



Item: AS-A1

## COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF HONORARY DOCTORATE FOR CHARNA LARKIN**

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### PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTION

Requesting recommendation to approve the conferral of an Honorary Doctorate on Charna Larkin.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

University Policy 2.3 (Honorary Doctorates) specifies that those nominated for Honorary Doctorates be recommended to the FAU Board of Trustees by the University Faculty Senate Honors and Awards Committee, the Provost and the President. One candidate is being recommended at this time.

Charna Larkin has led an extraordinary life as an entrepreneur, businesswoman, and philanthropist with more than 20 years devoted to Florida Atlantic University and giving back to her community. She attended college as an adult and graduated from Boston College. In the early 70's, she helped form The Larkin Group, a widely respected and successful trade show production company that was acquired by Advanstar Communications in the year 2000. Ms. Larkin lived in Massachusetts until 2002, where she supported Beth Israel Hospital and other community organizations, including the Boston University School of Medicine's Larkin Family Eye Research Laboratory.

Upon moving to South Florida, Ms. Larkin has demonstrated an on-going love for FAU, such as the support of university programs that are named in her honor and in the memory of her late husband Alan. Among these initiatives are the Larkin Family Presidential Symposium dedicated to the advancement of the history of the American Presidency, the Alan B. Larkin Book Series, and the Alan B. Larkin Family Fellowships and Scholarships.

For more than 20 years, the Symposium has added a new dimension to scholarly pursuits for FAU's students, faculty, and the community. Held each February in honor of President's Day, it has become a signature event at FAU and over these many years has attracted thousands of visitors/attendees to FAU. The annual symposium explores the role of the presidency in

shaping political, cultural, and social developments in American life. Past symposia have featured lectures by former Secretary of State [Madeleine K. Albright](#), noted journalists [Helen Thomas](#), [David Halberstam](#), [Eugene Robinson](#), [Bob Woodward](#) and [Carl Bernstein](#) as well as some of the country's top historians.

In 2022, Charna increased her philanthropic relationship with FAU by donating her rare Presidential Signatures Collection to the FAU Libraries. Among the items that will be housed in the study on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Wimberly Library are 45 letters signed by American presidents ranging from George Washington to Donald Trump.

Ms. Larkin's recognition as a dedicated humanist and philanthropist continues to grow. Her dedication to fostering our intellectual growth and nurturing of initiatives across the university has resulted in impactful outcomes for hundreds of staff, faculty, and students.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATE**

If approved, this Honorary Doctorate will be conferred at a future commencement ceremony.

#### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A.

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**Supporting Documentation:** Nomination materials

**Presented by:** Dr. Russ Ivy, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Phone:** 561-297-3062



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**To:** Interim President Stacy Volnick, Interim Provost Russ Ivy, Interim Vice President David Green

**From:** Dr. Michael J. Horswell, Dean of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters

**Date:** February 10, 2024

**RE:** Nomination of Mrs. Charna Larkin for Doctor Honoris Causa in Humane Letters

Pursuant to the University Policy on Honorary Doctorates, I hereby nominate Mrs. Charna Larkin for the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters on behalf of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters. As this memorandum of support will detail, Charna has exceeded the criteria for this recognition, as laid out in our policy:

**“Selection criteria are based on national and international standards of exceptional achievements that are primarily intellectual in nature. Consideration may also be given to individuals who have contributed in significant ways to the advancement of disciplines or programs at FAU and/or to the development of the state and region.”**

Charna Larkin has led an extraordinary life as an entrepreneur, businesswoman, and philanthropist with more than 20 years devoted to Florida Atlantic University and giving back to her community. Charna and her deceased husband Alan, represent the best virtues of what Tom Brokaw called “America’s Greatest Generation” by their dedication and compassion to education and especially to FAU. In her own modest way, Charna radiates enthusiasm and passion to advance the education of American history and especially the knowledge of the American Presidency, as well as increase civic literacy. She has demonstrated an on-going love for FAU and the community and as a compassionate community leader, she is one of those rare individuals who truly *cares*—and shows it in every aspect of her life.

#### **Alan B. and Charna Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency**

Following a meeting in 2003 with the Department of History Chair, Steve Engle, Charna requested a proposal from Florida Atlantic University to outline specifically what Steve had conceived as the creation of an annual Alan B. Larkin Family Presidential Symposium dedicated to the advancement of the history of the American Presidency. The proposal included not only the annual symposium but also the Alan B. Larkin Book Series and the Alan B. Larkin Family Fellowships and Scholarships. Upon receiving this proposal, Charna decided that a one-million-dollar endowment be established by the family to be placed under the direction of the Department of History.

With special appreciation for this opportunity, the Department of History in concert with the College of Arts and Letters’ focus on interdisciplinary cooperation initiated an annual Symposium on the American

Presidency under the banner of the Alan B. Larkin Family. For more than 20 years, this program has added a new dimension to scholarly pursuits for FAU's students, faculty, and the community. The Symposium, held each February in honor of President's Day, has become a signature event at FAU and over these many years has attracted thousands of visitors/attendees to FAU.

### **Signature Impact of the Larkin Symposium**

Over the years, the Larkin Symposium has partnered with several programs within the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts to promote dialogue and guidance for individuals seeking knowledge about the American Presidency. The annual symposium explores the role of the presidency in shaping political, cultural, and social developments in American life. Past symposia have featured lectures by former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, noted journalists Helen Thomas, David Halberstam, Eugene Robinson, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein as well as some of the country's top historians including David McCulloch, Mary Frances Berry, Michael Beschloss, Brian Balogh, and Mark Neely, Jr. In February 2008, the symposium co-sponsored "Join It! Civic Engagement Week at FAU." Over 4,000 students participated in civic week events, including voter education workshops, a student voter registration drive, a "Rock the Vote" rally, a visit by the C-Span "Campaign 2008" bus, three student contests, a mock presidential debate by FAU students, and a performance by Comedy Central's "Indecision 2008." For its contribution in promoting civic understanding, the Larkin Symposium received the George Washington Honor Medal from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.

