When Sue Weitz retired from her position as dean of students and vice president for student life at Gonzaga, giving back to the University was a priority.

“I thought, ‘how do you give back to an institution that gave you and your family so much?’” said Weitz, who first came to GU in 1981. “I knew my gift would make a difference.”

Weitz’ gift, which designated Gonzaga as a beneficiary of her retirement account, was not specifically directed to a particular area within the University and remains unrestricted. Her knowledge of the University’s administrative inner workings inspired the decision about how she wanted her gift to be used.

“I could see it in scholarships, in a building, in operating costs – I want to make the operating costs a little bit more affordable – no matter what you give to at Gonzaga, the students are going to benefit,” she said. “My gift could help other students get the kind of education I think they should get. I’m convinced that other students get the kind of education I wanted my gift to help keep tuition down – whether it goes to a building, or is a small amount to help keep tuition down – making the operating costs a little bit more affordable – no matter what you give to at Gonzaga, the students are going to benefit,” she said. “My gift could help other students get the kind of education I think they should get. I’m convinced that our institution gives a better education.”

Giving was also a way for Weitz to continue to feel connected to a place that has been such a large part of her life for so long. “I will never be disconnected,” she said, “because that’s where I sat for many years. I think it was Father Coughlin who said Gonzaga is ‘educating the mind and the heart together,’ and I am such a believer in that. I wanted to make sure they have money to do it.”

You can learn more about how giving through Gonzaga makes a difference at blogs.gonzaga.edu/GonzagaGiving.

Giving where it is needed most

By the Numbers
The Zag Scholarship Promise
Planned Giving
Unrestricted generosity
Q&A
Regional scholarship recipients
Scholarship Focus
Family first

Snapshot
[CCASL]

Gonzaga students volunteer their time and talents to help local children in Spokane Public Schools, Boys & Girls Clubs and more. Learn more about how students are giving back at gonzaga.edu/CCASL.

Olympic-sized legacy

Tony Le ’07 was the kind of guy who was always there for others – birthdays, events, moving, a pickup basketball game – you name it, Le was there. So when the day came that Le wasn’t there anymore, his friends from Gonzaga stepped in to carry his legacy forward.

Tony loved interacting with people, getting to know people, and doing the right thing by volunteering for anyone that needed help,” recalled Le’s friend and classmate, Zachary Oliver ’06. Le’s Gonzaga experience was largely defined by his volunteering and service through the Center for Community Action and Service Learning and for many, CCASL was defined by Le.

He gravitated there because he was comfortable, making them feel good for being there,” said Ann Nemitz ’08, another friend of Le’s. “He was always with stage 4 cancer.

In November of 2012, five years after graduating from Gonzaga with his degree in engineering, Le was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. At the age of 28, Tony Le had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

It was really uncomfortable for him,” Oliver remembers. “For him to be in this place where he couldn’t be the strong one anymore was really difficult. We wanted him to know that he wasn’t in this fight alone.” Friends took Le to Disneyland, Las Vegas, to Spokane for a Gonzaga basketball game and to Portland to see the Trail Blazers play. “To get to meet Lebron James, Ray Allen, Chris Bosh, Damien Lillard – he loved it,” added Oliver. “People just loved him because he was always so involved in so many of their projects. The GU slogan then was ‘Educating People the World Needs Most’ and Tony was definitely one of those people.”

In November of 2012, five years after graduating from Gonzaga with his degree in engineering, Le was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. At the age of 28, Tony Le had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

It was really uncomfortable for him,” Oliver remembers. “For him to be in this place where he couldn’t be the strong one anymore was really difficult. We wanted him to know that he wasn’t in this fight alone.” Friends took Le to Disneyland, Las Vegas, to Spokane for a Gonzaga basketball game and to Portland to see the Trail Blazers play. “To get to meet Lebron James, Ray Allen, Chris Bosh, Damien Lillard – he loved it,” added Oliver. “People just loved him because he was always so involved in so many of their projects. The GU slogan then was ‘Educating People the World Needs Most’ and Tony was definitely one of those people.”

In November of 2012, five years after graduating from Gonzaga with his degree in engineering, Le was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. At the age of 28, Tony Le had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

It was really uncomfortable for him,” Oliver remembers. “For him to be in this place where he couldn’t be the strong one anymore was really difficult. We wanted him to know that he wasn’t in this fight alone.” Friends took Le to Disneyland, Las Vegas, to Spokane for a Gonzaga basketball game and to Portland to see the Trail Blazers play. “To get to meet Lebron James, Ray Allen, Chris Bosh, Damien Lillard – he loved it,” added Oliver. “People just loved him because he was always so involved in so many of their projects. The GU slogan then was ‘Educating People the World Needs Most’ and Tony was definitely one of those people.”

In November of 2012, five years after graduating from Gonzaga with his degree in engineering, Le was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. At the age of 28, Tony Le had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

It was really uncomfortable for him,” Oliver remembers. “For him to be in this place where he couldn’t be the strong one anymore was really difficult. We wanted him to know that he wasn’t in this fight alone.” Friends took Le to Disneyland, Las Vegas, to Spokane for a Gonzaga basketball game and to Portland to see the Trail Blazers play. “To get to meet Lebron James, Ray Allen, Chris Bosh, Damien Lillard – he loved it,” added Oliver. “People just loved him because he was always so involved in so many of their projects. The GU slogan then was ‘Educating People the World Needs Most’ and Tony was definitely one of those people.”

