WHY I GIVE

“I want Booth to be just as amazing when Alice enters the class of 2040!”

— Anderson Lei Dong, ’17
with wife Rita, and daughter Alice

Class of 2017
Raises the Bar

“I WANT TO ENSURE THAT FUTURE CLASSES OF BOOTH REPRESENT MANY VOICES THE WAY OURS DID.”

Pete Estridge, ’17

“I WAS A VERY FORTUNATE RECIPIENT OF ONE OF THE SCHOOL’S SCHOLARSHIPS WHEN I JOINED BOOTH... THIS CLASS GIFT ALLOWS ME TO BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF A SIMILAR EQUATION.”

Anu Johns, ’17

These were just two of the sentiments that motivated members of the Chicago Booth class of 2017 to donate to their class gift. For the past 20 years, the class gift campaign at Booth has been a tradition—an opportunity for each class to come together one last time, reflect on their Booth experience, and leave a legacy for future students. The Full-Time MBA class of 2017 broke records for their generosity with participation by 97 percent of students, raising a total of $209,455—an all-time high dollar amount.

While previous classes have designated their gifts to go toward international trips or student-alumni programming, this year’s graduating Full-Time MBA class opted to designate its gift toward the Class of 2017 Scholarship, among other priorities. The scholarship will target individuals with a track record of working selflessly to build and improve a community with which they identify or have otherwise significantly interacted with. The ultimate goal is to attract students who will continue their work in developing communities while benefitting the overall student body experience for their Booth class.

A pay-it-forward mentality
Not surprising as Booth students, this year’s class was competitive, motivated, and successful, according to Meggie Cramer, Booth’s assistant director of reunion and annual giving, who coordinated the students’ effort. But the class also truly had a ‘pay it forward’ mentality and wanted their legacy at Booth to be financial as well as community-minded, diverse, and forward-thinking.

“This was a class that came together and agreed that they wanted to do something big for future Booth students,” said Cramer. “The class gift co-chairs were absolutely stellar—were able to rally their fantastic committee, effectively communicate to their peers,
Class of 2017 Raises the Bar continued

and use their competitive spirit to their advantage. Fundraising for a scholarship really resonated with the entire class.”

One of the co-chairs, Zachary White, '17, said, “the biggest challenge and reward with this effort has been helping my classmates understand how our engagement and support truly make a difference. Support from our alumni is and will always be a critical asset of the school. Given the success of our campaign, I believe our team did a phenomenal job delivering that message in a meaningful way.”

In the spirit of paying-it-forward, a group of alumni generously helped the class of 2017 surpass its goals by issuing a challenge, which unlocked bonus dollars for every five percent of class participation reached after 50 percent. Once the class surpassed their goal of 95 percent, the alumni contributed $77,500.

A lasting legacy

Reflecting on her experience as a class gift committee co-chair, Kirsten Wellington, '17, said, “the class gift is important because it initiates a legacy of giving back to Chicago Booth, which is necessary for the school to maintain its position as one of the best, if not the best, business school in the world. Many of the reasons we chose to come to Booth are because of alumni giving and philanthropy—faculty research, the beautiful Harper Center, and centers like Polsky and Kilts. I am absolutely thrilled about our record-breaking success in that it really reflects the class of 2017’s generosity and passion for Booth and all the school has given us in our two years. I look forward to continuing our giving legacy in the years to come.”

2017 Class Gift Committee Co-Chairs
Zachary White
Kirsten Wellington
Rachel Chamberlain

Class Gift Committee Members
Aidan Ali-Sullivan  Andrea McPike
Sruti Balakrishnan  Kelly Nguyen
Jing Chen  Dan O’Brien
Yok Chirathivat  Jon Pack
Pete Estridge  Joe Pietrzak
Austin Fang  Cen Qian
Agustin Gelosi  Julian Rowlands
Brian Gracia  Sonja Schut
Antoinette King  Shangril Shah
Etay Koren  Rikki Singh
Lisa Koth  Cedric Soh
Tom Kozlowski  Brian Tung
Emily Kruger  Gloria Zhang
Giancarlo Lazzaro