In 2014, the symposium co-sponsored with the FAU Student Government Association a public screening of "All the President's Men," which featured an introduction and commentary by Dr. Timothy Naftali, former director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum. In 2015, the symposium co-sponsored an exhibit in the Wimberly Library titled "Remembering World War Two at 70," which also featured a lecture by Dr. Wilson Miscamble of Notre Dame. In 2018, the symposium took advantage of having Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist Eugene Robinson on campus and hosted a luncheon for students and faculty associated with the University Press. In 2019, we hosted scholars from around the world who presented their research on the "Origins of the American Presidency," published as the fifth Larkin Presidency Series book. In 2020, we hosted Doris Kearns Goodwin who spoke about "Presidential Leadership in Turbulent Times," the following year, David Gergen, zoomed in virtually on "Democracy Going Forward: The State of the American Presidency," and in 2022, Thomas Friedman talked about "The American Presidency Through a Global Lens." Last year, we featured Laura Bush and her daughter Barbara Pierce Bush in a conversation moderated by CNN Historian Tim Naftali about the role of First Ladies and First Daughters.

### **Alan B. and Charna Larkin Presidential Book Series at the University Press of Florida**

To accomplish the academic/scholarly objective and produce a book, the Symposium has a thematic focus based on a three-year cycle. Renowned speakers/scholars are invited to participate and to present papers that are included in an anthology published by the University Press of Florida. Presidential themes have ranged from war-time Presidents, peace-time Presidents, founding Presidents, economic depression Presidents, etc. To date, we have published five books.

### **Alan B. Larkin Family Fellowships and Scholarships**

In addition to the annual Symposium and the book, each year one Alan B. Larkin Family Fellowship is awarded to a graduate student, who serves as the Larkin Fellow. These Graduate Fellowships are renewable for two years. More recently, Charna signed an additional estate gift agreement committing

\$1,000,000 for scholarships to be used in the College of Arts and Letters, another example of her commitment to education.

### **Alan B. and Charna Larkin Presidential Study**

In 2022, Charna increased her philanthropic relationship with FAU by donating her rare Presidential Signatures Collection to the FAU Library. Steve Engle, as Director of the Symposium series, authored a proposal to construct the Alan B. and Charna Larkin Presidential Study in the Wimberly Library located on the third floor to house the collection. Not only did Charna endorse the idea and donate her rare collection, but she also paid for the design and construction of the space and provided an endowment for the preservation of the original signatures of every president. The endowment will provide resources for the operation and maintenance of the Study and Collection, including the care of the collection and Study, and for programming related to the American Presidency collection, including the Alan B. and Charna Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency. This distinctive space will serve as a historical archive of the Alan B. and Charna Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency, including symposia photos and displays of speakers presented over the years, as well as video clips from past events, and published Larkin symposia books. A collection of presidential biographies will enhance the display of signed presidential letters. In addition, the space will serve as a student study and gathering space, and an educational site on the American presidents. Community engagement activities in the space will include small lectures, visiting student and small group tours, post-event receptions and other special programs.

Returning to our criteria for the awarding of honorary doctorates, I can think of few others who have exceeded the mark as Charna Larkin has. Her recognition as a dedicated humanist and philanthropist continues to grow, yet she never forgets her home here at FAU. Her dedication to fostering our intellectual growth and nurturing of our faculty and staff initiatives across the university has resulted in impactful outcomes for hundreds of staff, faculty, and students. An Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from her beloved university would highlight and honor the myriad selfless contributions Charna Larkin has made to Florida Atlantic University and to our greater community. She has inspired me greatly during my years as Dean and I wholeheartedly recommend her to you and our trustees for this recognition.

*F*lorida Atlantic University is pleased to announce a major gift of \$1 million from the family of the late Alan B. Larkin. This generous contribution, initiated by Mr. Larkin's widow Charna Larkin, established the Alan B. Larkin Endowed Fund and will be used to support the University in advancing and enhancing the study of the American presidency in the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters' Department of History. Through the State of Florida's matching gift program, this gift will total \$1.75 million.

A powerful force behind fashion industry trade publications and trade shows, Mr. Larkin and his brother Harold founded Larkin Publications 60 years ago. The company, a family enterprise, was later renamed the Larkin Group. The company was sold in 1999, and Mr. and Mrs. Larkin, residents of Newton, Massachusetts, retired to Boca Raton.

Mr. Larkin's lifelong love of history inspired his family to create this multi-faceted gift. The fund will annually support the Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency, beginning in 2007. The symposium will be designed to attract the nation's foremost authorities in the field and become a central academic event in the study of the American Presidency. In addition, the gift will create graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships for students who demonstrate interest in this area.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

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AND

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MRS. CHARNA LARKIN AND THE LARKIN FAMILY

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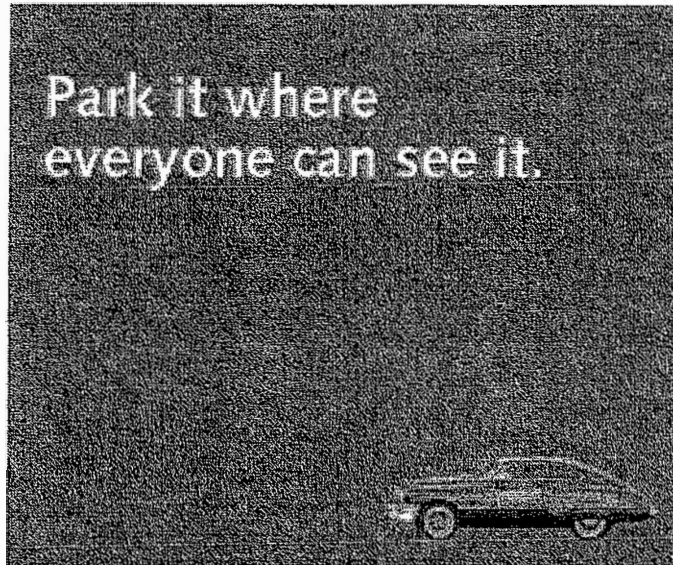
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December 17, 2004

### Money to inaugurate presidential symposium at FAU

The family of a former fashion publisher who had original, signed letters from every U.S. president has donated \$1 million to Florida Atlantic University to support study of the American presidency.



