

PULSEPOINT



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL: **THE HEART OF PRIVATE GIVING AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY** // Spring 2021



Meeting today's challenges together

This truly has been a challenging year—likely the most unpredictable one in Purdue's 152-year history. Yet despite the obstacles we have faced, one thing has remained constant: the commitment of our President's Council family.

Your unwavering support has helped us overcome so much as we achieved what may have seemed impossible. You repeatedly exemplified the spirit of being a Boilermaker, and your generosity makes us ever grateful to be a part of Purdue's community.

We now look to the months ahead with hope and gratitude. While we have missed being together and will continue with virtual programming at this time, we look forward to attending in-person events slated for later this year.

Please also remember the next Purdue Day of Giving on April 28—a great way to support our students as they prepare to make their next giant leap.

Until then, thank you for helping us build a safer, stronger University together.

—April Headdy

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PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

The heart of private giving
at Purdue University.

PULSEPOINT // Spring 2021

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CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF GEORGE SHAHNASARIAN

■ **THOSE WHO KNEW GEORGE SHAHNASARIAN (IA'78, MS IA'79)** recall a warm, welcoming presence. When he passed last fall, we lost a cherished friend—one who was passionate about all things Purdue.

A fixture at President's Council gatherings, Shahnasarian regularly attended campus events. It didn't matter that he lived two hours from West Lafayette; he considered Purdue to be his extended family.

Like many of you, Shahnasarian enjoyed cheering on the Boilermakers. An enthusiastic fan at Purdue games for decades, he posthumously received the Diamond P Award last October. The John Purdue Club's highest honor, the award recognizes a donor who not only has demonstrated what it means to be a Boilermaker, but also has supported the department financially and maintained other connections to Purdue Athletics.

Equally devoted to the University's bands and orchestras, Shahnasarian enjoyed sharing his musical talents. While you could find him playing saxophone in the alumni band, he also participated in the alumni version of Black and Gold Sound, the pep band supporting Purdue women's basketball.

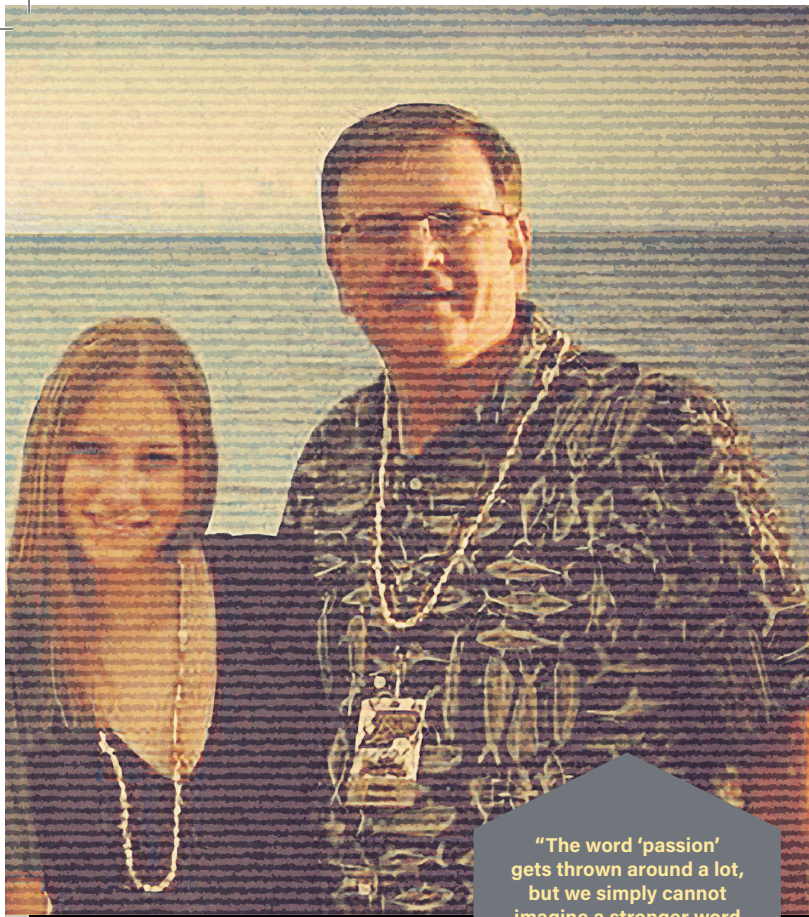
"George was a true Boilermaker in every respect," says Jay Gephart, the Al G. Wright Chair of Purdue Bands and Orchestras. "His love of Purdue and his commitment to his University will be remembered fondly."

