DEAR FRIENDS,

I likely heard about Frank Gunsaulus’ “Million Dollar Sermon” a dozen times during my first week at Illinois Tech. Within my first year here I have been privileged to witness how deep the influence of this story goes. This isn’t just a great story; it sets us apart. The principles Gunsaulus laid out at our founding gives our university a North Star: to equip students from all walks of life with the skills they need to obtain employment and make the world a better place.

When we tell the story of how Frank Gunsaulus opened these doors 130 years ago, we’re not just talking about the past. We are also telling the story of how every single day, our community will work to its maximum capacity to push those doors open just a little bit wider.

Our mission here is to make a difference in the lives of our students. In turn, we hope they’ll go out and make a difference in the world, and we have a strong track record to suggest they will. The stories you’ll read in this issue of Impact Magazine are about people who were motivated in different ways to support Illinois Tech, but the common theme that unites them all is a desire to make a difference, and the conviction that supporting our students was a surefire way to make that happen.

In these times, the difference they’ve made matters more than ever before. Because of philanthropic support from alumni and friends, I have the utmost confidence that Illinois Tech will be well equipped to grow into what comes next.

We’re grateful now for the generosity which supports our mission of equipping students to power the difference the world needs to meet this challenging moment, and the future that lies ahead. On behalf of our university community, thank you.

I can’t wait to see what we’ll do together next.

Sincerely,

Ernie Iseminger | Vice President, Advancement
Illinois Institute of Technology
eiseminger@iit.edu
Richard Conviser soaked in the long ovation — the clapping, cheers, and shouts — from the familiar faces of 250 Chicago-Kent College of Law alumni. By the time he approached a podium to acknowledge them, it was too late. He was already fighting back tears.

The school’s retiring dean, Harold J. Krent, had just announced that Illinois Institute of Technology is renaming its law school building to the Conviser Law Center to recognize Conviser’s lifelong service and giving to Chicago-Kent. For Conviser, a long time professor at Chicago-Kent, that moment was a culmination of the energy he spent forming bonds with former students as their teacher and mentor.

“It was extraordinary,” says Conviser, whose lifetime donations to Chicago-Kent recently surpassed $12 million. “They were excited. I was in tears. Their reaction is why I feel so strongly about giving to Chicago-Kent — the relationships with students and alumni that have been built over the course of decades.”

Conviser’s commitment to students is an integral part of the Chicago-Kent community. His classes are regularly filled with more than 90 students. Each semester, Conviser and the Student Bar Association host the Conviser Bash, a party that draws more than 500 attendees.

“I’ve always loved my students, and I think it has been a two-way street,” Conviser says. “So many of them are now very famous lawyers. And many of them are now alumni who are giving back to Chicago-Kent, too. We all want the same thing: help Chicago-Kent become even better than it already is and advance its academic ranking.”

Conviser has also helped millions of law students who have never even taken one of his classes. He co-founded BARBRI, the world’s largest bar exam preparation course. Since BARBRI’s founding, almost 1.5 million lawyers around the world have used it to help them pass their bar exams. Conviser started BARBRI in his mid-20s when he was an associate at Baker McKenzie. BARBRI quickly gained success training the majority of law students in the nation to pass the bar exam.

“It’s like parenting,” he says. “Your kids grow up and go to college. They want their kids to go to college, and beyond. You want them to go be the best they can and be ever happier in life and more successful than you were. That’s the way the students and I feel about Chicago-Kent. We want it to continue to grow and get even better — get to the next level — because we support it and each other.”

Life-Changing Bond With Students
Michael Hill was walking in downtown Manhattan when someone approached him, shook his hand and thanked him for his work. Hill didn’t know the man, but he can certainly relate to what it feels like to have such high appreciation for someone’s efforts.

That day, Hill (CS ’82) was wearing a t-shirt that read “CREW,” or Counter RCIED Electronic Warfare, an electronic system that blocked the detonation of roadside bombs during the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and saved countless lives. Hill’s Illinois Institute of Technology education helped him contribute to CREW, but he may not have had the opportunity to pursue his career if it wasn’t for Nate Thomas.