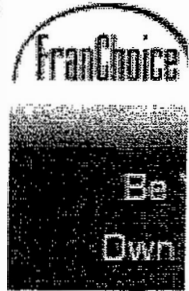
American Presidency" is to allow up to three distinguished scholars each year to present papers that may be contributed to books, scholarly journals, essays and other publications.

"Beyond establishing fellowships for students studying history at the undergraduate and graduate levels, we have every expectation that the Alan B. Larkin Symposium will become the central event in the study of the American presidency in the historical field, attracting and featuring the nation's foremost authorities on the American presidency," said Stephen Engle, chairman of FAU's department of history.

The symposium is to be held each spring beginning in 2007.

The Boca Raton university said the state will match the gift from Alan B. Larkin's family to total \$1.75 million.

An endowed, annual "Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the



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Larkin's widow, Charna, said her husband had a lifelong love of history.

"He also enjoyed mentoring young people. This gift presents the community with an opportunity to learn about America's past," she said.

Larkin, who passed away in 2002, bought original, signed letters of presidents Grant, Jackson, Eisenhower and Taft in 1989. Over the next 12 years, he purchased signed letters from all the American presidents, from George Washington to George W. Bush.

His family said it plans to keep the collection current and make it available for educational use. It presented the letter from President Truman at FAU's 2003 Truman Legacy Symposium.

Larkin, with his brother Harold, founded Larkin Publications 60 years ago. They sold the fashion trade magazine publishing house, renamed the Larkin Group, in 1999. At that time, Alan Larkin retired to Boca Raton, while maintaining a residence in Newton, Mass.

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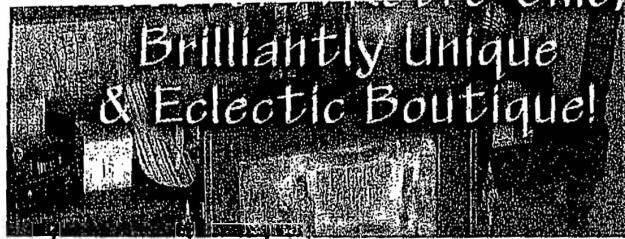
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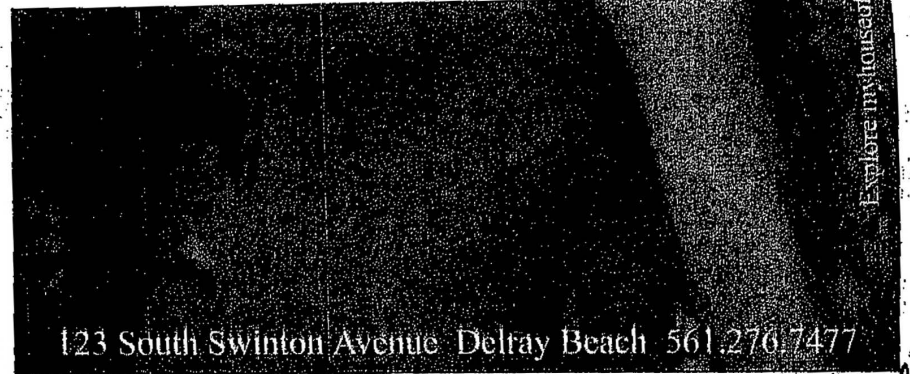


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Jan 2005 The Boca Raton Observer

## For A Good Cause

### FAU RECEIVES \$1 MILLION DONATION FROM LARKIN FAMILY

Florida Atlantic University announced that it received a \$1 million donation from the family of the late Alan B. Larkin, which includes his widow Charna, his brother Harold and sister-in-law Lenore Larkin, his children and their spouses David Larkin, AJ and Michelle Larkin, Jonathan and Margie Larkin, and his niece Susan Bradner and her husband Chris Bradner. The gift, made to honor and recognize Alan B. Larkin, will support the University in advancing and enhancing the study of the American presidency in the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters' Department of History. Through the State of Florida's matching gift program, this gift will total \$1.75 million.

Specifically, the Alan B. Larkin Endowed Fund will support an annual symposium and create supporting graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships for students who demonstrate interest in the American presidency. The annual "Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency" will have a thematic focus, providing up to three distinguished scholars each year with the opportunity to present papers that may be contributed to books, scholarly journals, essays and other publications. The Symposium will be held each spring semester beginning in 2007.

"Alan had a lifelong love of history. He also enjoyed mentoring young people. This gift presents the community with an opportunity to learn about America's past," said Mrs. Larkin.

Alan B. Larkin's (1922-2002) love of American history included a focus on the American presidency. In

1989, he purchased original signed letters of Presidents Grant, Jackson, Eisenhower and Taft. Over the next 12 years, he purchased signed letters from all of the American presidents - from George Washington to George W. Bush. His family plans to keep the collection of letters current and make the collection available for educational use. The original signed letter from President Truman was presented at FAU's 2003 Truman Legacy Symposium.

"The American presidency, long considered the most influential office in the free world, is an extraordinarily interesting wellspring of material for scholarly study and historical analysis," said FAU President Frank T. Brogan. "We are very grateful to the Larkin family for their generosity in establishing the Alan B. Larkin Endowed Fund, which will allow FAU to become a center of scholarship on this key component of American history."

