An artful gift
Shulamit Ran and Abraham Lotan fund visiting artists to the Center for Jewish Studies.
Longtime music professor Shulamit Ran gives back to the University she calls her home.

When former University of Chicago music professor Shulamit Ran was 8 years old, taking piano lessons in Tel Aviv, her teacher wrote down Ran’s original songs and, unknown to her or her parents, sent them to an Israeli radio station.

When a letter arrived with news that a children’s choir would perform two of her songs during a youth program, “it was really a fantastic surprise,” says Ran. She was at summer camp when the songs were aired, and she and the other children sat around a big radio and listened.

“The children’s choir sang my songs very beautifully,” she says. “And I realized, here was this thing that came out of me, but at the same time it had an independent existence.” She knew then that she wanted to continue to create music and have it performed. “That was really the beginning.”

At age 14 she earned a scholarship to the Mannes School of Music, moving to New York with her mother (her father joined them a year later). After graduation she toured as a concert pianist while also composing. Then in 1973, UChicago music professor Ralph Shapey heard her vocal chamber recording “O the Chimneys” (1969), based on the Holocaust-themed poems of Nelly Sachs.

Shapey, who was looking to fill a position, walked into music chair Robert Marshall’s office, threw the LP on his desk, and said, “There’s our composer.” They wrote and called Ran, persuading her to move to Chicago, a city she had never visited, and join the faculty.

She stayed at the University for 42 years, during which time she served stints as composer-in-residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera, composed an opera, directed Contempo (formerly the Contemporary Chamber Players) after Shapey’s 2002 death, and won a Pulitzer Prize for her 1990 Symphony.

In 2015 she retired from the University as the Andrew MacLeish Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Music. And in 2018 she and her husband, retired otolaryngologist Abraham Lotan, made a gift to the University to bring a visiting distinguished artist from Israel to the Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies in the Division of the Humanities, in concert with arts units across campus.

“The plan is to bring in one artist a year, rotating among music composition, the written word (an author, poet, playwright), and other creative arts such as painting, architecture, film, and choreography. “So there would be many ways of making the gift come alive.”

While retired from the University, Ran continues to compose in the airy Chicago Loop high-rise condo she and her husband have filled with art. Pages of handwritten sheet music cover her grand piano and nearby drafting table.

These pages are for Anne Frank, a full-scale opera commissioned by Indiana University, scheduled to premiere in fall 2020. Working on this story, she says, “is exhilarating, daunting, a huge responsibility.”

She takes her time when writing. “I don’t just crank them out,” she says. “It’s important to me that everything I do represents the best that’s in me.” One reason she accepted the University position back in 1973, in fact, was because her concert career left little time to compose. More time to compose was also a factor in her decision to retire from academia. Since that first radio experience as a young girl, composing is what she’s wanted to do.
Invested with meaning

Jane Pugh’s diligent investments gave her the resources to give back to the College.

Jane Pugh, AB’47, was inspired by the grandfather she never met: Florin Harrison Pugh. In 1902 the 38-year-old former schoolteacher and blacksmith earned his medical degree from Rush Medical College, then a University of Chicago affiliate.

Although he died two years before Jane was born in 1927, she ensured his name would live on in a UChicago College professorship arranged in her bequest.

The only child of an electrical-engineer father and plant-pathologist mother, Pugh grew up in suburban Downers Grove, Illinois. Enrolling in the Hutchins College before finishing high school, Pugh and her Downers Grove neighbor, Theodora “Teddy” Kras, AB’47, were roommates in Kelly Hall. “Jane valued friendships,” says Kras, “and everyone who lived together in Kelly Hall remained her closest friends.”

After graduation Pugh, who donated her course materials to Special Collections in 1993, worked for the City of Chicago, preparing civil service examinations for the Department of Personnel. She spent nearly five decades at City Hall before retiring in 1998.