That is partly why Hill, along with IIT’s African American Alumni Association, or 4A, established the Nate Thomas Legacy Scholarship to provide financial assistance to IIT undergraduates who are studying science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. The scholarship honors Thomas, who worked in administration for IIT in the 1970s and 80s, and prioritized the recruitment of promising black, Hispanic, women students who might not have attended college otherwise.

Hill and his sister, who grew up in Chicago’s South Side, were among the talented black students who were given a chance under Thomas’ leadership, and they ran with it. They carved out successful careers, as have many of the other minority students Thomas recruited.

"Am I a spectacular success? No. But am I a success? Definitely, given the history of my family," says Hill, who is now an electrical systems engineer at Envision Innovative Solutions. "I’ve had an important impact on society — to the point where a person I didn’t know in Manhattan walked up to me and thanked me.

"IIT has always been a school where children of working class families or the otherwise socially disenfranchised can get a leg up in this world, and that is the legacy of Nathan Thomas."

Through 4A, Hill is celebrating successful black IIT alumni and continuing the conversation about ways to increase minority enrollment. He helped establish 4A and has been its chair since its inception in 2011, when it became the school’s first formally recognized affinity group. Earlier in 2009, he and other organized a tribute event to Thomas became one of the largest alumni events in IIT history. After 4A’s founding, the Nate Thomas Legacy Scholarship was funded.

"If you’re an alumnus of IIT, your blood is in the ground," Hill says. “You reflect on the school and the school reflects on you. So if you can give your time or financial support, I recommend that you do. I have, and it has benefited me in ways I could not have foreseen."
Thomas and Josette Morel couldn’t have engineered their first encounter any better.

Thomas Morel (MS MAE ’69, PHD MAE ’72) was in just his second day in the U.S. after moving from the Czech Republic to pursue a master’s degree in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department (MMAE) at Illinois Institute of Technology. He poured himself a cup of coffee at an IIT gathering for international engineering students, and the first person he met was his future wife, Josette Morel (MS MAE ’69, PHD MAE ’73), who moved to the U.S. from her native France nearly a year earlier.

Fifty years later, their marriage — along with two children and five grandchildren — has kept them in the U.S. while forging celebrated careers in engineering thanks partly to MMAE. Now they are giving back to an institution they love with a $1 million gift to establish a fellowship for students pursuing graduate degrees in MMAE. The fellowship covers tuition and provides a stipend for living expenses.

“We have so much gratitude for the department,” says Josette Morel, an associate professor emeritus of physics at Roosevelt University in Chicago. “They accepted me as a graduate student who spoke very little English and gave me a scholarship. Plus, that’s where I met Thomas and so many amazing professors who guided our careers. We both feel we owe a lot to the department.”

The fellowship honors former MMAE faculty Andrew Fejer, T. Paul Torda and Mark Morkovin, who mentored the Morels as they navigated life in a foreign country while trying to keep up with rigorous classwork.

“They were very special people,” says Thomas Morel, president and founder of Gamma Technologies, which develops software used to design and optimize engines. “Andrew spoke French, and that was a lifesaver for Josette, who didn’t speak much English. They not only taught us a great deal about engineering but also had a profound influence on us and our perception of the world.”

They hope their gift will help MMAE continue to attract talented students and accomplished faculty who will help the department maintain its excellence.

“That’s where the success of a school starts: dedicated, knowledgeable professors who care about their students,” Josette Morel says. “If you had former teachers who contributed to your success, considering making a donation in their honor is a small but meaningful gesture. It helps future students receive the same opportunities you did.”

Generosity Generated From Gratitude and Love
In 1890, when education was denied to the underrepresented in society, Frank Gunsaulus delivered his "Million Dollar Sermon," casting a vision for a new kind of university that would provide technological education to people of all different backgrounds. The challenge was met with Philip Armour's donation. And Illinois Institute of Technology began its journey to educate and to ignite the power of difference to make a difference.