With the substantial nature of the gift, FAU will be able to bring in several prominent speakers for the annual symposium. This will be a great service not only to FAU academically, but also to the surrounding community.

"Few American political institutions are more important than the presidency," said William A. Covino, dean of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters. "The Larkin family's gift ensures that Alan Larkin's passionate interest in the presidency will be honored and shared by future generations."

Sixty years ago, Alan Larkin, with his brother

... to create supporting fellowships and scholarships for students who demonstrate interest in the American presidency.

Harold, founded Larkin Publications, a publisher of trade magazines for the fashion industry. In 1969, he launched his first fashion trade show in New York City and from that the "International Fashion and Boutique Show" was born. Larkin Publications, renamed the Larkin Group, became a powerhouse in

fashion industry trade shows. The Larkin family members who are supporting the gift to FAU were all partners in the Larkin Group. The company was sold in 1999 and Larkin retired to Boca Raton, while maintaining his residence in Newton, Massachusetts.

"Speaking on behalf of the faculty of the department of history, we are absolutely overwhelmed and humbled by this wonderful gift and gesture by the Larkin family," said Stephen Engle, chair of FAU's department of history. "Beyond establishing fellowships for students studying history at the undergraduate and graduate levels, we have every expectation that the Alan B. Larkin Symposium will become the central event in the study of the American presidency in the historical field, attracting and featuring the nation's foremost authorities on the American presidency."

For more information on the Larkin gift, contact FAU's department of history at 561-297-3840.

# A MILLION TEARS

## Family donates \$1 million to FAU during an emotional afternoon

by Jared Martin

A humbled FAU History Department received a \$1 million donation last month from the family of the late Alan B. Larkin, a fashion magazine publisher whose passion was the U.S. Presidency.



Alan B. Larkin

Larkin collected signatures of every president from Washington to Bush, so his family chose FAU to establish the Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency and the Alan B. Larkin Endowed Fund.

It was an emotional afternoon for the Larkin family as they announced their unanimous support of the donation.

The small conference room in which the announcement was made was filled with friends and family of Alan B. Larkin. As one of his sons David Larkin recalled his father's love of both history and children, he

induced a flood of tears and weeping from those who knew him well.

Chairman of the Arts and Letters Department William A. Covino said, "The Larkin Family's gift ensures that Alan Larkin's passionate interest in the presidency will be honored and shared by future generations."

The \$1 million dollar gift is expected to total \$1.75 million through Florida's matching gift program.

History Department Chairman Stephen Engle said that this donation gives the department a "golden opportunity to build." Though he acknowledged that the History Department did not specialize in the "office of the American Presidency," he expressed his confidence in its ability to host a "first-class" symposium.

Chairman Engle said, "We have every expectation that the Alan B. Larkin Symposium will become the central event in the study of the American Presidency in the historical

field." The symposium which will be held annually, beginning in the spring of 2007, will feature three prominent scholars who will focus on what Frank T. Brogan called, "the most influential office in the free world." These scholars will be given the opportunity to present papers that may be contributed to various scholarly publications.

In support of the annual symposium the Larkin family gift will also establish the Alan B. Larkin Endowed Fund for FAU students who show interest in the office of the American Presidency.

The scholarship funds, which will become accessible to students in 2008, are expected to benefit students in several departments including History, Communications, and Political Science.

Although the guidelines for receiving monetary support from the scholarship fund have not yet been drawn up, President Brogan expects that the Alan B. Larkin Endowed Fund "will allow FAU to become a center of scholarship in this key component of history."



David Larkin consoles his mother Charna Larkin during an emotional press conference in December at the FAU administration building on the Boca campus

PHOTO BY RALPH NOTARO

kin

Frank T. Brogan

# Lynn University

## EXCALIBUR SOCIETY LUNCHEON PROGRAMS



Maestro Albert-George Schram



Irving R. Levine



Jan McArt

The Lynn University Excalibur Society, which raises scholarship funds for deserving undergraduate and graduate students, has announced its three luncheon programs for the year and a change in the previously announced date for the February luncheon. Maestro Albert-George Schram, the conductor of the Lynn University Philharmonia Orchestra, opens the program year as the Feb. 23 luncheon speaker. The luncheon was originally scheduled for Feb. 16. The March 8 luncheon will feature fabled broadcaster Irving R. Levine, former NBC News chief economics correspondent and Dean Emeritus of Lynn's College of International Communication. Jan McArt, "First Lady of Florida Musical Theatre" and Lynn's director of theater arts development, closes out the luncheon programs on April 27. Excalibur luncheons take place, 11:30 a.m., in the Henke Wing of the deHoernle International Center on the Lynn University campus, 3601 N. Military Trail in Boca Raton. Luncheon tickets are \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. Call the Lynn University Special Events Line at 561-237-7798 or e-mail [speialevents@lynn.edu](mailto:speialevents@lynn.edu).

