



Item CG: A-1a

COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Date: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021

SUBJECT: APPROVE NAMING OF UNIVERSITY ELEMENTS

PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTION

Recommend that the BoT approves the naming of the "Myrna Gordon Skurnick Writing Nest at Theatre Lab" within the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Donation:

Myrna Gordon Skurnick is making a blended gift of One Million Five Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$1,550,000) to the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters for a recognition opportunity to name the "Myrna Gordon Skurnick Writing Nest at Theatre Lab". Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) will be given over five (5) years as a cash donation. The remaining balance of One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,300,000) will be received as an Estate Gift. The gifts will establish the Myrna Gordon Skurnick Theatre Lab Playwriting Program and Creative Writing MFA Fellowships Fund.

Gift Purpose:

The cash gift will establish the "Myrna Gordon Skurnick Theatre Lab Playwriting Program" as well as fund stipends to attract outstanding student writers to the Masters in Fine Arts Creative Writing degree program.

The remaining estate gift will establish an endowment to permanently fund the "Myrna Gordon Skurnick Theatre Lab Playwriting Program and Creative Writing MFA Fellowships Fund."

The purpose of the Donor in making this gift is to establish a named space, fund a playwriting program and Creative Writing MFA stipends to inspire creativity in writing, new play development and to cultivate the next generation of writers, playwrights and new play development among students, faculty and community members.

Donor's Background:

Myrna Gordon Skurnick is retired. She worked with her late husband, Sam Skurnick (deceased 2006), a stockbroker who had a seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

Ms. Skurnick emigrated from England to the United States after World War II. Prior to working with her husband, she worked as a secretary during the day and a telemarketer for Arthur Murray Dance Studios in the evening. It was through her phone work at the Arthur Murray Dance Studio that she met her husband Sam. He liked her accent and then asked to meet.

Together with her husband, Ms. Skurnick lived in New York and Connecticut before moving to her current residence in Boca Raton. The couple have a daughter, Michelle, who remains very close to her mother. She owns a small horse farm in Massachusetts and they speak regularly during the week.

Ms. Skurnick is an avid writer and enjoys the arts especially theatre, dance, music and literature. She is actively engaged with several local British women's organizations and shares an enormous pride for her British heritage. She has many relatives in England with whom she speaks often.

Ms. Skurnick has regularly attended arts programs, performances, shows and lectures within the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters since at least 2013. She became an annual Ambassador of the Arts supporter (\$1,000 annually) when the program was established in 2014, then also becoming a \$2,500 Inner Circle donor to Theatre Lab since its inception in 2015. Her cumulative giving to date is Fourteen Thousand Dollars (\$14,000).

Her generosity includes significant gifts to many local organizations including the Boca Raton Regional Hospital, her temple, the Wick Theatre and others. She is especially proud of naming a room at Brooklyn College in memory of her late husband in 2020. Sam was a proud alumnus, loved the college, and encouraged most of his nieces to attend there.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Cost of signage and installation funded through the gift.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATE

Installation of signage and distribution of promotional materials following BOT approval.
A naming announcement and planning for other celebratory activities to follow.

Presented by: Mr. Steve Schmidt, FAU Foundation Board Chair

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