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University of Rochester Alumni Endow Directorship for New Humanities Center *Couple Also Establish Annual Humanities Lecture*

University of Rochester Trustee Ani Gabrellian and her husband, Mark Gabrellian, have committed \$2 million to establish a directorship for the University's newly created Humanities Center. The Gabrellians also have pledged additional funds to support an annual lecture series through the center in honor of Ani's parents and their belief in the benefits of a humanistic education.

"I am delighted by Ani and Mark's commitment to the future of the humanities at the University of Rochester," said University President and CEO Joel Seligman. "Their generous support will be instrumental in establishing the vision that ensures the center succeeds in becoming a hub for multidisciplinary life on campus."

Both commitments support *The Meliora Challenge*: The Campaign for the University of Rochester, which ends June 30, 2016, as well as one of the four initiatives of University leadership's "Next Level" plan: Humanities and the Performing Arts.

The creation of the center was announced last spring as a way to support scholarly research, student engagement, and the creation of new knowledge in the humanities on campus. Plans are underway to create a physical home for the center in Rush Rhees Library.

"We envision the humanities center as a place that provides students with a strong foundation for the rest of their lives," said Mark, a member of the National Council for the River Campus Libraries and the University's New York City Regional Cabinet.

"Today there seems to be such an emphasis on the technical and STEM side of education, and we want students to know that they could be, for example, an amazing scientist and still love art history. One is not exclusive of the other," said Ani, chair of the National Council for Arts, Sciences & Engineering. "The humanities give people different perspectives on how to approach problems. And, in the long run, the exposure to different ways of thinking will help students to excel in any path they choose."

This has been true for the Gabrellians, who are both University alumni and have pursued multiple fields of study in their own lives. Mark majored in political science and history at the University, graduating in 1979. Ani was also a double major, having received her bachelor's degree in political science and economics in 1984. They followed with careers in both the public and private sectors in law, finance, banking, and now real estate development.

“Mark and Ani’s support for the humanities will help us to attract exciting new talent to the University and to establish a center with rigorous programming,” said Gloria Culver, dean of the School of Arts & Sciences. “We are grateful for not only their financial support, but also their time, energy, and vision.”

In addition to the Ani and Mark Gabrellian Directorship for the Humanities Center, the Gabrellians provided support for the annual Hagop and Artemis Nazerian Humanities Lectures to highlight the research and talents of current University faculty. The lecture series will rotate at least once every four years between Rochester and New York City. According to Mark, it will reinforce “one of the tenets of the center, which is to support collaboration and interaction among University faculty members with distinct backgrounds and research interests.”

The series is named in honor of Ani’s parents, Hagop and Artemis Nazerian. Immigrants from multicultural Middle Eastern and Armenian societies, Hagop and Artemis developed interests in history, literature, philosophy, art, and music and became proficient in many languages.

Hagop and Artemis were and are “deeply committed to the benefits of a humanistic education no matter what one’s calling in life may be,” said Ani. “Our parents made sacrifices in their lives so their children could receive a great education. They taught us by example, and we can only hope that through our actions we are able to do the same.”

The Gabrellians previously endowed a multidisciplinary professorship in Arts, Sciences & Engineering to better understand political and economic issues, and they permanently endowed the Mesrob Mashtots Research Grants, innovation grants for outstanding incoming undergraduates. Ani and Mark also provide the University with ongoing unrestricted support as charter members of the George Eastman Circle, the University’s leadership annual giving society.

More information about the Humanities Center and a full schedule of the center’s inaugural events and workshops can be found at www.rochester.edu/college/humanities.

About the University of Rochester

The University of Rochester (www.rochester.edu) is one of the nation's leading private universities. Located in Rochester, N.Y., the University gives students exceptional opportunities for interdisciplinary study and close collaboration with faculty through its unique cluster-based curriculum. Its College, School of Arts & Sciences, and Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences are complemented by its Eastman School of Music, Simon Business School, Warner School of Education, Laboratory for Laser Energetics, School of Medicine and Dentistry, School of Nursing, Eastman Institute for Oral Health, and the Memorial Art Gallery.

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