# Multiple Sclerosis Society

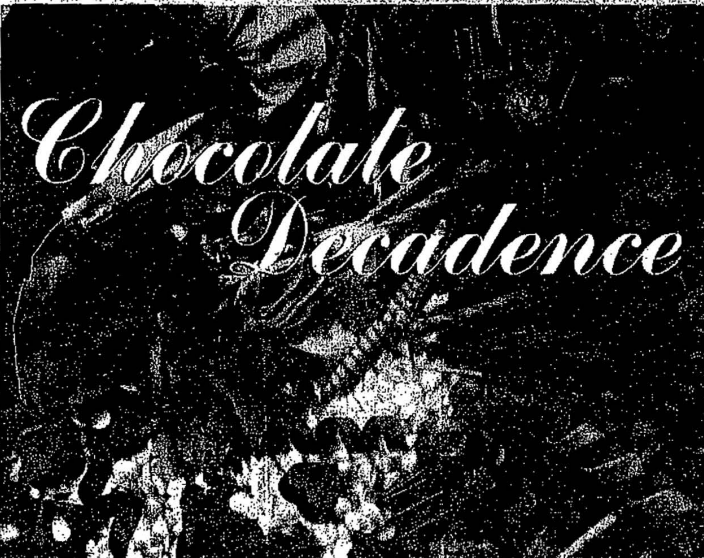
## SPRING TRUNK SHOW



Monica Goldstein, Cathy Edelman, Heidi Pepper, Debbie Weisman, Stacey Klaiman

**A**lene Too, DW Accessories, Just Kidding and local jewelry designer Rubee Hearts will join forces on Wednesday, Feb. 2, for a Spring Trunk Show featuring styles by Diane vonFurstenberg. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Alene Too in the Shops at Village Pointe, 6006 S.W. 18th St., Boca Raton. Ten percent of proceeds will be donated to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in hopes of finding a cure for this debilitating disease. Call 394-0899.

## THE SHOPS AT BOCA CENTER



# Chocolate Decadence

## A Sweetheart of an Event

Thursday, February 10, 2005  
6:00 to 9:30 p.m.

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# Florida Atlantic University

## RECEIVES A \$1 MILLION DONATION



Alan B. & Charna Larkin

**F**lorida Atlantic University received a \$1 million donation from the family of the late Alan B. Larkin, which includes his widow Charna, his brother Harold and sister-in-law Lenore Larkin, his children and their spouses David Larkin, AJ and Michelle Larkin, Jonathan and Margie Larkin, his niece Susan Bradner and her husband Chris Bradner. The gift, made to honor and recognize Alan B. Larkin, will support the University in advancing and enhancing the study of the American presidency in the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters' Department of History. Through the State of Florida's matching gift program, this gift will total \$1.75 million. Specifically, the Alan B. Larkin Endowed Fund will support an annual symposium and create supporting graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships for students who demonstrate interest in the American presidency. The annual "Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency" will have a thematic focus, providing up to three distinguished scholars each year with the opportunity to present papers that may be contributed to books, scholarly journals, essays and other publications. The Symposium will be held each spring semester beginning in 2007. For more information on the Larkin gift, contact FAU's department of history at 561-297-3840.

Charna Larkin

— Probably 2010

Until the year 2002 I lived in Newton Massachusetts, where I raised my three sons. I was active as a volunteer with the Beth Israel Hospital, The Cub Scouts, the Metco Program (hosting children bussed into our schools from other neighborhoods). As a summer resident of Cape Cod, I formed the Association of John's Pond to help preserve my local environment, and with my husband, was one of the original sponsors of the Mashpee Commons Concert, that has grown in attendance to many thousands of Cape Codders. I was active in the formation of the Larkin Family Eye Research Center, which is part of the B.U. School of Medicine

In the early 70's I helped form The Larkin Group, a widely respected and successful trade show production company. Formed with my Husband, Alan . and my brother-in-law Harold from boot strap beginnings, the company grew to become one of the leading producers of fashion industry events, such as the International Fashion and Boutique Show, the International Kids Show and the Fabric Show. Our exhibitors and attendees came from all over the world. The company was acquired by Advanstar Communications in the year 2000.

I attended college as an adult and graduated Boston College with a degree in Social Studies. I am now retired, and live in Del Ray Beach and am still active in various charities in the area. My home is the setting for many philanthropic receptions.

The Larkin Family presented a gift to FAU in 2004 to endow the Alan B. Larkin Symposiums on the American Presidency, as history was a lifelong passion of his. He had amassed a comprehensive collection of signed letters from every President from George Washington to George W. Bush, which we intend to be used for educational purposes.

PROFILE

# CHARNA LARKIN

By CAROLYN RUSH

Photography by TRACIE VAN AUKEN

## *Providing A Perspective on American History*

Approaching the front steps, a bronze statue of a man reading the newspaper ignores you as you knock. He is all too caught up in his reading to bother to look up, and it's not you he's waiting for.

Charna Larkin said she bought the statue because it reminded her of her husband, a former fashion publisher. But some may disagree. If that statue were of Alan Larkin, some feel he would be laughing and his hands would tell a story of life and great love and of family.

Even though Alan Larkin passed away four years ago, the spark in Larkin's eyes persists. She speaks freely of her great love, Alan, but she also speaks passionately about art, opera, literature, and of the continuing education classes she still takes at FAU.

Having grown up in Boston, Larkin received a degree in sociology from Boston College. Although Larkin was never an employed social worker, she admitted she does take advantage of part of her collegiate training.

"I give advice to everyone I know. It's tax free," she said with her almost permanent smile and a chuckle.

It is in that giving vein that Larkin made her recent \$1 million donation to FAU to establish an annual symposium designed to bring in world-class speakers to share their thoughts of the American presidency and the state of national politics.

"I hope it will bring an interest in politics and presidential history," she said. "Since Alan so loved America, especially the presidents, it is the perfect way to make a tribute to my husband."

The donation that Larkin and her three sons made to create the annual Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency established an endowed fund which will also be used to provide scholarships and fellowships within FAU's Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters.

The first symposium scheduled for Feb. 15 and 16 is entitled "Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century." It will feature noted war journalist, historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Halberstam.

Larkin is extremely excited about the first lecture, but that is not all she is excited about.



She is an avid art collector. Very unusual statues, and breathtaking photographs, oils and multi-media pieces grace every turn of her palatial home. She personally chooses all of her art and is more than knowledgeable about her choices.

Larkin is also currently taking an opera class where she studies another of her great loves — the stage. Growing up in Boston, Larkin had access to tremendous theatrical

productions. Now, she said the local theater is one of the things she loves best about South Florida.

