

Team Effort

How Athletics and alumni raised \$1 million / BY JEFF CRUIKSHANK



Like many memorable athletic events, this one came down to the wire—and set records.

During BU's fourth annual Giving Day, a 24-hour fundraising drive for the BU Annual Fund, the University received more than 11,000 gifts adding up to over \$2.3 million—an increase of \$800,000 from 2016 and a new record.

Varsity athletics also bested its previous Giving Day totals, with 3,555 gifts adding up to \$1,020,343, twice the amount raised in 2016. It began with a simple question posed at an October meeting of the Athletic Director's Advisory Council, hosted by Drew Marrochello, BU's director of athletics and assistant vice president: could BU Athletics raise \$1 million on the next Giving Day, April 5, 2017? Shortly before the big event, trustee and entrepreneur C. A. Lance Piccolo (SED'62) issued a challenge to Marrochello: "If you get to \$975,000, Drew, I'll kick in the last \$25,000 to get you over the top."

The next person to weigh in was former BU Alumni Council president Mary Buletza (Questrom'80), a CPA, superfan, and current advisory council member, who had agreed to serve as Giving Day chair for Athletics and had already sponsored a number of challenges in support of women's athletics. "If you

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have trouble getting to Lance's \$975,000," she told Marrochello, "you call me."

Over the course of Giving Day, Marrochello and Scott Graham, director of development for Athletics, anxiously watched the giving totals. Things seemed to be going well, but perhaps not quite well enough. Calls went out in all directions, including the first of many to both Buletza and Piccolo. One by one, major milestones were passed: \$600,000, \$700,000, \$800,000, and \$900,000. And when it looked like a little more momentum might be needed, Buletza stepped forward with an additional gift, which, combined with a steady stream of smaller donations, triggered Piccolo's generous finish-line gift and put Athletics over the top.

The money will be used to support and enhance women's and men's varsity sports, a cause Buletza says she is thrilled to have advanced. "Our varsity athletes show their spirit in so many ways both on and off the field," she says. "As an Athletics donor, I've been able to witness how our support has helped grow these student-athletes into our future leaders. Giving Day gives us a great foundation to build upon."

For his part, Piccolo is happy to have provided the stimulus to help turn an ambitious vision into a reality. "Sometimes, that's what it takes," he says. "You set a stretch goal, and somewhere along the line, people stop worrying about whether or not it's a stretch—they just work like crazy to make it happen."