Inspiring Myra (Hiatt) Kraft ’64 touched many lives at Brandeis

University mourns loss of beloved alumna

Some 1,500 miles from Brandeis, in the impoverished nation of Haiti, Myra (Hiatt) Kraft ’64 is still making a difference. Mrs. Kraft’s commitment to her alma mater and aiding the less fortunate inspired Shaina Gilbert ’10, who was the recipient of the Frances Hiatt Memorial Scholarship while a Brandeis student, to return to her mother’s hometown and establish a free day camp “As a recipient of Mrs. Kraft’s scholarship and mentorship, I was able to afford and graduate from a great institution like Brandeis and start a non-profit that currently supports more than 100 of Haiti’s neediest youth,” Gilbert says. Mrs. Kraft, who first visited Brandeis with her father as a child in the 1950s and over the next half-century became one of the University’s most prominent and generous alumnae, died on July 20 after a lengthy battle with cancer. The longtime Brandeis trustee was 68. “I will hold her in my memories as a modern Martin Luther King Jr.,” Gilbert says. “On her bus, you can sit anywhere, the fare is whatever you can give, and if your destination is beyond your city limits, she’ll encourage you to go because other places beyond your home need you as well. The seed that she planted in me will grow and continue to give fruit in Boston, Haiti and wherever my bus stops next.”

Mrs. Kraft served on the presidential search committee that brought Fred Lawrence to Brandeis. His work in advocating for social justice.

“We are deeply saddened by the passing of a true champion of social justice,” said President Lawrence. “Myra was not just a philanthropist—she was a humanitarian in both a personal sense and a community sense.”

Alumna Reunion gift supports student activists

To help ensure that Brandeis continues to serve as the vibrant social justice incubator that launched her career, trailblazing public-interest lawyer Linda Heller Kann ’61 made a generous 50th Reunion gift to support the University and recognize budding activists.

While most of Kann’s gift was directed to the Annual Fund, which supports the University’s greatest needs, a portion created the Linda Heller Kann ’61 Prize. The $1,000 award will be presented annually to an undergraduate student who has demonstrated leadership in advocating for social justice.

“I want to see people pursue careers in public advocacy,” Kann says of the prize. “In every era, there are important issues of social justice that need to be addressed, never more

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Senior Vice President of Institutional Advancement: Nancy Winship, P ’10, P ’12
Associate Vice President for Campaign: Susan Krinsky
Managing Editor: David E. Nathan
Vice President for Advancement: Marietta Haley
Associate Editor: Marion Sweet
Contributing Writer: Marietta Haley
Photography: Enaide Garlito, Amy Shoults, Mike Lowey, Wayne Swick
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Brandeis enjoyed another strong fundraising performance in fiscal year 2011, surpassing the $862 million in cash and topping the budget-relief goal of $85 million by more than 15 percent. The University’s fundraising priority continues to be student scholarships.

During the fiscal year ending on June 30, Brandeis raised more than $62 million in cash and topped the budget-relief goal of $85 million by more than 15 percent. The University’s fundraising priority continues to be student scholarships.

“Every time she visited campus, we worked closely together for nearly 17 years, from the time I came to Brandeis as senior vice president of institutional advancement in 1994 until her untimely passing in July at the age of 68. I was with Myra on her last trip to Israel, and enjoyed her company on March 30, when she and her husband, Robert, graciously hosted a reception for Fred Lawrence and his wife, Kathy, on the night before Fred’s presidential inauguration.”

While Myra and Robert gave generously to Brandeis, following the philanthropic lead of her father, early visionary Jacob Hiatt, her support of the University went well beyond the financial.

A longtime trustee, she served as a valued mentor for a new generation of alumni leaders; was active on committees that improved the student experience and furthered the University’s mission; and built enduring relationships with senior administrators, faculty and students.

As her fame grew and her commitments increased, she never forgot Brandeis. In fact, she used her influence to spread the word about Brandeis and help bring new donors to the University.

Perhaps most importantly, she inspired all of us who were lucky enough to come in contact with her to do better, to help those in need, and to make the world a better place.

