Thank you, all of you. Whether or not you have made contributions to our fund, you are all remembered for being a part of an organization that continues its presence on the UMD campus 40 years later. Wow! Please, send your check today while it is “top of mind.” All contributors will receive a receipt for tax purposes (all donations are tax deductible), a thank-you card from LBSE, recognition in the UMD Annual Report, as well as annual reminders from the University for continued pledging. If you prefer to use a credit card, please contact Lawrence Johnson at (866) 311-1157, or email at lpjohnso@d.umn.edu

Also, the UMD Homepage website www.d.umn.edu/unirel/homepage hosts information in story format about past and present organizations and school events.

During February, this website will host an article on 1st St. Gang, recognizing its contribution to the newest building on campus and its scholarship. Please . . . stay tuned!!

By the way, contributions can be mailed to: UMD Scholarship Fund Attn: Lawrence P. Johnson 219B LSBE 1318 Kirby Drive Duluth, MN 55812.

Checks should be made payable to the University Foundation and referenced with Fund #6522.
Why Are Good Causes Not Always Top-of-Mind?

. . . about the 1st St. Gang "Geoff Spencer" Commemorative Scholarship Fund. Of course, the idea behind starting the Fund was to honor Geoff, and to mark his passing in the memories of all who knew him. The willingness of so many people to contribute to the start of the Fund resulted in contributions of $16,900—far exceeding a seemingly lofty goal of $10,000. Now, after six years of the Fund’s existence, and after payouts to six scholarship recipients, earnings on the principal balance of the Fund (combined with additional contributions) leave the fund with a balance of $43,932. Even though it was established as an endowment fund that would forever exist because of higher earnings than annual payouts, a $1,000 scholarship no longer seemed adequate. But how could we make it more meaningful, more substantial, and perhaps more frequent? That started me wondering about raising additional funds, and I began asking myself why good causes are not always top-of-the-mind. This “letter” grew out of that thought process.

The article I was reading stated that “regular consumers of products like Coke are not likely to forget the name of the product. On the other hand, we don’t buy a new car every day and that is why Chevrolet, Ford and other brands advertise constantly so that when we finally are in the market for a new car they’ll have top-of-the-mind presence in our brains.”

This top-of-the-mind presence became the theme of the article, and it led me to realize that while it may be that our desire to grow the fund isn’t feasible, I think it is more likely that too few people were made aware of it to begin with, and those that were made aware, are not continuing to support it with additional contributions. And that is a shame.

It’s a common problem for all fund raisers, for sure. People give their hard-earned dollars to support an initiative at a school, a church, a neighborhood organization, or a cultural institution. At the time, the idea makes sense and those who contribute have done their homework, and are comfortable knowing where their dollars are going. But that is the last they hear about it. Dollars are scarce, especially in today’s economy, and many other needs compete for these dollars. However, if we know a program we have supported is succeeding, most of us would consider additional support.

Fundraising Time

In answer to the questions raised in the opening paragraph of this newsletter, please help to raise the scholarship fund balance to our new goal of $100,000, or more! If we can push our contributions over the $100,000 mark, we will become one of the largest scholarship fund within the Labovitz School of Business and Economics. Almost 40 years ago the 1st St. Gang grew to become the largest scholarship fund which recognized social organization on the UMD campus. It dominated intramural sports, held the best and largest parties, attracted an incredible array of talented and friendly people, and it became a legend in its own right. Now, during its 40th anniversary year, we need your help toward making our fund grow so more students can achieve their academic goals and begin their careers.

Naming Rights

For those who have not heard, the Grand Opening of the Labovitz School of Business and Economics was held on September 19th of this year. Long before construction began, the University solicited alumni, school organizations, community groups, businesses, and individuals for contributions to help fund the cost of this new “green” building. The 1st St. Gang was approached for contributions, and we eventually committed to a $25,000 donation. This “substantial” donation earned the 1st St. Gang “naming rights” to a room in the new building—a seminar room! Spelled-out, above the entrance to the room—the very first room you see upon entering the building is 1st St. Gang. Eleven of us attended the opening ceremonies that day, and participated in tours, greetings, introductions, speeches and an afternoon lunch. The 1st St. Gang was mentioned throughout the day as a long-standing, respected group of UMD alumni.