This is a common theme at Illinois Tech: visionaries from each generation stepping up to power the next chapter in our history. Our story is brought to life by leaders like Gunsaulus and Armour, or more recently, leaders like Robert A. Pritzker (IE ’46) and Robert Galvin and their respective families, whose combined $120 million gift in 1996 strengthened Illinois Tech’s position at the dawn of the 21st century.

Even more recently, we’re grateful to Illinois Tech Board of Trustees Chairman (and son of Robert Galvin) Michael P. Galvin (LAW ’78), University Regent Craig J. Duchossois, and University Regent and Immediate Past Board Chair John W. Rowe. With their combined commitment of $80 million this year, Galvin, Duchossois, and Rowe spearheaded the group responsible for the largest combined gift of $150 million in our university’s history, demonstrating the sort of generational leadership that has always powered our mission.

Leading a new generation of supporters and friends is exactly what this trio aims to do. As John Rowe puts it, “True leadership is about inspiring others to make a difference.”

And these three know a thing or two about making a difference. Hundreds of students from all walks of life have been able to attend and realize their great potential at Illinois Tech and beyond, because of bold philanthropic actions from this trio and their families, including scholarships, mentoring, and summer programming.

Our faculty is stronger because of endowed chairs and professorships, including the seven bearing the names Rowe (4), Duchossois (2), or Galvin (1). Research initiatives like the Visual Prosthesis Research Project or the Galvin Center for Electricity Innovation are all possible because of them. Our campus community is stronger because of spaces like the Duchossois Idea Shop and the soon-to-be-rededicated Jeanne and John Rowe Village.

Illinois Tech’s founding principles make it different from any other university, and that shapes how our students learn, develop, and go out to make a difference of their own. Stewarding that legacy requires flexibility and a willingness to learn as well as to lead. As Craig Duchossois is quick to point out, “Students from Illinois Tech are teaching me new perspectives, new ways to look at the world, and how to challenge what I should do next in order to solve problems.”

The type of leadership that Galvin, Duchossois, and Rowe exemplify embraces what makes our university unique. They have already committed so much of their energy to supporting Illinois Tech, and we’re fortunate to witness their willingness to push us even further. As Mike Galvin notes, “Some of us have been around for generations—but we’re just getting started.”

Leadership for a New Generation

In 1890, when education was denied to the underrepresented in society, Frank Gunsaulus delivered his “Million Dollar Sermon,” casting a vision for a new kind of university that would provide technological education to people of all different backgrounds. The challenge was met with Philip Armour’s donation. And Illinois Institute of Technology began its journey to educate and to ignite the power of difference to make a difference.

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Leadership for a New Generation
Arlington “Art” Carter, Jr. built a career on making sophisticated air technology — and in making history.

With his $3 million to establish a scholarship fund, Carter (EE ’61) recently became the first African-American donor to gift more than $1 million to Illinois Institute of Technology. His gift established the Arlington W. Carter, Jr. Endowed Scholarship fund to supply financial assistance to the school’s engineering students. He makes the gift after a decorated engineering career at Boeing, where he was named the first African-American vice president in company history.

IIT instilled in Carter a process that helped guide his career, he says, and he hopes his gift will allow other engineering students to follow suit.

“I started in engineering in a very analog environment, but my education set me up with a process to be able to adjust to the rapidly changing technology,” Carter says. “I was able to stay abreast as we shifted to a digital age, and now things are quickly going toward artificial intelligence.”

In 1961, Carter was hired by Boeing in Seattle, and he quickly put his IIT education to work. In 1978, he became the first African-American person to serve on the company’s executive management team before retiring as general manager of the Missiles Systems Division in 1998.

“I’m proud of my work at Boeing,” Carter says. “But I’m also proud of the work I did as a result of my time there — becoming the Northwest area president of the NAACP and helping establish the IIT Seattle alumni chapter.”

Engineering wasn’t in the forecast for Carter until late in his career as a meteorologist for the U.S. Air Force.

He served in the Korean War, monitoring weather patterns to help fly government officials to Korea and back to the U.S. Carter, a native of Chicago who earned his associate’s degree at Wilson College, was seeking a post-military career path. That’s when he came across a book about electrical engineering.