Sincerely,

Nancy Winship, P’10, P’12
Senior Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Brandeis raises $62 million in another strong year

President Fred Lawrence strongly supports Brandeis’ commitment to helping the best students, regardless of their family’s financial situation.”

Lawrence has quickly become an integral part of Brandeis’ fundraising enterprise. In his first months as president, he met with large groups of alumni, friends and parents at events in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Jersey, New York (NYC, Long Island and Westchester County), Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Israel. He has also spent time with smaller groups of alumni and friends, and had hundreds of one-on-one meetings.

“President Lawrence is a natural fundraiser,” Winship says. “In just 10 months on the job, he has already made strong connections with alumni and friends around the world.”

Funding highlights included:

• An all-time high of 71 percent of the Class of 2011 contributed to the senior class gift. The Class of 2008 had the old record of 68 percent (see story on page 7).
• Brandeis raised a record $698,573 through its online giving site, almost three times the total from just four years ago. Nearly 2,000 donors went online to make their gifts to Brandeis.

New provost excited to contribute to the success of his alma mater

New provost Sieve A.N. Goldstein ’78 is back home. The New York native, a highly accomplished researcher and scientist, earned his B.A. and M.A. in biochemistry from Brandeis in 1978. Two years later, he met his wife, Emily Novick, on campus while he was pursuing a research project and she was working as a residence counselor in Massell Quad. In 1993, after receiving his M.D. and Ph.D. from Harvard, Goldstein returned to his alma mater to complete his postdoctoral research fellowship with biochemistry professor Christopher Miller. Most recently a professor of pediatrics at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine and director of the Institute of Molecular Pediatric Sciences, Goldstein sat down with Connections to discuss his role at Brandeis, his passion for the University, and the importance of donor support in shaping the institution’s future.

Q: What made the provost position at Brandeis so attractive to you?

A: I remain proud of what I can accomplish as a physician, academic and scientist, but as the provost of Brandeis, I have the privilege of helping to advance the individual success of students, faculty and staff — and, thereby, the entire institution. By enabling the success of others, I am able to amplify my own impact many times over.

Q: What is it like to be back at Brandeis?

A: I find Brandeis to be even more exciting and enriching than when I was a student more than 30 years ago. The institution is unique and the energy is palpable. What I learned at Brandeis carried with me and shared wherever I went. It’s exciting to come back to share “it” with another generation — the quest for excellence; helping our students, faculty and staff achieve their individual potential; and pursuing social justice.

Q: As a former Brandeis student yourself, what do you tell today’s students?

A: When I welcomed the students, I shared with them three principles that I learned at Brandeis and that have guided my professional life — take control, take risks and take responsibility. You need to take control of your own education, take risks by stretching yourself academically, and take responsibility by understanding what you must do to take care of yourself and those around you.

Q: What role will donors have in Brandeis’ future?

A: President (Fred) Lawrence has asked me to lead our strategic planning initiative, which is focused on what Brandeis should look like in the decades ahead. Just as in our first 60 years, we will need visionary donors to allow those plans to blossom into all they can be. The support we receive from alumni and friends is often the stimulus for securing funding from other sources, such as the government, corporations and foundations.

Q: What is your approach to fundraising?

A: For me, fundraising is an extremely satisfying and rewarding experience. I always believe so deeply in what I am trying to raise funds for that I feel like a facilitator working on a collaboration to change the world and affect the future. I’m not pushing or trying to convince, but working with a donor on a shared vision. What could be more rewarding than that?

Correction

The David R. Pokross Chair in Law and Social Policy at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management was established by his family and friends in 1983. A story in the spring edition of Connections incorrectly reported when the Pokross chair had been created. We regret the error.
Alan Hassenfeld establishes innovative IBS overseas program

The Brandeis International Business School has enhanced the student experience through a new program that gives students an in-depth look at the business and economy of a dynamic overseas market. Established through a generous gift from Alan Hassenfeld, retired chairman and CEO of international toy giant Hasbro, the inaugural trip of the Hassenfeld Fellows Overseas Immersion Program took 30 students from 19 countries to Istanbul for seven days to gain invaluable on-the-ground experience in one of the region’s most promising economies.

