The term "Utica College family" is about to get more real than ever. Children and grandchildren of Utica College public relations, journalism, marketing and communications graduates are eligible for "Legacy Scholarships" offered through the Raymond Simon Institute for Public Relations and Journalism.

Each Legacy Scholarship is worth $1,000 per year. Students must be matriculated in one of the college’s public relations, journalism or communications programs and remain in that program, in good standing (C+ average and above), for four years. Transfer students are also eligible, with the duration of the award being up to three years.

"Utica College graduates are among the elite in the public relations, journalism and marketing professions across the country and throughout the world," said RSI Chair Paul Montana, Class of 1970. "This unique scholarship opportunity is a way to recognize them by supporting their own families’ educational pursuits and to promote the college’s first-class communications programs."

RSI was established in 1986 to promote and support Utica College’s nationally recognized programs in public relations and journalism.

More than 120 Utica College alumni and students marked the 70th anniversary of UC’s public relations major during a special Homecoming 2018 celebration last fall.

"70 Years of Pioneering Public Relations" celebrated the college’s PR major started by Professor Raymond Simon in 1948. The Raymond Simon Institute presented a special half-day conference that addressed the program’s place in history as well as its current role in the profession, with keynotes, an interactive symposium and a networking gala.

Patricia Swann, professor of public relations and journalism, kicked off the conference with a short documentary scripted by Journalism Professor David Chanatry and produced by UC student Daeshan Buseck ’18.

Patrick Cooley ’95 delivered the opening keynote with advice on how to keep pace with technology as a public relations pro. As a marketing communications senior consultant at Dell, Cooley spoke to the unique challenges of working in high-tech PR.

Next was Dorree Gurdak ’92, executive vice president at Weber Shandwick, who illustrated that “All I Really Need to Know I Learned at UC” with examples of how she’s applied her education throughout her career, punctuated by fascinating stories and photos from numerous campaigns. From dinner parties in a cranberry bog to flash mobs in Grand Central Station to seriously creative and occasionally hilarious last-minute thinking, Gurdak entertained and inspired.

The conference then turned to academia as Regina “Gina” Luttrell ’98, PhD, assistant professor of public relations at the Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, discussed how social media has created a sea change in business. A widely published author on social media and business ethics, Luttrell shared compelling case studies. The audience seemed to appreciate that her anthology includes a book about beer-making (a copy of that was a raffle prize which went to an age-appropriate student!).

Next up was Chris Bandura ’99, vice president of media relations for the Buffalo Sabres NHL team. In “The Slippery Business of Media Relations in Professional Ice Hockey,” Bandura quickly dispelled the myth that his job is glamorous, then demonstrated the long tail of the internet by showing the.
The Legacy Scholarships are now among the thousands of dollars in financial awards given each year by RSI to deserving students in UC's public relations and journalism programs within the Communications & Media degree program and the public relations major in the college's School of Business. A committee of the RSI Advisory Board, composed of Utica College alumni who have achieved professional success in the communications field, selects the awardees based on criteria established by the full board. For more information or to apply, contact RSI executive director Patricia Swann.

To learn more about RSI or to support one of its many scholarships and awards, go to www.utica.edu/rsi.

70 YEARS continued

The conference was followed by a networking reception where students and alumni had the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the symposium presenters. To view the documentary and agenda, please visit utica.edu/conferences/pr70/.

70 YEARS cont.
CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF RAYMOND SIMON

The life of Professor Raymond Simon was celebrated last spring as several hundred Utica College Public Relations and Journalism alumni representing seven decades of Simon’s teaching and mentoring career gathered in the Library Concourse to remember the man who helped shape a profession and so many lives.

Simon, who died Nov. 7, 2017 at 102, founded Utica College’s undergraduate public relations program in 1948, and went on to become one of the most influential PR educators and textbook authors in the world.

Bob Feldman ’78 and Rob Flaherty ’81 organized the April 21, 2018 event and served as masters of ceremonies. College President Laura Casamento gave welcoming remarks, while retired UC professors Bill Blanchfield and Kim Landon spoke poignantly of their personal and professional relationships with Simon.

What his alumni remembered most was how he made a difference in each of their lives.