For over 40 years, Shahnasarian also remained an enthusiastic financial supporter of his alma mater. His gifts benefited more than a dozen areas of need—from athletics and music to the College of Health and Human Sciences and the Krannert School of Management.

"George was a truly charitable, selfless soul, and we are proud to have him as one of our treasured partners and alumni," says David Hummels, the Dr. Samuel R. Allen Dean of the Krannert School.

It was Shahnasarian's desire to support college students that motivated his generosity. This became ever more personal to him when his three daughters enrolled at Purdue, not only following in their father's footsteps but also in those of their late mother, Karen.

"Both of our parents had such amazing memories of their time as students and valued passing those experiences on to us," says oldest daughter Tania Forsman, who earned a degree in youth, adult, and family sciences in 2005. "We all only applied to one



"The word 'passion' gets thrown around a lot, but we simply cannot imagine a stronger word to describe what Purdue meant to our dad."



The Pinnacle Award recognized Shahnasarian's generosity toward his alma mater.

college, and thankfully we were accepted. Purdue always felt like home to us."

Notes middle daughter Alissa Hudson, a 2008 graduate in nutrition, fitness, and health, "The word 'passion' gets thrown around a lot, but we simply cannot imagine a stronger word to describe what Purdue meant to our dad." In fact, the sisters recall, it was as if Shahnasarian never left Purdue upon graduating, as he credited the University for his family, friendships, and career.

"He was so incredibly grateful and often would tell us that he continually felt called to give back to the institution that gave him so much," says youngest daughter Sasha Smith, who earned a degree in youth, adult, and family sciences in 2010. "He would gift financially so the University could progress and so others could have similar opportunities."

Now, looking forward, the sisters hope their father's legacy of giving will benefit future generations of Purdue graduates, those who will help make the world a better place. //



Jackson Hole, Wyoming

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To learn about future trips, events, and experiences, visit [PURDUE.EDU/PC](https://Purdue.edu/PC)

2021

April 28	Purdue Day of Giving
September 4	Pregame Tailgate // Oregon State
September 16-19	Jackson Hole, Wyoming
September 25	Pregame Tailgate // Illinois

ANNUAL WEEKEND

October 1-3	Purdue for Life Annual Weekend
October 1	President's Council Annual Dinner
October 2	Homecoming Pregame Tailgate // Minnesota
October 23	Pregame Tailgate // Wisconsin
November 6	Pregame Tailgate // Michigan State
November 27	Pregame Tailgate // Indiana

2022

January 10-20	South Africa and Victoria Falls
February 9-13	Naples Weekend
July 17-24	Southern France River Cruise

Travel advisory: The health and safety of the Purdue community and the President's Council family are always a top priority. The calendar is subject to change depending on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic.

BIGGER IMPACT

A LOOK AT HOW
YOUR SUPPORT AT THE
PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL
LEVEL EMPOWERS PURDUE
TO MAKE GIANT LEAPS.



Alibrahim celebrates his second Purdue graduation with family and friends—including his infant son—in 2018.

FACILITIES

LEAVING A LEGACY IN KRANNERT

■ **IN HONOR OF THEIR CLOSE FRIEND AND FORMER STUDENT DR. FAISAL ALIBRAHIM**, alumni from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have named Krannert School of Management classroom G20 the Faisal Alibrahim Memorial Classroom.

Born and raised in Kuwait, Alibrahim first came to Purdue in 2004 to study accounting and management on scholarship. He graduated with distinction in 2008 and worked at the Commercial Bank of Kuwait before enrolling in graduate school at George Washington University. Alibrahim then married his wife, Nora, and returned to West Lafayette to pursue a PhD in management.

In 2018 he not only completed his doctorate but also welcomed the birth of his son, Ibrahim. The young family then returned to Kuwait where Alibrahim fulfilled his dream of teaching at Kuwait University. Sadly, he was diagnosed with cancer during his first semester there.