“My dream is to give you all tools that maybe you didn’t have, to develop an understanding of another culture that you might want to work in, and one that I believe will become a very, very central player in the world,” Hassenfeld, a member of the business school’s Board of Overseers, told the participating Hassenfeld Fellows.

“We are extremely grateful to Alan for providing our students with this unique and innovative opportunity,” said Brandeis IBS Dean Bruce Magid, the Martin ’72 and Ahvra Gross Chair in Financial Markets and Institutions.

“The program is a complement to the learning that goes on in our classrooms every day. By enabling students to visit the country and delve into topics and industries that inspire them, Alan’s vision is advancing our efforts to prepare future global business leaders.”

Hassenfeld believes that cultural awareness is a critical component of advancing meaningful change across borders. “You cannot work in this world unless you have an appreciation of other lifestyles,” he said. “You have to get buy-in from inside the system, and change takes time.”

Hassenfeld is part of the third generation of the Hassenfeld family to support Brandeis, a history of generous philanthropy that began in 1950 with a gift from his late grandfather Henry, a Brandeis fellow. Alan’s mother, Sylvia, is a Brandeis trustee, and his sister, Ellen Hassenfeld Block, is a member of the Board of Overseers at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. Alan’s late father, Merrill, and late brother, Stephen, were both Brandeis fellows.

The Hassenfeld family has contributed to a number of important initiatives at Brandeis, including the Sylvia K. Hassenfeld Chair in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, The Hassenfeld Foundation Endowed Scholarship, The Sylvia Hassenfeld Endowed Scholarship, and the Henry and Marion Hassenfeld House residence hall.

Reunion 2011 giving tops $4.5 million

Reunion 2011 was a time to renew old acquaintances, reminisce, explore the campus — and also support Brandeis. Giving by the 11 Reunion classes reached nearly $4.6 million, a 53 percent increase from last year and one of the best totals in school history. More than 1,000 alumni and their families attended Reunion.

The Class of 2001 established a record for 10th Reunion giving, raising more than $139,000. The Class of 1961 secured more than $2 million, the second-best total ever for a 50th Reunion. A record 71 percent of the Class of 1956 contributed to the 55th Reunion gift.

“It’s exciting to see that, for many alumni, making a gift in honor of Reunion has become as much of a Reunion tradition as the Ralph Norman Barbecue and a tour of the Castle,” says Mark Abelman, assistant vice president of Development. “We thank all of the Reunion Committee members for their hard work in encouraging fellow alumni to attend Reunion and contribute to their class Reunion gift.”

Reunion 2011 committee chairs

1956 — Fellow Marge Grodner Housen ’56
1961 — Trustee Steve Reiner ’61 and Fellow Bruce Litwak ’61
1966 — Joe Perkins ’66
1971 — Susan Eisenberg Jay ’71
1976 — Larry Nem er ’76
1981 — Elizabeth Etra Juck ’81, P ’09, P ’12, Trustee Danny Elkaim ’81 and Vic Ney ’81, P ’11
1986 — Amy Kollo-Chartock ’86 and Jan Cardin ’86
1991 — Jeremy Pressman ’91 and Stu Slotnick ’91
1996 — Michael Gerstein ’96
2001 — Adam ’01 and Samantha (Gross) Zirkin ’01
2006 — Alex Goldstein ’06

Reunion 2012 will be held June 8-10 for all classes (1952, ’57, ’62, ’67, 72, 77, 82, 87, ’92, ’97, ’02 and ’07). If you are interested in serving on your class Reunion committee, email reunion@alumni.brandeis.edu.

BOLD program set to engage young alumni

Brandeis has launched BOLD (Brandeisians of the Last Decade), a new university-wide initiative designed to further engage young alumni.

BOLD will feature new programming, special volunteer opportunities, on-campus briefings with President Fred Lawrence, and enhanced use of social media to improve communications with this important segment of the Brandeis family. Details will be announced during the winter.

“Young alumni are truly the future of Brandeis,” says Nancy Winship, P ’10, P ’12, senior vice president of institutional advancement. “We hope to work more closely with our young alumni to ensure that Brandeis’ future is as bright as its past.”