But she cannot deny her one greatest love, the one that still drives her to achieve, the one that keeps her seeking knowledge and the one who still lights up her life.

He sits on her doorstep waiting for her to come home every day, reading the newspaper.

# THE

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# why

## Donor Honors Husband's Passion

Charna Larkin's grandson beamed with pride earlier this year as his entire school class listened to investigative journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of Watergate fame at the event that bears his grandpa's name: The Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency. The symposium was created in Alan's memory in 2007 and is now presented each February at FAU. Charna created an endowed fund to support the symposium to honor Alan's passion. He loved history, and he amassed a collection of images, letters and signatures from every American President.

"Endowing a gift for the FAU symposium was a way for the whole family to pay tribute to Alan," said Charna. "It is wonderful that my grandchildren will be able to say, 'Oh, that's my grandfather's seminar.'"

When Charna wanted to fortify the fund and her husband's legacy, she made FAU the beneficiary of her IRA. It gives her great peace of mind to know that her plans will assure that The Alan B. Larkin Symposium continues to educate young minds into the future. Charna and Alan both attended college in Boston, but Charna now lives in Boca Raton with her six grandchildren nearby. She is a lifetime member of FAU's Lifelong Learning Society and particularly enjoys the music and history courses. From these programs to the seminar that bears her husband's name, Charna expressed, "FAU has been wonderful to me and is a terrific resource for our community."



**Laurie Carney**

Article submitted by Laurie M. Carney, Senior Director of Development and Outreach, Florida Atlantic University, Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, Fl. 33431. Office: 561-296-3606; Cell: 561-523-1150, lcarney@fau.edu



**Charna Larkin**

## **Background on Charna Larkin**

**Recorded June 30, 2014, for Horizon Society newsletter**

Attended Boston College as an adult. Studied Sociology.

Widow. Spouse was Alan B. Larkin

Fund: Charna and Alan B. Larkin Philanthropic Fund at the FAU Foundation

Husband was from Portland, Maine. Husband Alan started at Boston University but had to leave to care for his father who went blind.

He and brother started local dances for single men and women. It got so big that he took the dances to Boston. Held dances at hotel in Boston and took up several rooms. Many people met their partners that way.

Charna met Alan through a blind date. Friends set them up.

Charna has three sons. Six grandchildren.

She is a lifetime member of FAU's Lifelong Learning Society. She takes Mr. Albanese's courses on music history. Other hobbies: Likes to travel—passionate about art. She belongs to all the local museums and goes on trips to see amazing art collections.

Type of gift: Charna created an endowed fund in her husband's name shortly after he passed away in 2003. Although he was a publisher for the fashion industry and had a company called Larkin Publications, his passion was history. He was fascinated by the American Presidents and over the years amassed a collection that includes images, letters and signatures from every American President.

Charna created the endowed Charna and Alan B. Larkin Philanthropic Fund at the FAU Foundation to enable FAU to produce the Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency. This is an annual educational forum for our community, enabling people can learn more about, and delve more deeply into the life, work and challenges of our U.S. Presidents. The very first symposium took place in 2007 and they have continued annually ever since.

About her husband's collection of Presidents' signatures, she used to say, they had every signature from George (Washington) to George (W. Bush). But she now also boasts a signed letter by President Barak Obama. (and through 2024 – through President Biden).

Why she decided create a planned gift using IRA assets? For no particular reason. Already had a fund, wanted to fortify that, "to insure that this goes on after I'm gone. Want it to continue, not only for the Alan Larkin Symposium but also for FAU and its students." One of the things I decided early on with my husband was to not give because of taxes. I like my country. (not opposed to taxes.) I chose FAU because this is where grandchildren live and I live here now, and

they will remember their grandfather always.” The grandchildren have come to seminars. “I paid for a bus to bring my grandson’s class this year.” They read about the Watergate scandal beforehand and the students were so impressed to hear from Woodward and Bernstein firsthand.

Every student sent her a thank you card. Her grandson thought it was just wonderful. The family was recognized in the symposium’s opening comments, and though Charna avoids publicity, she appreciated that this provided two benefits. First, youth learn about the power of philanthropy. Second, they learn about history and the responsibility of the Presidency.

What was favorite seminar? Helen Thomas seminar was terrific. She has worked with eight Presidents. She was so sharp. She could answer all the questions off the top of her head. She just remembered everything. Former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright was also impressive. Mary Frances Berry spoke on civil rights and the Presidency. Daniel Ellsberg was interesting. And “our speaker this year is David McCullough, Author of *John Adams* and *Truman*. He will speak about Harry S. Truman, World War II and the dropping of the atom bomb. This should be so interesting and timely in today’s world.”

Why this is such a great legacy for husband:

“My husband loved American history. And he had a wonderful memory. He loved reading about the kings and queens of England and about U.S. history, and especially the Civil War. Most of the books he read were research books on American history. When he passed away, I knew I needed to do something to honor his memory. I discussed it with his brother Harold and the boys, and endowing a gift for the FAU symposium is what we decided to do.” Charna has a wall in her house with memorabilia (letters, images, photos) and most importantly the signatures of every U.S. President. “It was a way for the whole family to pay tribute to Alan.”

It is wonderful that my grandchildren will be able to say, “Oh, that’s my grandfather’s seminar.” Her grandson’s entire class came to the seminar this past year, which feature Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of Watergate fame. The class studied the Watergate scandal in advance, and he was so proud to has his family recognized, Mrs. Larkin shared.

“I’m very happy to keep it going with this new donation. I just love it. I have been very happy with FAU and FAU has been wonderful to me.”