Although he put up a valiant fight, Alibrahim died last May. His friends remember him as the glue connecting their large but tight-knit group. In fact, he was like a father figure due to his maturity, generosity, and willingness to support and get the group together.

The friends enjoyed playing cards, video games, and soccer with everyone jokingly taking advantage of Alibrahim's competitive nature. During gatherings at his apartment, he would try his hand at preparing traditional Kuwaiti cuisine like "Imawash," attempting to recreate a taste of home.

Bader Altukhaim (M'07) and Abdullah Marafi (IE'07, MS IE'08) cherish these memories of Alibrahim. "He was a truly special person who left a positive impression on me and our group

of friends," Marafi says. "Faisal always had a positive attitude and a sense of humor. His presence left its mark on our group of friends, and we will always remember him as the person who brought us all together and always put a smile on our faces."

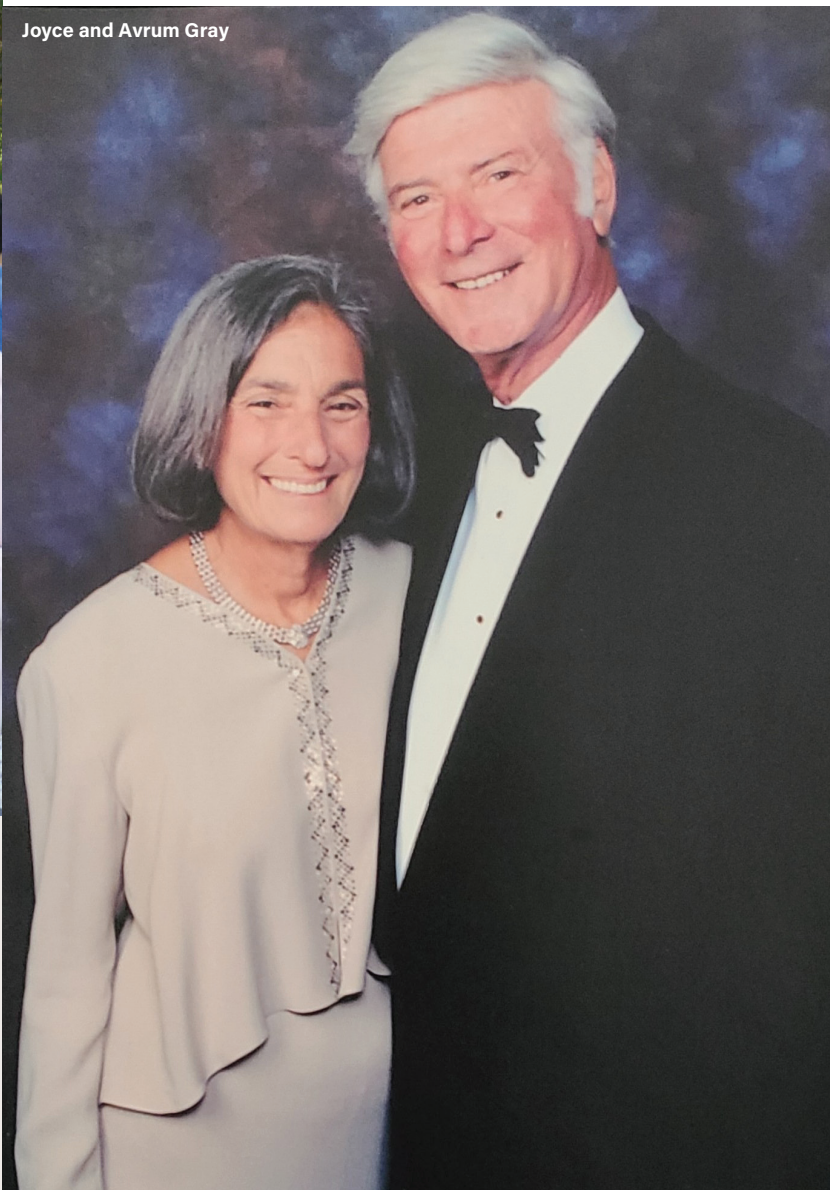
Altukhaim recalls Faisal staying in contact via social media while pursuing his PhD—updating everyone on Purdue happenings and sharing pictures of campus and his patio garden, boasting about his green thumb. They say it was during his doctoral studies that being a Boilermaker became ingrained in Alibrahim. He often would stay in the states for the holidays and later even weaved Purdue into his university teachings with West Lafayette-themed examples.