“I had always excelled in math, chemistry and physics, so it seemed like a real break to come across electrical engineering as a career possibility,” he says.

Turns out it was an excellent choice. He enrolled at his craft and understands the types of skills students require to establish successful careers in engineering. IIT delivers the right teaching, he says, and that’s why he’s so passionate about supporting his alma mater.

“We want to raise engineers, scientists and computer specialists who have a strong background in ethics so they have something to base their decisions on throughout their careers,” Carter says. “As your build, create and develop technology, you have to ask yourself, ‘How will this benefit society overall?’ IIT does a fantastic job of helping students adapt their thinking as the technological world changes.”
Dr. Frederica Darema was struck by the responses when she moved to the U.S. from Greece and told people she was pursuing a graduate degree in physics. “Physics? Do you mean physical education?” one person asked her. When Dr. Darema (M.S. PHYS ’72) emigrated in 1970 with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from the University of Athens, 7% of STEM workers in the U.S. were women, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Progress has been made, but a U.S. Office of the Chief Economist report in 2017 found that women still held only 24% of STEM jobs.

The STEM education and workforce gap is why Dr. Darema, who has built an esteemed career in physics and computer science, donated funds to the Illinois Institute of Technology College of Computing to establish the Dr. Frederica Darema Lecture Series. The series brings faculty from underrepresented STEM groups at other universities to present their research at IIT. Darema hopes the series encourages underrepresented groups to pursue computer sciences. The series provides speaking opportunities that can help faculty earn tenure and stay in academia, and can encourage collaboration across departments at IIT and other institutions. “Mathematics and physics are important pillars of science and technology fields. And over the last two decades, computer science has become the third important pillar, because now you can’t do physics or mathematics without computer science,” says Dr. Darema, who earned Ph.D. in theoretical nuclear physics from the University of California-Davis as a Fulbright Scholar.

“It’s very important for the well-being of our country to have a STEM-educated workforce that includes appropriate representation of females and other underrepresented groups.”

Dr. Darema recently retired as senior executive service director of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, where she managed the U.S. Air Force’s basic research mission and funding. Her career included roles within physics, and computer and computational sciences. In 1983, while working at IBM, Dr. Darema proposed the SPMD (single program, multiple data) programming model. For the past 35 years, it has been the most widely used approach for “parallel computing,” which is used to program and employ the power of the fastest computers — supercomputers. Dr. Darema values the mentoring she received from Illinois Tech faculty when she was a graduate student, and she wants that cycle to continue. “It has been so gratifying to be a positive influence on people’s careers” Dr. Darema says. “Six academics whose research I fostered when I was a Federal Funding Agencies official at the National Science Foundation (NSF) now have important roles at NSF”. “I hope the lecture series we’ve started at IIT will foster more mentorship.”

STEM Gender Gap Does Not Compute

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Nobody would have guessed that George J. Kacek, Jr. (EE '54, M.S. '55) was a millionaire. He never lived in a mansion, instead settling in a charming 100-year-old house on the shore in the tranquil community of Heart Pond in Chelmsford, MA. He never drove a flashy car, or even a new car until he was in his 70s. He’d happily talk to you about just about anything, but the subject of his wealth would never come up. In fact, until his passing in late 2018, nobody knew he was a millionaire at all.

George and his younger brother, Don Kacek (ME '58), were self-described geeks. As boys they rechristened the family’s garage as their workshop, where they delighted in fixing things, or occasionally taking them apart to see how they worked. Their curiosity eventually led them to Illinois Institute of Technology, where they both obtained degrees, commuting from their family home in Berwyn, IL to class. Both brothers were proud of their education and the success it afforded them. After graduation, Don excelled in business, eventually becoming a CEO. George pursued a technical leadership path, designing software systems for aerospace control and navigation with GE for 15 years. After that, George spent 20 years at the defense contractor company Raytheon, where he was heavily involved as an engineer and team leader in the Patriot missile program.

When he retired in the early 1990s, George found his home on Heart Pond, where he established himself as a local fixture, proving himself to be a conscientious neighbor, a charming guest, and a reliable helping hand. He resisted the urge to tear down his century-old house, and instead devoted his retirement to improving and maintaining the original structure.

