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Report of Gifts 2010: Charles Apel Robinson 1928 Memorial Scholarship Fund: A Multigenerational Honor

The family of Charles Apel Robinson '28, likes to share a memory that they feel best exemplifies the patriarch's love of people and interest in the world. Many years ago, Charles picked up his son (Charles R. '62) and daughter-in-law Barbara, who had just come in to Philadelphia from New York City, at the train station. At the same time, he also picked up a third guest, Sergio, a young man from Brazil who spoke little English and was travelling through the United States. Upon arrival at the Robinson home, the visitors were shown to their rooms. Father and son, having some privacy for the first time since they met at the station, asked each other about Sergio.



Rengyi "Emily" Xu '12, current recipient of the Charles Apel Robinson 1928 Memorial Scholarship Fund.

"We each thought he was the other's guest!" says Charles R. "This is a favorite family story. It illustrates the nature of my parents – welcoming and very generous of spirit." For that summer, Sergio, by happenstance, became part of the Robinson family home in Chester County, PA which included 14 children, seven biological and seven adopted.

Because so many of his children and grandchildren also went to Haverford, Charles' family decided to honor his legacy and give back to Haverford College by establishing the Charles Apel Robinson 1928 Memorial Scholarship Fund. The multigenerational fund provides assistance to international students with demonstrated financial need, whose background and character show a high level of commitment to building successful multicultural communities.

"We were motivated by several things when defining the scholarship's purpose," explains Charles P. Robinson '89, son of Charles R. and Barbara. "My grandparents' home was always full of visitors from around the world. The scholarship acknowledges their openness to people from all walks of life." He adds, "We also want to encourage students outside of the United States to apply to Haverford. So many international students flock to universities in the States, and the tremendous wealth of liberal arts colleges is too often overlooked."

The Robinson family also hopes that each scholarship recipient will become part of their extended family. Says Christopher Robinson '76, brother of Charles R., "The scholarship is designed to connect individuals that might not otherwise meet. And following my parents' lead, our family also wishes to offer a friendly hand to international students adapting to a new culture far from their own families."

Indeed, Rengyi "Emily" Xu '12, the most recent recipient of the scholarship, feels part of the Robinson fold. The economics major from Shanghai uses Skype to talk with Charles P., who lives in London and speaks Mandarin. She also visits nearby attractions, such as Longwood Gardens, with Maria Rosa Robinson '99, one of Charles A.'s granddaughters.

Says Emily, "This scholarship means a lot to me and my family. I am grateful to have the opportunity to attend Haverford and the support and friendship of the Robinsons."

Among the Robinson clan, the fund has become a favorite focus of giving at holidays and birthdays. In fact, Charles R.'s sons encouraged guests at his recent 70th birthday party to give to the fund in lieu of gifts. And Charles R. and Barbara match all gifts of up to \$1,000.

Says Charles P., "This fund is a nice multigenerational way of showing support for Haverford and paying tribute to our grandparents. We hope it will serve as a template for others."