Mother’s Day scholarships to Landig and other students in honor of her mother, Clara Sternick Odoner ’41.
A Lasting Legacy for the Thomas Hunter Society

The Hunter College Foundation gratefully acknowledges bequests totaling $3,658,965 from alumni and friends received from July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2013, who named Hunter in their wills. We are thankful for their generosity and dedication. These contributions will help to provide future students with the opportunity for a world-class education.

Florence Belsky
Sylvia L. Berman
David Cooper
Jacqueline Da Costa
Charlotte S. Dunka
Belle Frechtel
Theresa R. Goldwater
Evelyn H. Lauder
Addie Langfelder
James and Estelle S. Leonard
Anna Machek
Esther K. Peterson
Mildred C. Primakoff
Mira Skolnick Raisman
Maria Rosenbloom
Augusta Thomas
Anne Marie Tye
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Klara Silverstein
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Cathy Weinroth
Judy Francis Zankel

The goal of the program is to train certified dance teachers for New York City schools.

Hunter College Foundation Trustee Jody Arnhold and Kathleen Isaac, Director of the Arnhold Dance Education Program, (seventh and eighth from left) meet with Arnhold Graduate Dance Education students and mentors. Arnhold sponsors the program, serves as a mentor, and chairs Hunter’s Dance Advisory Board.

Members of the Class of ’63 celebrated their 50th reunion last spring with President Jennifer J. Raab.
Hunter Alumna Elise Tepper Endows Scholarship for Early Childhood Education

"I believe that early childhood educators have the important task of helping to build a strong foundation for children's future learning and development."
— Kinga Omiljan

Elise Tepper '56 has always wanted to find the perfect way to show how much her Hunter education has meant to her. The idea came to her this past summer.

"What I learned at Hunter went far beyond the classroom," Tepper said. "The experience and the education provided me with the basics I would need for my career, but Hunter College had such a big influence on my life," she said. "For a long time, I have wanted to do more than just say thanks. I finally got around to it."

"I believe that early childhood educators have the important task of helping to build a strong foundation for children's future learning and development," said Kinga Omiljan. "Mrs. Tepper has made it possible for me to take on this challenging but rewarding task. Elise Tepper has made it possible for me to take on this challenging but rewarding task."

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