BU Celebrates, Big-Time

Campaign kickoff bash a rousing, rollicking display

BILLED AS A “defining moment for the University,” the Celebration of BU, held on September 22, 2012, delighted and dazzled with a pageant of student and alumni talent, from the captivating voices of the BU Symphonic Chorus to the breathtaking jumps and spins of the BU Figure Skating Club.

Featuring video of BU’s groundbreaking history and music provided by the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, the event was an adrenaline-infused public kickoff to the Campaign for Boston University, BU’s most ambitious fundraising effort ever.

“We have come here to celebrate BU, and we have got a lot to celebrate,” Kevin O’Connor, host of the PBS show This Old House, told the cheering crowd filling nearly three-quarters of Agganis Arena’s 6,300 seats. Among those who attended were President Robert A. Brown and Beverly Brown, BU trustees, alumni on campus for Alumni Weekend, and students outfitted in Terrier red. “Greatness comes from a vision, a dream of what the world could be, and should be,” said O’Connor (GSM’99), one of several celebrities hosting the gala. The celebration marked the formal announcement of the unprecedented fundraising effort. With a goal of raising $1 billion for financial aid, faculty support, research, and facility improvements, the campaign places BU on a list of just 53 universities that have attempted a 10-figure fundraising initiative. Its success will elevate the University’s academic standing, extend its global impact, and make BU more accessible to more students.

BU’s historic inclusiveness and history of giving back was a prevailing theme of the celebration, which included a surprise announcement by Alison Weltman (COM’13), Community Service Center events manager, that she and fellow undergraduates were pledging to complete a million hours of community service by the end of the campaign in 2017. (See page 16.) At that, Kenneth Elmore (SED’87), dean of students, urged all the students in the crowd to stand, and BU’s Inner Strength Gospel Choir burst into a chorus of “Amen.”

Over the course of the two-hour event, BU’s praises were sung by several well-known alumni. Erica Hill (COM’98), a CBS News special correspondent, urged the crowd to “help make BU an even better place tomorrow.” Andy Cohen (COM’90), exec-
Gifts from Two Trustees Fuel Lack Professorship

Will research ways to keep serious journalism alive and well

OF THE MANY unknowns clouding the future of journalism, none is more crucial than where the money will come from. Now, with the help of a $1.66 million gift from Bloomberg Media Group CEO Andrew Lack (CFA’68) and an $833,333 matching gift from the Leventhal family, the College of Communication is putting $2.5 million behind a professorship whose goal is to find an answer, or perhaps more than one answer.

The Leventhal contribution is part of a larger challenge-grant program established by trustee Alan Leventhal (Hon.’09) and his wife, Sherry, which has helped support the creation of 10 professorships, 20 scholarships, and 4 fellowships at 10 schools across the University.

The Andrew R. Lack Professorship, says Thomas Fiedler, dean of COM, is intended to provide the resources and scholarship to analyze new business models that may support serious journalism in the years ahead.

“It comes from Andy’s concern that accountability journalism—the kind of journalism that the First Amendment’s free-press clause is intended to protect—is endangered by the collapse of the old business models that supported newspapers and TV news until the internet era,” says Fiedler (COM’71). “The Lack Professor will oversee research and develop courses that may envision and incubate these new business models.”

That endeavor, coincidentally, is similar to what Lack does every day at Bloomberg. Among his many charges at the media giant is to guarantee that the company’s vast news operations, now supported by a corollary business model around that? How do we navigate these various issues, and the impact that they’re having on the work we do, is what I hope the Lack Professor will engage our students in.”

Fiedler says he expects the program to dovetail nicely with another new area of study overseen by the nascent Feld Professorship in Emerging Media. That position is held by James Katz, who joined COM as director of the new division of emerging media studies this past fall. He came from Rutgers University, where he was chair of the department of communication. AJ