The group of friends hopes one day Alibrahim's son will be able to visit this place that meant so much to his father, see his name on the wall, and forever be proud of the legacy he left behind. //

Under the sponsorship of Alibrahim's family, Kuwait University has launched a student research award in his memory.



Joyce and Avrum Gray



“Not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur, to be in business for themselves.

However, a motivating teacher can make a profound difference and change your life.”

FACULTY

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

■ **GROWING UP ON CHICAGO’S NORTH SHORE**, Avrum Gray (ME’56, PhD’85 Spertus Institute) aspired to become an accomplished businessman, following in his father’s footsteps. Now, through his financial support, he helps Purdue University prepare future entrepreneurs for similar success.

After graduating from Purdue, Gray completed service in the U.S. Army before joining his father’s manufacturing company. He ultimately led and expanded the family enterprise, later becoming a venture capital executive. In 1982 he founded G-Bar Limited Partnership, one of the nation’s largest independent options trading firms.

Several years later, Gray and his late wife, Joyce, made a gift to establish the Avrum and Joyce Gray Directorship in Purdue’s Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship. In doing so, they hoped to impact the training and development of future entrepreneurs through faculty support.

An interdisciplinary hub for entrepreneurship in Purdue’s Discovery Park, the Morgan Center facilitates business development for emerging concepts and technologies stemming from the University’s research. The center promotes an understanding and application of entrepreneurship, both across campus and among its worldwide stakeholders.

“I know there are a lot of smart people attending Purdue who should have an opportunity to gain exposure to entrepreneurship,” Gray says. “Not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur, to be in business for themselves. However, a motivating teacher can make a profound difference and change your life.”

Gray adds, “Purdue taught me how to organize the way I thought about a problem so I could reach a logical solution—to adopt an organized problem-solving system applicable to every phase of life has served me well. That’s the most important concept Purdue taught me.”

When he turned his attention to the financial industry, he relied on his Purdue engineering math background to develop a math-based system benefiting G-Bar and optionsXpress, a G-Bar spinoff.

“I was fortunate I was successful in that business. I started thinking about what helped me become successful, and Purdue was instrumental in providing me with the tools to achieve what I did,” he says.

It’s Gray’s appreciation for the University—and his entrepreneurial spirit—that will go a long way toward equipping Purdue’s faculty to impact tomorrow’s business leaders. //

The Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship provides key resources like the Purdue Foundry, an entrepreneurship and commercialization hub helping businesses reach the next level through innovative technologies.





Melody Birmingham

PROGRAMS

GIFT SUPPORTS WOMEN, MINORITY INITIATIVES

■ **WHEN MELODY BIRMINGHAM (OLS'94) PREPARED TO ATTEND COLLEGE**, she sought a campus environment where she could identify long-term goals while enhancing her strengths in math and science. After conducting an extensive search, she decided Purdue University fit the bill.

Today Birmingham is senior vice president, supply chain and chief procurement officer for Duke Energy, one of the nation's largest energy holding companies. She recently gifted Purdue with \$50,000, one-half of it benefiting Women in Technology. A student group, the program helps its members acquire strong leadership qualities through networking, mentoring, and hands-on activities. The second \$25,000 went to the Business Opportunity Program, which promotes the professional development of underrepresented minority students studying business.

"I've had opportunities to return to campus and speak with both groups," Birmingham says. "I have noticed the fire, the gleam in students' eyes, and have seen myself in them as they work toward their degrees and think about future careers."

A native of Chicago, Birmingham originally studied accounting but later switched her major to organizational leadership. By doing this, she hoped to one day make a positive impact on employees' lives by assuming a frontline leadership role. Toward that goal, Birmingham's new field of study allowed her to acquire essential people skills while still developing business-related competencies.

As a minority student at a large university, Birmingham says she also learned to become comfortable in her own skin as a young African American woman on campus. "What really helped shape me was the support network I was able to develop," she recalls, noting a core group of friends that included peers from both the Black Cultural Center and various technology fields.