In November of 2012, five years after graduating from Gonzaga with his degree in engineering, Le was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. At the age of 28, Tony Le had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

It was really uncomfortable for him,” Oliver remembers. “For him to be in this place where he couldn’t be the strong one anymore was really difficult. We wanted him to know that he wasn’t in this fight alone.” Friends took Le to Disneyland, Las Vegas, to Spokane for a Gonzaga basketball game and to Portland to see the Trail Blazers play. “To get to meet Lebron James, Ray Allen, Chris Bosh, Damien Lillard – he loved it,” added Oliver. “People just loved him because he was always so involved in so many of their projects. The GU slogan then was ‘Educating People the World Needs Most’ and Tony was definitely one of those people.”

In November of 2012, five years after graduating from Gonzaga with his degree in engineering, Le was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. At the age of 28, Tony Le had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

It was really uncomfortable for him,” Oliver remembers. “For him to be in this place where he couldn’t be the strong one anymore was really difficult. We wanted him to know that he wasn’t in this fight alone.” Friends took Le to Disneyland, Las Vegas, to Spokane for a Gonzaga basketball game and to Portland to see the Trail Blazers play. “To get to meet Lebron James, Ray Allen, Chris Bosh, Damien Lillard – he loved it,” added Oliver. “People just loved him because he was always so involved in so many of their projects. The GU slogan then was ‘Educating People the World Needs Most’ and Tony was definitely one of those people.”

In November of 2012, five years after graduating from Gonzaga with his degree in engineering, Le was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. At the age of 28, Tony Le had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

It was really uncomfortable for him,” Oliver remembers. “For him to be in this place where he couldn’t be the strong one anymore was really difficult. We wanted him to know that he wasn’t in this fight alone.” Friends took Le to Disneyland, Las Vegas, to Spokane for a Gonzaga basketball game and to Portland to see the Trail Blazers play. “To get to meet Lebron James, Ray Allen, Chris Bosh, Damien Lillard – he loved it,” added Oliver. “People just loved him because he was always so involved in so many of their projects. The GU slogan then was ‘Educating People the World Needs Most’ and Tony was definitely one of those people.”
Corky was a very humble man and I could really rally behind in Tony's honor," said Oliver. "I wanted to create something that people would remember Tony, and everyone showed up at seven.' and everyone showed up at seven.

Tony made volunteering part of our lives," added Nemitz. "In Seattle when we weren't a part of the University anymore, there wasn't one major network connecting us to service. Tony made it easy. He just said, 'hey I'm going to start a Special Olympics team.' I'll pick you up at seven,' and everyone showed up at seven.

"I wanted to create something that people could really rally behind in Tony's honor," explained Oliver. So, he and Nemitz organized the first annual "La Olympics" - a fundraiser in remembrance of their friend.

"We knew the games couldn't be 'everyone wins,' because Tony wouldn't have wanted that," said Nemitz. "There had to be a clearly defined winner and a trophy." Medals were made and winners were crowned, including CCASL, the beneficiary of the funds raised by the Le Olympics.

"We plan to continue it for as long as we can," said Oliver. "We try to pick the Saturday closest to Tony's birthday the 'Thanksgiving of the Fighting Irish.'" Oliver and Nemitz are making plans for the second annual Le Olympics and have secured LeOlympics.org for anyone interested in joining in support of CCASL and carrying on the legacy of Tony Le.

CCASL is currently celebrating 20 years of providing service opportunities for Gonzaga students and was recently honored with three prestigious awards for civic engagement and community service. Learn more about CCASL's programs and honors at gonzaga.edu/CCASL.

By the numbers

The Zag Scholarship Promise is a commitment to what is truly important for our students - access to an affordable and exemplary Jesuit education.

3,199 donors answered President McNeilly's challenge to help provide Zags with scholarships from the Zag Scholarship Fund.

257 Zags have been individually sponsored with one-to-one scholarships from the Zag Scholarship Fund so far.

500 sponsored Zags are needed by May 31, 2015, to reach the Annual Campaign goal.

$643,485 in gifts has been given to the Zag Scholarship Fund since the Scholarship Promise launched.

$200,000 in scholarship funding.

In the spirit of Zag gratitude and Texas hospitality, Portillo said, "Thank you for letting me make Gonzaga my home. If you ever find yourself in Texas and need a nurse, I love you!"

Elise LaRussa ('16)
Seattle Regional Scholarship
Major: Mechanical Engineering
LaRussa didn't have to travel far from Seattle to Spokane, but she has her sights set further for her future.

"After graduation, I would love to work for a program that goes abroad or around the states submitting homes or improving water systems," she said.

Chelsea Huffman ('15)
Alaska Regional Scholarship
Major: Biology
This Alaska native was recently accepted to Veterinary School and credits her scholarships with helping make this lifelong goal attainable.

"Without the contributions of the regional donors, I would not be able to pursue my dreams," said Huffman.

Emily Mann ('16)
Gonzaga-in-Florida Via and Bruno Bay Area Scholarship
Major: Public Relations
Mann has aspirations to take her Gonzaga education back to her home region.

"After graduate school, I want to eventually get a job in public relations in the Bay Area," said Mann, adding, "and possibly law school, too."

By the numbers [Annual Campaign]

The Zag Scholarship Promise is a commitment to what is truly important for our students – access to an affordable and exemplary Jesuit education.

3,199 donors answered President McNeilly’s challenge to help provide Zags with scholarships from the Zag Scholarship Fund.

257 Zags have been individually sponsored with one-to-one scholarships from the Zag Scholarship Fund so far.

500 sponsored Zags are needed by May 31, 2015, to reach the Annual Campaign goal.

$643,485 in gifts has been given to the Zag Scholarship Fund since the Scholarship Promise launched.

1,707 donors had gifts matched by an anonymous donor family through the “Twice as Nice” Challenge in December 2014, spawning over $200,000 in scholarship funding.

Learn more about the Zag Scholarship Promise and how you can sponsor a Zag at gonzaga.edu/ScholarshipPromise.