Among his many interests, George kept just one to himself: his passion and extraordinary aptitude for investing. Through the cozy winters on Heart Pond, he dedicated himself to research, leveraging his experience into a portfolio of technology and aviation stocks which he managed without the aid of any financial advisor.

When he passed and his planned estate gift to Illinois Tech was disclosed, Illinois Tech leadership felt that it was imperative to honor the magnitude of George’s generosity. In the end, the George J. Kacek scholarship was established, and the rededication of a rehabilitated Mies van der Rohe-designed residence hall was selected as a fitting tribute to a man who worked hard to make his own house a home.

Like the home of its namesake, George J. Kacek Hall is a thoughtfully innovative structure that celebrates the old while making way for the new. Industrious yet modest, George found prosperity without sacrificing loyalty to his family, friends, and neighbors. Through George J. Kacek Hall, George’s legacy will live on as a role model of a well-lived life for generations of students to come.
“My experiences at ID have allowed me to learn the skills necessary to work on large social issues and to design interventions to make a positive impact in the world and the communities I live and operate in. Thank you so much for your contribution to my education!”
Justin Walker
Pontiac, Michigan
Master’s Degree Candidate
Design

“I feel blessed to have been given this opportunity to accomplish what I want and love to do.”
Kinza Haque
Chicago, Illinois
Second Year
Information Technology and Management

“Your help encouraged me to move toward my dreams and there is nothing more powerful. Thank you for the chance to become who I believe I can be.”
Beatrice Gaurean
Bucharest, Romania
Master’s Degree Candidate
Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling

A SPECIAL THANK-YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE MADE AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING ILLINOIS TECH.

■ The Philip Danforth Armour Society, named in honor of Illinois Tech’s founding donor, currently recognizes 103 philanthropic families who have given transformational gifts of $1 million or more in support of the university’s mission.

■ The Sawyier Society, named for longtime faculty member and donor Fay Sawyier, recognizes the philanthropy of faculty and staff who have given $25,000 or more to the university.

■ The Frank W. Gunsaulus Society, named in honor of the university’s founding president, recognizes those who have arranged for an estate commitment to Illinois Tech.

■ Illinois Tech Visionaries is a group of alumni, parents, and friends of Illinois Tech who support the university’s mission with their personal annual gifts of $1,000 or more.

■ Loyal Hawks members show their pride and commitment to Illinois Tech by making an automatic monthly gift.

■ Mies van der Rohe Society members support the society’s mission to preserve the architectural integrity of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s buildings, to modernize the buildings’ performances, to enhance architecture and education programs for students, and to reinforce Chicago’s international reputation for architectural distinction.
The Philip Danforth Armour Society, named in honor of Illinois Institute of Technology’s founding donor, recognizes philanthropic families who have given transformational gifts of $1 million or more in support of the university’s mission. To date there are 103 Armour Society families.

**PHILIP DANFORTH ARMOUR SOCIETY**

Through the 2019–2020 Fiscal Year

Anderson Family
Anderson Family
Anonymous
Anonymous (3)
Armour Family
Baker Family
Bawer Family
Bekir Family
Bogler Family
Collamos Family
Carter Family
Cherry Family
Cho Family
Collins Family
Conviser Family
Cox Family
Covin Family
Cowan Family
Davidson Family
Dewey Family
Diffendall Family
Dranos Family
Duchosovitz Family
Eidkraft Family
Elbrock Family
Ellison Family
Elliot Family
Finley Family
Fiske Family
Fraze Family
Frear Family
Galvin Family
Goldstone Family
Goldwater Family
Gonser Family
Grabinger Family
Hardman Family
Hegar Family
Herman Family
Hill Family
Huprich Family
Jordan Family
Kazak Family
Kaplan Family
Karp Family
Kraus Family
Kraus Family
Kreidler Family
Lambert Family
Lewis Family
Lewis Family
Lincoln Peterson Family
Li Family
Lycoski Family
Makra Family
Maruzzo Family
McCluskey Family
Mitchell Family
Monson Family
Morgantown Family
Murphy Family
Newberg Family
Paige Family
Parke Family
Peck Family
Petersen Family
Pettis Family
Petrolia Family
Pruitt Family
Qualti Family
Rice Family
Rice Family
Ross Family
Rowe Family
Sawyier Family
Schlaifer Family
Schmidt Family
Schult Family
Segal Family
Self Family
Simon Family
Sogra Family
Stuart Family
Tang Family
Taylor Family
Taylor Family
Tung Family
Wright Family
Wagner Family
Woodford Family
Wright Family
Wright Family
Zink Family
GUNSAULUS SOCIETY