Stories of Gratitude (/giving-in-action?field\_tags=300)

## Charna Larkin Donates \$1.6 Million to Florida Atlantic University to Support Student Scholarships and Establish American Presidential Study



Florida Atlantic University recently received an estate gift of \$1 million from longtime benefactor Charna Larkin. This generous scholarship gift will establish the Alan B. and Charna Larkin Student Opportunity Fund within FAU's Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters.

"I understand the importance of FAU to our greater community," Larkin said. "I want to ensure young people are given every opportunity to be successful and attend college regardless of their humble beginnings."

This generous scholarship support is in addition to a \$617,000 gift from Larkin to construct and name the Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study on the third floor of the S.E. Wimberly Library at FAU's Boca Raton campus. The premier space will house the Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Letters Distinguished Collection, making the letters available to the larger university and the general community. Among the items that will be housed in the presidential study are 45 letters signed by American presidents ranging from George Washington to Donald Trump.

This distinctive space also will serve as a historical archive of the Alan B. and Charna Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency, as well as a student study and gathering space, an educational site on the American presidents, and a community engagement location for small lectures, receptions and other special programs.

"This gift reflects the generosity of the Larkin family and their commitment to making an impact on the lives of our students and community, as well as improving access to important historical information," said FAU President John Kelly. "This gift will give for generations to come."

Additionally, the gift supports a collaboration between the S.E. Wimberly Library and the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters. The Larkin Study will include a digital component that will provide links to all presidential libraries and homesteads, as well as a platform for digital history students to develop exhibits using art, photos and documents to feature a particular presidential era.

"The Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study reflects the evolving vision of the modern academic library and the transformation of library spaces to meet the needs of today's students," said Christopher Delisio, FAU vice president for Institutional Advancement and CEO of the FAU Foundation. "This generous philanthropic gift builds upon our history and legacy of community collaboration to advance knowledge that helps us all."

FAU began its relationship with the Larkin family in 2007 when Charna Larkin, along with her family, made a \$1 million donation to FAU in honor of the late Alan B. Larkin to establish an endowment to fund an annual symposium on the American presidency. The Alan B. and Charna Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency provides up to three distinguished scholars each year with the opportunity to present papers that may be contributed to books, scholarly journals, essays and other publications. The fund also supports graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships for students in the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters who demonstrate an interest in the American presidency.

"We are so grateful for these two generous gifts, the presidential study and the scholarship endowment," said Michael J. Horswell, Ph.D., dean of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters. "Charna's philanthropic vision elevates the profile of our college and university while providing students unique access to the historical record of the American presidency and to the financial support to pursue their studies at FAU in the arts, humanities and social sciences."

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## ALAN B. AND CHARNA LARKIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL STUDY

**Vision:** To honor the Larkin family's generosity to FAU, prominently feature the Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Letters Distinguished Collection, and give the Larkin Symposium a visible presence in the public/library that endures in perpetuity.

**Designate library/public space to provide University and community visibility:** The Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study will present the original presidential signatures of every president in an appropriately adorned space of almost 1,500 sq. ft. on the library's third floor. Special designation of the site, protective display cases and new furniture will give the feel of a "Presidential study" with appropriate security and oversight for the collection.

**Student/Community Engagement:** This distinctive study will serve as a historical archive of the Larkin symposia, photos, and displays of speakers presented over the years, as well as video clips of past events students could watch. It can become a place for students to study, take a book about the American presidency off the shelf and read, or simply spend time reviewing the signatures and the historical displays about the evolution of the American presidency. The site could display all of the Larkin Symposia books published by the University Press of Florida, and feature those along with a small collection of presidential biographies.

**Digital and Audio-Visual Component:** The Larkin Study would include a digital component that could provide links to all presidential libraries and homesteads, and provide a platform for digital history students for developing exhibits using art, photos, documents, etc. to feature a particular presidential era.

**Civic Literacy Component:** History faculty would require all students that require Civic Literacy to make a visit to the Larkin American Presidential Study and perhaps write a short essay on the Presidential signature that resonated with them the most or about the content of the letter that had their signature.

**Related Component:** The Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study could serve as a site for post-commencement meet and greet with parents and faculty, a potential site for the History Club and/or Phi Alpha Theta meetings, small lectures, visiting student and small group tours, and other special activities



### **ALAN B. AND CHARNA LARKIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL STUDY ESTIMATED COSTS**

**Project:** To design, construct and establish a defined, premiere enclosed space of almost 1,500 sq. ft. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the S.E. Wimberly Library to be named the Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study. This dedicated space will serve to fulfill the vision as outlined in the attached proposal.

**Construction Estimate: \$92,798**

- Glass panels to define and safely secure the space
- Drywall, ceiling and prominent soffit entry
- Luxury vinyl flooring
- Architectural planning
- Wall design and painting
- Display cases to securely display the Presidential letter collection
- 10% contingency budget

**Furniture Estimate: \$20,000**

- Stylish couches and chairs for comfortable seating yet durable to withstand regular use
- Student desk for site monitoring
- Stacked lecture chairs for small meeting use
- Larkin American Presidential podium

**Future:** Digital displays funded through university tech-fee proposals or revenue from the Larkin symposium.

**Other:** An enclosed site in close proximity to the Jaffe Center for Book Arts Collection and Suite adds to the distinction of the library's third floor and special collections while adding an active learning space for students and the community. This area is closely monitored and secure, and in the case of an emergency or imminent weather, the Presidential letters can be readily moved into the Weiner vault, a secure space that includes a generator to maintain appropriate air temperature and humidity conditions.

**Potential \$250,000 gift:** \$112,798 total (above); \$137,202 endowment (\$5,350 annually in perpetuity)

**Charna Larkin Legacy Statement**  
**April 5, 2022 Board of Trustees Meeting – Chris Delisio Presentation of Naming**

**The Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study**

Charna feels that it is very important for students to learn more about the American Presidency, and having these letters all in one place on display in a public university is very appealing to her.

