

# Gifts at Work

By Carol Olechowski

## Swartz Scholarships Provide Inspiration

For 23-year-old UAlbany senior Rachele Jean-Baptiste, the *Goldie Brenner Swartz '51 and Howard Swartz Scholarship* is more than just a financial assist. It's a form of inspiration – “a gesture” from one person with a visual disability “reaching out to another.”

The scholarship endowment provides funding for tuition, room and board, “and a little more,” Howard Swartz, a retired consultant, said when he and his wife established the award in 2006. He acknowledged having struggled through school because of a visual impairment.

The couple, who reside in Florida, wanted their \$300,000 gift to support students “who were visually handicapped, though not necessarily blind, or disabled,” added UAlbany alumna Goldie Brenner Swartz, a retired fifth-grade teacher. “We wanted to give someone an opportunity to overcome that disability and lead a successful life.”

Jean-Baptiste, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., “was born with sight,

but prematurely.” She needed more oxygen and was placed in an incubator; however, “both of my retinas were completely damaged as a result of having too much oxygen, leaving me with absolutely no vision. My eye condition is called retinopathy of prematurity, or ROP,” explained the psychology major.

With the award, “Mr. and Mrs. Swartz have allowed me to continue this part of my academic journey. They have paved the way for me to accomplish my goals and dreams, and I hope that I could do the same for someone else.”

Jean-Baptiste, who minors in education, will have that opportunity. “I would like to continue on to grad school in counseling psychology. I am interested in working with teenagers.”

Two other undergraduates have also received the Swartz Scholarship. Melissa Brabham, 19, of Hempstead, N.Y., is a chemistry major who plans a career as a dermatologist. Taryn Cooper, 18, is a freshman from Mayfield, N.Y.

Mark Schmidt



## Littauer Foundation Augments Axelrod Fellowship

In keeping with the philanthropic vision of its namesake, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, Inc., recently awarded a \$25,000 grant to the School of Public Health's David Axelrod Fellowship. The funding brings the total amount of the endowment – which provides support for outstanding students preparing for careers in public health and public policy – to \$325,000.

The fund, which honors the late New York State health commissioner, David A. Axelrod, was established in 1994. In the years since, fellowship recipients have gone on to careers in the public-health field, studying hazardous waste sites, airborne chemicals, adolescent health-risk behaviors, infectious disease and other factors that impact the health and safety of their fellow citizens, and recommending appropriate policy implementation or alteration. To date, 16 students have received the fellowship.

Named for a Gloversville, N.Y., native who became both a successful businessman and a five-term U.S. congressman, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation supports various causes related primarily to education and health.

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## Foundations Partner with Cancer Research Center, St. Peter's

The University's Cancer Research Center and St. Peter's Hospital in Albany are collaborating on a one-year study of anti-prostate cancer therapies. The project is supported by grants of \$10,000 each from The Dominic Ferraioli Foundation, based in Johnstown, N.Y., and The Bender Scientific Fund of The Community Foundation for the Capital Region.

Scott Tenenbaum, Ph.D., a molecular geneticist at the CRC, and Michael Perrotti, M.D., a urologist at St. Peter's, are teaming to investigate how effective Dutasteride might be in eradicating prostate cancer. The drug was originally formulated to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia; it has also shown some promise as a remedy for hair loss resulting from male-pattern baldness.

Twenty-five men from around the Capital Region are participating in the trial.

Prostate cancer, the most common non-dermatological form of cancer in the nation, is a leading cause of mortality in adult males. Every year, an estimated 220,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer, and 30,000 die of the disease.

Dominic Ferraioli, a businessman from Guilderland, N.Y., established the foundation that bears his name several years ago through his last will and testament.

The Bender Scientific Fund of The Community Foundation for the Capital Region makes grants to support and promote discovery and development in medicine, science and technology in the Capital District.