Because many of Brandeis’ earliest graduating classes were much smaller than those of today, alumni who have graduated within the last decade represent almost one fourth of the University’s overall alumni population.

BOLD will work to keep young alumni informed about the variety of opportunities available to stay connected to Brandeis, including working with the Alumni Admissions Council or the Hiatt Career Center, or serving as a class agent or class correspondent.

One of the important components of BOLD is educating students about the need for them to become active members of the alumni community after graduation.

“We want to ensure that the passion students feel for Brandeis during their undergraduate years continues after graduation,” Winship says.
Brandeis on the Vineyard

Nearly 100 members of the Brandeis family gathered on Martha’s Vineyard for a welcome luncheon for President Fred Lawrence and his wife, Kathy, at the home of Fellow Jules Bernstein ’57 and his wife, Linda Lipsett.

Sachar Legacy Society Luncheon

New Provost Steve A.N. Goldstein ’78 spoke at the annual Sachar Legacy Society luncheon, which was hosted by Brandeis National Committee board member Dena Robbins. The Legacy Society is comprised of individuals who have included Brandeis in their estate plans.

Honoring New TYP Donor

Boston businessman and philanthropist Marvin Gilmore, who recently made a gift to establish the Marvin and Lorna Gilmore Endowed Transitional Year Program Scholarship, was recognized for his generosity during an event on campus. The dozens of attendees, including several current and past TYP Scholars, also sang happy birthday to the 87-year-old.
Meet the New Provost and Dean

Members of the Brandeis family gathered at Brandeis House in New York to hear from two new senior administrators, Provost Steve A.N. Goldstein ’78 and Susan Birren, the dean of Arts and Sciences.

Brandeis in Israel

President Fred Lawrence and his wife, Kathy, traveled to Israel in June and attended several alumni events, including one at the home of Jay ’88 and Shira Ruderman (second from left and middle). The Rudermans and Lawrences were joined by Gilad Erdan (left), Israel’s minister of environmental protection.

Goldman Sachs Hosts President

Trustee Fran Bermanzohn ’78 hosted Brandeis President Fred Lawrence for an event at the Goldman Sachs offices in New York. Many Brandeis alumni work for the financial services giant.

Boston Student Send-Off

Sharon Rosenberg ’00, trustee Daniel Jick ’79 and Elizabeth Etra Jick ’81, P ’09, P ’12, and Josh Jick ’12 at the New Student Send-Off at the Jicks’ Boston-area home.

Golf and Tennis Outing

The seventh annual Brandeis Golf and Tennis Outing, sponsored by Alpine Capital Bank, raised more than $100,000 for student scholarships.
Inspiring Myra (Hiatt) Kraft ’64 touched many lives at Brandeis and beyond

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Brandeis, and the Krafts hosted an event for the president and his wife, Kathy, at their home the night before his inauguration on March 31. It was to be his last public appearance.

“Myra was not just a philanthropist — she was a humanitarian in both a personal sense and a community sense,” Lawrence said. “She will be missed by countless friends and by all of those who benefited from her tireless work, her wisdom and her personal acts of kindness.”

For nearly 20 years, Mrs. Kraft worked closely with Nancy Winship, P’10, P’12, senior vice president of institutional advancement at Brandeis.

“Through her charitable work — here at Brandeis and around the world — she changed the lives of many people,” Winship said. “It is hard to imagine our world without her.”

As president of the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation and through the Robert and Myra Kraft Foundation, Mrs. Kraft sought to improve the lives of people in Boston, Israel and around the world. She was involved with many Boston area philanthropic organizations.

By the time she arrived at Brandeis as a freshman, in the fall of 1960, Mrs. Kraft already was quite familiar with the University. Her father, Worcester, Mass., businessman Jacob Hiatt, was a visionary early

Brandeis leader and as a teenager she often accompanied him on visits to campus.

“I remember being here with my father for commencements in the 1950s, when they were held at the Ullman Amphitheater,” Mrs. Kraft recalled during a 2008 interview. “Brandeis was an exciting place to be in those days — there was such a buzz around the place. It was where I always wanted to go to school. I had no idea I would still be involved 50 years later.”