More than 30 former students, family members and colleagues – including 97-year-old Harold Burson, founding chairman of Burson Marsteller, in a video message – shared stories of how Professor Simon influenced them by doing or saying something at just the right moment. For David D’Alessandro ’72, it was how Simon found him in the class registration line and convinced him to take a public relations course. That course led not only to a successful public relations career, but also to D’Alessandro ultimately heading John Hancock and being named one of the country’s top CEOs.

Perhaps the alumni who portrayed Professor Simon the best were those from the graduating classes of the 1970s, who each offered six words about him. Here are a few:

Jeanne Wickline LaBella ’75: He inspired curiosity and critical thinking.
Carmen DiRienzo ’77: He brought incomparable sparkle to learning.
Mark Cacozza ’73: He challenged all to reach high.

Meanwhile, Dave Armon ’83 and Larry Platt ’86 reflected on Simon’s influence in their decade. Dorree Gurdak ’92 told how Simon helped in her career even though he had retired from teaching while she was a student.

Professor Pat Swann, executive director of the Raymond Simon Institute for Public Relations and Journalism, and Alumni Advisory Chairman Paul Montana, spoke about the founding and the future of the Institute.

Simon’s family recounted their own Utica College memories. Daughters Melissa Berczuk and Brooke Candelaria told of growing up with their father. Heartwarming and humorous remembrances from his wife, Lyn Heywood Simon ’56, closed the program.

A reception sponsored by the RSI followed.

Throughout all the tributes and recollections was a profound sense of affection or, as Gary LaBella ’75 put it in his six words: “Our love for Ray is eternal.”

2019 AWARDS

Every Spring the Raymond Simon Institute holds an Awards Ceremony to recognize the year’s outstanding students. Students, their families, faculty, administration, and RSI board members attend. This year RSI presented students with six scholarships and 25 awards totaling more than $21,000.
PLEASE SUPPORT RSI

You can support the Raymond Simon Institute by making a secure online gift at utica.edu/donate. Under “Apply Donation To” use the drop down to “Other” and in the “Comments/Questions” section write in Raymond Simon Institute.

Your gift is greatly appreciated.

RAYMOND SIMON INSTITUTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Michele (Ford) Adams ’01, annual giving director at Mohawk Valley Health System

Brian Agnew, Ph.D. ’03, executive vice president at Bergen Community College. He has worked in development and fundraising for many high profile educational institutions and foundations.

David Armon ’83, former chief operating officer for PR Newswire. He is currently the chief executive officer of 3BL Media.

Chris Bandura ’99, vice president of media relations for the NHL Buffalo Sabres. He is the team’s spokesman and primary media contact at home and on the road.

Brooke Candelaria, daughter of Raymond Simon, and managing partner of events and marketing company 2Can Consulting.

Carmen (DiRienzo) Carmody ’77, a consultant, was previously the director of human resources at WNET-TV in New York City, a PBS affiliate.

Dorree Gurdak ’92, marketing/PR consultant 20+ years experience.

Kessler, Deborah ’90, owner of Kessler Promotions, Poland, NY. The company provides promotions, public relations, fundraising and marketing services.

Frank Maurizio, Jr. ’77, retired manager of media and web relations for New York State United Teachers, based in Latham, N.Y.

Tim McGowan, ’80, vice president for strategic donor engagement in Princeton University’s Office of Development. He was previously at Columbia University and worked for Young & Rubicam.

Paul Montana, ’70 is retired after owning and managing a number of businesses in the Albany, NY area. He is currently writing his second novel.

Bob O’Gara, ’67, professor of public relations & advertising at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA. Prior to teaching, O’Gara was in corporate public relations and advertising for Pittsburgh Corning Corp., Koppers Company Inc., and PNC Financial Corp.

Richard Puff ’81, assistant vice president, Health Center Public Relations, the University Of Cincinnati.

Stephanie (Roe) Zimmer ’96, sales operations manager for Mercedes-Benz USA in the NY Tri-State Area. She consults with her dealers on their Sales and Marketing initiatives.

RECENT GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Marissa Filletti ’17, marketing specialist, Northland Communications.

James McClendon, ’17, sports reporter, Utica Observer Dispatch.

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

Patricia Swann, professor of public relations and journalism and executive director of the Raymond Simon Institute.

Kim Landon, professor emerita and executive director emerita of the RSI.