“At Illinois Tech, I’ve genuinely grown as a person and met benevolent, inspiring people I thought I would never encounter in my life. It’s completely changed my outlook on life, and for that, I cannot thank you enough.”

Elijah Wilson
University Park, Illinois
First Year
Cybersecurity

Harold R. Ames B5 ’50
John & Pat Anderson
William F. Andrews BS ’47 & Virginia Andrews

*Trustee    **Deceased

GUNSAULUS SOCIETY
Harold R. Ames BS ’50
John & Pat Anderson
William F. Andrews BS ’47 & Virginia Andrews
Anonymous (1 1)
Robert Babbin BAC ’52 & Sylvia Babbin
Bernard S. Baker PHD ’69 & Cornelia H. Baker
James J. Baumbich BS ’69 & Thekla Baumbich
Michael J. Belcher PHD ’73 & Fran Belcher**
Hal Bergen* BS ’50 & Sharon Bergen
Robert M. Bernacchi BS ’63, MS ’64
Robert L. Borlick BS ’59
Abdon J. Bray** BS ’50 & Eileen Bray
Howard W. Broider** BS ’46 & Carol Broider
James B. Brown BS ’66 & Donna Brown
Robert J. Collopy** BS ’40 & Crystal Collopy
David L. Crowell* BAC ’79 & Debra Crowell
Donald R. Dann BS ’56 & Jacqueline Dann
Edward B. Davis BS ’70 & Ming Yan Davis
Charlotte E. Decker BS ’51, MS ’53
Lawrence H. Dickelman BS ’59
David S. Dickson BS ’77 & Marie M. Dickson
Janet & Craig Duchossois*
G. Stuart Elliott BS ’71, MAS ’74
Herbert Elliott JD ’75
Fred E. Bisshopp** BS ’54 & Susan Ellis
Charles E. Erickson BS ’58
Ted & A. Eliason BS ’72 & Anne Frida
Henry F. Falkner* BS ’50 & Margaret Falkner
Robert R. Ferguson BS ’50 & Hilda Ferguson
Aki & Faye BS ’49 & Faye Faye*
Robert R. Gendron BS ’55 & Mary Evelyn Taplin
Edward C. King BS ’66 & Beverly Flour
Frank H. Fox BS ’34
Graydon C. Fox BS ’39 & Marion Fox

Robert J. Collopy BS ’65 & Diane Chilpalo
Prinzie Clarckwater MS ’51
Robert C. Crossley
Teresa C. Kull (D1), MA ’19,
John C. Cole BS ’74, MS ’81
Roy Cowles BS ’35 & Diana Uchida MS ’92

Robert L. Collopy BS ’47 & Crystal Collopy
Marvin Camras** BS ’40, MS ’42 & Isabel Camras

Robert A. Cornog* BS ’61 & Virginia A. Cornog

Michael J. Belcher PHD ’73 & Fran Belcher**

Gwen R. & Jules F. Knapp**

Edward C. King BS ’66 & Linda King

Robert B. Johnson BS ’69, MS ’71 & Sharon G. Johnson

G. Stuart Elliott BS ’71, MAS ’74 & Marilyn Fitzpatrick

Helen B. Graham** BS ’50 & Helen B. Graham**

Robert M. Bernacchi BS ’63, MS ’64 & Dorothy Gregory

Fred B. Hanson** LLB ’32 & Marilynn Hanson

Korzenecki Family Trust

Korzenecki Family Trust

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