Now, through her financial gifts to Purdue, Birmingham seeks to help other female and minority students obtain a quality education. "I believe in paying it forward for others like me, those who share the same dreams and aspirations I had," she says. "I've been there, worrying about whether or not I'd be able to pay for the next semester, so I hope this gift will at least provide some relief."

And as someone who comes from humble beginnings—the daughter of hard-working parents who lacked the opportunity to go to college—Birmingham feels blessed to help young people pursue higher learning. "I am delighted to be able to support Purdue since it was Booker T. Washington who said that those who are happiest are those who do the most for others," she says. //

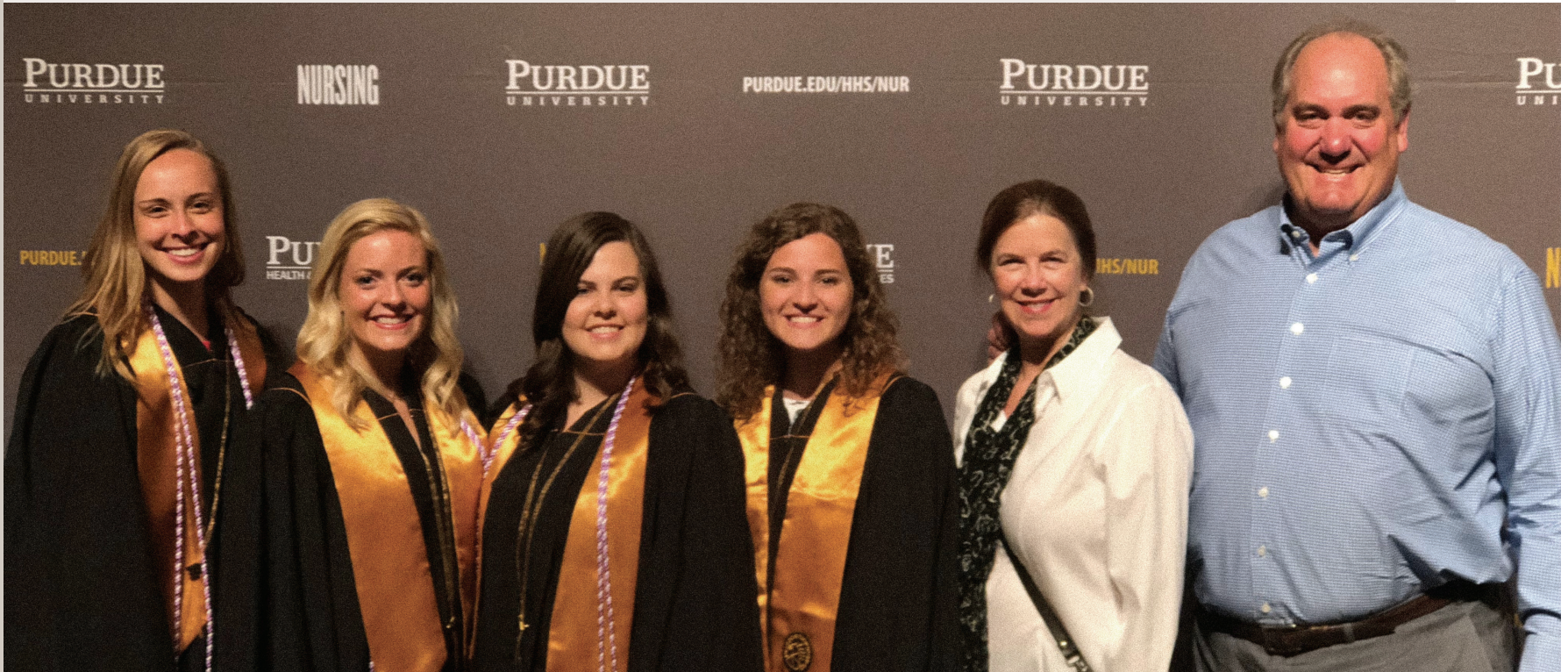
"I've had opportunities to return to campus... I have noticed the fire, the gleam in students' eyes, and have seen myself in them as they work toward their degrees and think about future careers."

BIGGER

IMPACT



Purdue University's Black Cultural Center celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019. It was a cornerstone for Birmingham during her time as a student, helping to shape her through the support network she was able to develop.