Her collection of Presidential letters have brought a lot joy and interest to Charna's family and to friends who have visited her home. She is now very excited to make this opportunity available for larger university and community audiences including younger students and families.


The Larkin American Presidential Study will also bring visibility to the "Alan B. and Charna Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency" which she is most proud of establishing at FAU.

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Coastal Star: Boca woman donates presidential letters — and scholarship funds — to FAU

Posted by **The Coastal Star** on August 31, 2022 at 13:07



**Mary Kate Leming** posted photos **Coastal Stewards Event , Highland Beach Fire Station Construction**

Feb 28



**The Coastal Star** posted a blog post **Special Report: Condo costs: A sudden storm**

Feb 28



*Charna Larkin and her poodle, Gigi, sit in front of framed images, letters and signatures from American presidents. Her late husband, Alan, loved history and the family has amassed a letters collection from every U.S. president from Washington to Biden. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star***

**By Jan Engoren**

For longtime Boca Raton resident Charna Larkin, who turns 94 this month, doing good comes naturally. Both Larkin and her late husband, Alan, were the children of Russian Jewish immigrants and she remembers life was not always easy, but the practice of *tzedakah* (charity) was instilled at an early age. One of her latest good deeds was a grand one. In June, she donated \$1.6 million to Florida Atlantic University to support student scholarships and establish the American Presidential Study. The donation establishes the Alan B. and Charna Larkin Student Opportunity Fund within FAU's Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters.

"We've been coming to Boca Raton from Newton, Massachusetts, since 1988 when our children were still young," Larkin said, recalling family vacations. She enrolled in FAU's continuing education classes and says, "I was impressed by the faculty and their vision and saw a great fit for us."

This donation is in addition to a \$617,000 gift from Larkin to construct and name the Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study on the third floor of the S.E. Wimberly Library. The space will house the family's letters collection, making it available to a wide audience. Among the items are letters signed by all 45 American presidents from George Washington to Joe Biden.

"Charna's philanthropic vision elevates the profile of our college and university while providing students access to the historical record of



**The Coastal Star** posted a blog post **Condo costs special report: South Palm Beach — Southgate**

Feb 28



**The Coastal Star** posted a blog post **Condo costs special report: Highland Beach — Coronado**

Feb 28



**The Coastal Star** posted a blog post **Condo costs special report: Boca Raton — Mayfair**

Feb 28



**Mary Kate Leming** posted a discussion in **OCEAN RIDGE Ocean Ridge: A role of a lifetime**

Feb 28



**Mary Kate Leming** posted a discussion in **BOCA RATON**

the American presidency and to the financial support to pursue their studies in the arts, humanities and social sciences," said Michael J. Horswell, dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

History was a passion for Alan Larkin, but his claim to fame was as founder of the Larkin Group with his brother Harold. It grew into the largest producer of fashion trade shows in the country, hosting events at Lincoln Center and the Javits Center in New York City during the Woodstock era.

"It was hysterical and fun," Charma Larkin recalled. She worked there after she graduated from college later than usual, and the couple had three sons. "It was a true family business."

"Alan was interested in the American presidency," Larkin says. "It began as a hobby, but as Alan acquired more of the letters, it became too intriguing not to pursue.

"We realized what a unique resource he had."

Larkin says her intention with the donation was to honor her husband, who died after a fall in 2002 at age 80.

"Now we feel that the whole Larkin family shares in this legacy," she said. "It's inspiring to see people of all ages and walks of life participate in the Larkin Presidential Symposium."

Her favorite letter is a thank you written by Harry S Truman to the Anti-Defamation League, after it acknowledged him for recognizing the State of Israel in 1948. In later years Alan Larkin was active in the ADL and its parent group B'nai B'rith.

"I'm happy that I've been able to continue collecting letters since Alan's passing," says Larkin. "Both George W. Bush and Donald J. Trump wrote personal letters to Alan after hearing about his collection," and Biden followed suit this past spring.

"There is something inspiring about seeing all the Founding Fathers autographed letters represented," she says, noting that it will be a legacy for her sons and six grandchildren.

"I take pleasure in our family," says Larkin. "All our children and grandchildren are good people. They take pride in this collection and are as excited as I am that we found FAU as stewards for the collection."

Her advice for future donors? "Start early and get in the habit of giving. Assemble assets and personal interests. Find ways to give back to the organizations you care about."

"We found a way to succeed," Larkin says. "We are grateful for the life this country gave us. The surprise is that I am still here and life is more interesting than ever."

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## **Boca Raton: Cyclist press for safer road: city outlines work ahead**

Feb 28



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**The Coastal Star** posted a blog post **Ocean Ridge: Owner can move into home that neighbors grew to hate**

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**The Coastal Star** posted a blog post **Ocean Ridge: A role of a lifetime**

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**Mary Kate Leming** posted a blog post **Boca Raton: Cyclists press for safer roads; city outlines work ahead**

Feb 28



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# Channel 12 News

## FAU receives big donation

by Srishti Jaiswal

Wed, June 29th 2022 at 3:10 PM



Charna Larkin; (back, left to right) Michael Horswell, Dean of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, Christopher Delisio, FAU Vice President of Institutional Advancement. (FAU)

BOCA RATON, Fla. (CBS12) — There is a new scholarship at Florida Atlantic University thanks to a big donation.

NEWS

Charna Larkin.

WEATHER

Not only can students get extra money for college, they can hit the book established Alan B. and Charna Larkin American Presidential Study in the

VIDEOS

This space will have collections of 45 presidential letters signed by all the ranging from George Washington to Donald Trump.

EN ESPAÑOL

GAME CENTER

It will also consist of a student study and gathering place, small lectures area, and other special programs for students.

CHIME IN

"This gift reflects the generosity of the Larkin family and their commitment on the lives of our students and community, as well as improving access information," said FAU President John Kelly.

FEATURES

HEALTHWATCH