In retirement Pugh stayed in Hyde Park and made weekend trips to her childhood home, which she had cared for after her mother’s death. A director of the Downers Grove Historical Society, she also tended to her garden there, at times so engrossed that when friends arrived to pick her up, Kras recalls, she was still pulling weeds and had to rush to get ready.

For 45 years straight, Pugh made gifts to the University, often supporting the Dean’s Fund for Student Life at the College, the Renaissance Society, pediatric AIDS programs, and the Women’s Board. In 1994 she received an Alumni Service Citation, recognizing her decades of service to alumni programs, including chairing her 40th and 45th Reunions.

Pugh often remarked that children of her generation were taught to save. She not only began saving early but also took an interest in stocks. She invested in assets in Mexico when interest rates were high and set up a commodities account with a friend when women were not allowed to own one.

At the suggestion of Mary Petrie, MBA’56, who began her University career as a secretary and retired as chief investment officer, in the early ’70s Pugh invested in the Acorn Fund, which became a top-performing small-cap growth fund. In the ’90s she joined an alumni investment discussion group organized by Kay Nelson, AM’69, PhD’78. The group met at Cobb Hall and featured speakers such as Ralph Wanger, who managed the Acorn Fund.

Decades before her August 2018 death, Pugh arranged a bequest to fund the Florin Harrison Pugh Professorship in the College, to be awarded “in the philosophical disciplines.” The remainder of the estate went to an endowed fund to support teaching in the College.

“Jane’s enthusiasm and dedication to the College was rooted in our traditions of general education and the Core curriculum,” says College dean John W. Boyer, AM’69, PhD’75. “She understood the deep value of liberal education, not only as a source of personal, intellectual enrichment but also as the preparation of students for civic leadership.”

“It’s important for those who benefit from Jane’s generosity to know how much the University meant to her,” agrees Sue Stealey, a neighbor from Downers Grove. At Friday night dinners with friends, says Stealey, Pugh referred to University-themed books by Boyer and others. “Even 70-plus years after she graduated, Jane was aware of the school calendar and events happening all over campus.”
Planning for a family member with a disability

Caring for a family member with special needs has its own set of responsibilities and challenges, but proper financial and estate planning can alleviate the added pressures of protecting his or her future.

Special needs planning is designed to protect assets and provide access to government services or benefits for a family member with a disability. Even wealthy families require this planning to ensure access to certain government programs. Because people with disabilities are living longer, public benefits are often necessary to cover their lifetime support. They also may be at greater risk of financial exploitation. To fully protect a family member, your estate plan must include a special needs trust (SNT).

What is an SNT?

It’s an irrevocable trust that benefits a person while allowing him or her to become eligible for governmental benefits and services. If you establish an SNT, and the beneficiary does not have the legal right to demand trust assets, then the trust is not considered a “countable resource” for purposes of government benefits and services. Therefore, your family member can receive government services and benefits even though he or she is also a trust beneficiary. If properly drafted, the SNT can continue to provide for the person for life, even if he or she is no longer considered disabled.

What if your family member already has assets?

If the person already has assets and is under age 65, those assets can be sheltered in an SNT called an OBRA trust, named for the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. The main difference between a typical SNT and an OBRA trust is that the latter must include a payback provision to Medicaid for any assistance provided before the person’s death. While OBRA trusts are a good solution for someone with assets, they do have limitations, such as the age restriction.

Given the complexity, some people go as far as to disinherit their family members with disabilities. But this severe action is unnecessary. With proper planning, your family member can receive the benefit of your inheritance or lifetime gifts and still receive needed government services or benefits.

How can I plan for a person with disabilities along with my charitable giving?

You can designate an SNT as a beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust, which pays income to the SNT and leaves the remainder to charity. A charity can also be named as the remainder beneficiary of an SNT after the person’s death. In some cases, it may make more sense to leave gifts to charity and plan for family members separately.
In recognition

The Office of Gift Planning recognizes the following individuals whose planned gifts have been received by the University. Their legacies of generosity and commitment to academic excellence live on through the programs they have supported through their estates.