During his long association with the University, Hiatt established the Hiatt Career Center, created a pioneering chair in Christian studies, and served as chair of the Board of Trustees from 1971-77.

Mrs. Kraft and her husband, Robert, a leading Boston businessman and the owner of the New England Patriots football team, followed in her father’s philanthropic footsteps. The Krafts supported a number of initiatives at Brandeis, including a chair in Arab politics and numerous student scholarships. Mrs. Kraft became a Brandeis trustee in 1986 and served as vice chair of the board for 10 years.

“I am a firm believer that if you are given something, it is your responsibility to give back,” Mrs. Kraft said in explaining her generous support of her alma mater. “Brandeis provided me a great educational experience. I am committed to helping Brandeis in any way I can.”

Although the demands on Mrs. Kraft’s time increased when her family purchased the Patriots in 1993, she remained committed to Brandeis. She served on her Reunion committees and hosted gatherings for the Class of 1964 either at her home or at Gillette Stadium, where the Patriots play home games.

Along with her husband, whom she married in 1963 while still a Brandeis student, Mrs. Kraft leaves four sons, Jonathan, Daniel, Josh and David; her sister, Janice; and six grandchildren.

Reunion gift from Linda Heller Kamm ’61 helps support student activists

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prominently than now. I hope that young people will fashion their careers so they find a meaningful home in the social justice movement.”

Kamm credits Brandeis with providing the foundation for a distinguished law career as notable for its impact on American society as for the volume of personal “firsts” she achieved. The first woman confirmed by the Senate as general counsel of a U.S. cabinet department (Transportation, 1977) and the first to reach partner at the nation’s second-oldest law firm (Foley & Lardner), she played a key role in advancing progressive social welfare and consumer protection legislation for more than four decades.

“I received a terrific education at Brandeis that gave voice to the values of tikkan olam that are part of my core sense of self as an American Jew,” Kamm says.

A history major, she fondly remembers taking classes with faculty stars such as Frank Manuel, Herbert Marcuse, Irving Howe and Phillip Rahv. Outside the classroom, she served as editor of The Justice, and sometimes joined professors and fellow students carrying picket signs outside Woolworth’s in Boston to protest the company’s segregationist policies in the South.

“Having grown up in Miami Beach at a time when it was segregated, I was sensitive to the issue of civil rights, but it was at Brandeis that I found the tools to act on those concerns,” Kamm says. “Brandeis changed my life. I’m very grateful.”

Kamm attended Boston College Law School, which was welcoming to women and committed to the kind of public-interest law that she was interested in practicing.

In 1967, in the midst of President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, she joined the U.S. Department of Housing, where she helped draft legislation that broke down the barriers that prevented millions of Americans from owning a home. Two years later, frustrated by the slow-moving federal bureaucracy, she went to work for the Democratic Study Group in the House of Representatives. The progressive organization championed a broad-based liberal agenda. Kamm focused on civil rights, health care and education legislation.

Kamm pursued her interest in House procedural reform as Counsel to the Committee on Committees, which was tasked with modernizing the legislative committee structure.

In 1977, Kamm was appointed by President Jimmy Carter as general counsel for the U.S. Department of Transportation, where she supervised a group of 400 lawyers. During her tenure, she oversaw issues related to economic regulation of the transportation sector. She also brought greater transparency to the regulatory process, spearheaded efforts to bring greater competition to the airline and railroad industries, and opened up opportunities for women in the Coast Guard and throughout the constituent agencies of the Transportation Department.

After leaving government service, Kamm pursued her interest in the environment as national chair of Friends of the Earth, U.S. She also served as special counsel for Reproductive Rights for the Women’s Legal Defense Fund, pursued her legal career at a Washington, D.C.-based law firm, started a private investment firm, served as chair of Americans for Peace Now, and was a founding member of the board of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, which focuses on Jewish women’s history.

She continues her advocacy on behalf of social justice. “Nothing is more rewarding,” Kamm says, “than being an agent for social change.” She hopes that today’s students will take up the unfinished agenda.