

Why Planned Giving?

Who are some notable individuals who have died without a valid will?

Answer: Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Pablo Picasso. Who prepared a detailed last will? Answer: Florence Nightingale

Elizabeth “Liz” Mulford Vavra ‘77

In 2008, in the course of planning for a trip to Europe, Elizabeth Vavra was motivated to make a change in her will for the same reasons that people buy extra life insurance prior to getting on a plane. “Having no children, a ‘common disaster’ would leave our assets to be distributed by the state if we did not make our wishes known. I decided I wanted the money to go somewhere that had importance to me.”

“When I read news reports about the country’s critical nursing shortage I realized I had the perfect answer. I would leave a portion of my estate to Columbia University School of Nursing in order to help students pursue their nursing education who might not otherwise be able to do so. I was fortunate enough to have my education at Columbia paid for by my parents, but I know many students are not in that position.”



Liz, as she prefers to be called, graduated in 1977 and is one of a growing number of Columbia alumni who have recognized the importance of supporting the School and aspiring nurses, and have found satisfaction by expressing those wishes in their wills. But Ms. Vavra is one of the younger graduates to have actually taken the step and had a will prepared to include Columbia.

“Nursing has provided me with many diverse opportunities throughout my life, from critical care nursing to the medical education of physicians. I have returned to a hospital environment for the first time in 20 years and I again see first-hand the dedication and skill of clinical nurses.”

Ms. Vavra lives in Wilmington, North Carolina, with her husband Ron.

Planning a bequest now allows you to give in ways you may not be able to during your lifetime. If you have already provided for Columbia University School of Nursing in your will, please let us know and we will add your name to the growing list of Anna C. Maxwell Legacy Society members.

Additionally, you may want to consider a gift to the School of Nursing that would provide lifetime income to you (or another beneficiary), allow you to pass assets on to your heirs, and/or reduce your estate taxes.

To learn more about how a planned gift could benefit you and the School of Nursing, contact us and we’ll be happy to consult with you and your advisors.

Call Reva Feinstein at 212-342-3030 or 800-899-6728 or by e-mail at nursingalumni@columbia.edu.