Edward M. Bakwin, MBA’61, supported an endowed fund at the University. He also supported the Regenstein Library.

Stuart D. Boynton,* AB’49, supported the Odyssey Scholarship Program in the College.

Joseph P. Caliguri, PhD’63, provided fellowship support for graduate students in the Division of the Social Sciences.

Harriet Heifetz,* friend of the University, provided support for faculty and student conferences and events held at or sponsored by the Law School.

Ann Krug, friend of the University, supported the Center of Health Administration Studies in the School of Social Service Administration.

Teresa Ma, friend of the University, provided scholarships for students studying pediatrics in the Pritzker School of Medicine.

Anjuli Nayak, friend of the University, established a professorship fund in the Biological Sciences Division.

Sheila W. R. Putzel, former staff member, supported the award fund she established for senior premedical students in the College.

Arthur R. Reece Jr., AM’65, supported the Division of the Humanities.

Ann T. Silver, LAB’42, provided support for financial aid in the Laboratory Schools.

June M. Simon, AM’61, supported the War Memorial Scholarship Fund in the College.

Helen R. Weigle, AB’35, provided support for students and graduates of the Law School pursuing careers in public service. She also supported the College.

Judith Merle Yablong,* MBA’79, supported the MBA Experience Fund in Chicago Booth.

The following individuals left unrestricted bequests to the University:

Hollie S. Bendewald, AB’75
Jenny G. Kubitschek, SB’43
Herbert S. Wolfe, SM’25, PhD’30

* Phoenix Society member. The Phoenix Society recognizes donors who reveal planned gifts to support UChicago during their lifetime. For more information, visit phoenixsociety.uchicago.edu.

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How to make a qualified charitable distribution

Under the new tax law, qualified charitable distributions (QCD) may provide value for IRA owners 70½ or older because they allow an above-the-line tax benefit outside of the standard deduction. Here are two ways to make a QCD from your IRA:

1. INSTRUCT YOUR IRA CUSTODIAN TO MAKE A DIRECT DISTRIBUTION TO THE UNIVERSITY.

Financial institution processes vary, but many require a form. Your IRA custodian may send the distribution check directly to the University or mail you a check to forward, payable to the University. Be sure that the check is not payable to you, or it is not a QCD.

TIP Plan carefully to satisfy all or part of the annual required minimum distribution with a QCD. You cannot reverse or replace prior distributions.

2. WRITE A CHECK FROM YOUR IRA ACCOUNT DIRECTLY TO THE UNIVERSITY.

If your financial institution offers this option, allow several weeks for the check to clear in the preferred tax year. Unlike custodian administered transfers, the date of a gift from an IRA checkbook is recorded when the funds are debited from the account, not when the check is issued.

TIP For tax purposes, request a receipt from the University and alert your tax preparer to report the distribution on your return as a nontaxable QCD.

Visit giftplanning.uchicago.edu/qcd.

This newsletter is intended to provide general information that we hope will be helpful to you in your tax, estate, and charitable planning. It is not intended as legal advice and should not be relied upon as legal advice. Figures, calculations, and tax information are based on federal tax laws, regulations, rulings, and rates applicable at the time such information was prepared and are for illustration purposes only. Individual state laws may have an impact on the availability of gift annuities. For advice or assistance with your particular situation, you should consult an attorney or other professional adviser.
Choose your payday

“A charitable gift annuity is the best deal out there for baby boomer donors in today’s uncertain economy.”
– John Glier, AM’74

A charitable gift annuity is a gift of $10,000 or more in cash or securities in exchange for your choice of immediate or deferred annual payments to you and/or another beneficiary. Payments are fixed and fully backed by the University, and you receive an immediate tax deduction with the potential for other tax savings.

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*Single-life rates determined by the American Council on Gift Annuities. Your rate is based on your age and chosen payment type when you make the gift. Rates are subject to change.

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