Mark and Maureen Miller's philanthropy created the Miller Scholarship Incentive Program in the School of Nursing. It has turned dreams into reality for Emily Field, Kylie Smith, Audrey Caprio, and Amy Bennett.

STUDENT SUPPORT

MEETING THE NEED FOR SKILLED NURSES

■ **AS THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO EVOLVE,** Mark (CS'77) and Maureen (AAS NURS'73, NURS'76) Miller use their financial gifts to promote the success of future nurses. In addition to an endowment they previously established at Purdue, the Chicago-area couple recently provided support for nursing students in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

"I always loved being a nurse and think it's an important career in health care because nurses are on the front line," says Maureen, who is now retired. "Nurses are usually the people who have the closest contact with patients and have the biggest impact, so I feel it's important to train skilled nurses who can make important decisions. Purdue prepares you for that."

Reflecting on her own vocational training, Maureen says she benefited greatly from the clinical work she completed in hospitals. "We also learned that you have to continue your education, that you don't stop learning," she adds.

The Millers appreciate the strides President Mitch Daniels has made toward curtailing student debt, providing affordable, high-quality college education. They also credit him with inspiring their decision to support the nursing program.

"He came to see me several years ago, and during our discussion about what we could do for Purdue, one of the things I suggested was a trial experiment on performance-based scholarships," Mark says of the couple's initial support. That conversation ultimately led to the Miller Scholarship Incentive Program to provide nursing students with baseline financial support for maintaining a minimum (3.3+) GPA along with incentives to earn additional funding. To qualify for extra scholarship dollars, which could more than double the funding for an in-state student, recipients had to maintain a higher GPA while exhibiting co-curricular involvement. In year two, for example, an in-state student received \$5,000 plus an additional \$6,000 for having a 3.7+ GPA.

Purdue conducted a successful trial of the program where all four enrolled students graduated with exceptional records of achievement, maxing out the total available scholarship funds. "This showed me that the system of people earning rewards for what they do works in education as well as outside of it," says Mark, who held careers at Abbott and Stericycle prior to his retirement.

"I'm just happy that we're able to give back to the University," Maureen says. "I feel it's important as a former student to support the school that you attended as much as you can. I'm happy we can do that." //

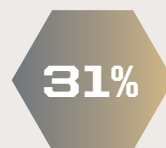
"NURSES ARE USUALLY THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE CLOSEST CONTACT WITH PATIENTS AND HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT."

**2014-2024
Projected
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Growth**

*U.S. Bureau of
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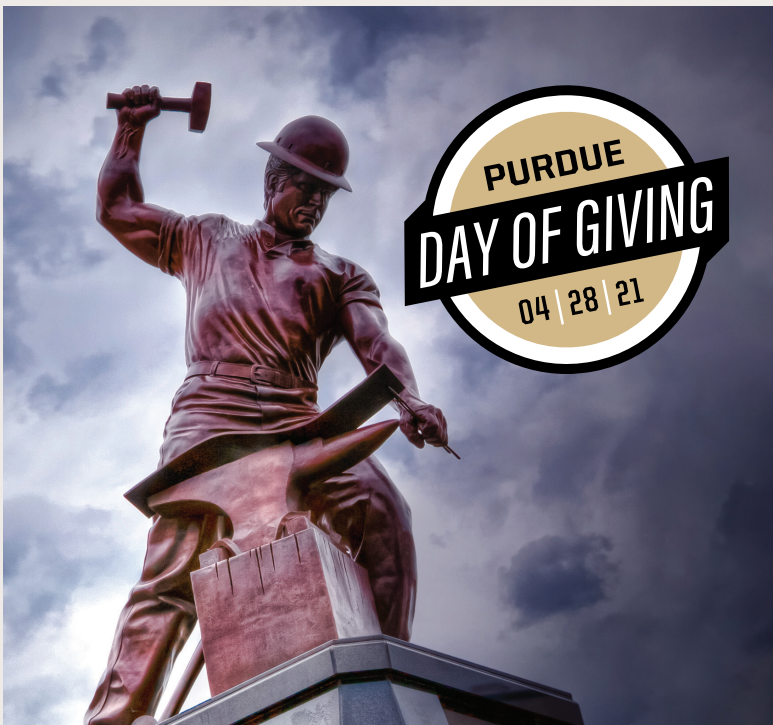
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