

Scholarship Support:

Profiles of Just a Few of the Medical School's Scholarship Benefactors Show the Range of Personal Reasons for Giving — and the Impact of Scholarship Gifts

The annual Mette Foundation dinner celebrates the life of the late **Norman Mette**, a Detroit man whose frugal lifestyle and careful investing allowed him to establish a private foundation in his name that has allowed for the distribution of more than \$1.3 million in scholarship funds to students in the University of Michigan Medical School over the past 21 years. Ill for most of his adult life, Norman Mette's gratefulness to his doctors and dentists was his motivation for leaving his life estate to support medical and dental students.

Photo: Gregory Fox



For others, the motivation for establishing permanent scholarship funds is to remember physicians who received their medical educations at Michigan. Eighteen years ago, Californian **Helen Vida** and her daughter, **Judith Vida Spence**, M.D., decided to establish a scholarship fund in the University of Michigan Medical School to honor the memory of their late husband and father, Alexander S. Vida, M.D., who received his medical degree from the U-M in 1939. Because Alexander Vida strongly believed it was good for physicians to have a broad educational background — that is, a liberal arts education in areas such as English, literature, history, music or art — and because he also strongly believed in medicine as a good field for women, his wife wrote in her statement establishing the fund that “to the extent possible under applicable law, it is my wish, but not a directive, that scholarship preference be given to women students.”

Mrs. Vida launched the fund with a gift of \$16,416. Today, with the addition of other gifts from her and her daughter over the years and with market growth, the Vida Scholarship Fund is now valued at nearly \$1.5 million and generates close to \$75,000 a year in scholarships for women students with non-science backgrounds in the University of

Pictured at the annual dinner of Mette Foundation trustees and scholarship recipients are, front row left to right: fourth-year student Kama Tillman, Suzanne Schettenhelm, Mette Foundation trustee Paul Hoenle, second-year student Alice Lin, Mette trustee Marilynn Knickerbocker, and second-year student Timnit Ghermay; back row: Mette trustee Karl Schettenhelm, Ulla Hoenle, second-year student Keith Hardy, third-year student Alexander Lin, and Mette trustees John Snyder and Glenn Inger.

Michigan Medical School. Last year the Vida Fund provided partial tuition support for 14 women students in their second year in the Medical School.

Jean Holland (M.D. 1977), a dermatologist in Birmingham, was inspired, after meeting her Medical School classmate James Hays' scholarship recipient Kristie Keaton, to set up a scholarship fund herself. Motivated, like Mrs. Vida, to honor the memory of her late husband, she and her five sons endowed a memorial fund in 1998 with a gift of nearly \$400,000 to honor her husband and the boys' father, Frederick Richard Holland (M.D. 1977), an ophthalmologist who died of a brain tumor in 1997. **James C. Hays** (M.D. 1977), an ophthalmologist who headed up the Atlanta (Georgia) Eye Surgery Group, the largest ophthalmology practice in Atlanta when he sold it a few years ago, in 1995 established a scholarship fund in his name, now valued at more than \$200,000. A scholarship recipient himself, Hays could not have attended medical school without scholarship support,

which the U-M Medical School was able to provide. “I owe it all to Michigan,” he says. Both the Holland and Hays funds provide support to a student in the Medical School for four years.

Donald D. Finlayson (M.D. 1941), a retired Sault Ste. Marie family physician, and his wife, **Catherine**, made a gift of \$100,000 to the University's Donor Pooled Income Fund that will, upon their deaths, support scholarships for medical students at Michigan from the Upper Peninsula where Finlayson himself grew up. Last year, not wanting to wait until they were gone in order to know that they were helping support a student in the U-M Medical School, the Finlaysons decided to begin making annual expendable gifts so that a medical student at Michigan could begin benefiting immediately from their support. [m](#)