Arméd with a degree in musical theatre performance from U-M’s School of Music, Theatre & Dance, Barrett Foa (BFA ’99) of New York City had few illusions. He wasn’tdreaming of a Tony Award his first year out of school. His goal was simple: be a working actor.

That happened quickly for Foa when classmate and casting director Rachel Hoffman (BFA ’99) introduced him to composer-lyricist Stephen Schwartz (Godspell, Wicked, Pippin). Schwartz promptly chose Foa to play Jesus in the 30th anniversary off-Broadway production of Godspell in New York City.

From there, Foa dared to dream bigger. His next stop was Broadway, in the original cast of Mamma Mia! Big roles ensued in a wide range of regional Broadway productions. Then in 2005, Foa returned to Broadway, as the lead in Avenue Q.

Six years later, Foa is more than a working actor; he is an actor with steady work—as adorable computer geek Eric Beale in NCIS: Los Angeles; as musicals. “That gave me the confidence to shake things up and move to L.A.,” he said. Foa

When the show pauses for 11 weeks each summer, Foa heads back onstage to keep up his theater chops. Blending television and theater, he also served as backstage host and social media reporter for the past two Tony Award ceremonies.

And if a Tony Award should someday come his way? Foa’s speech is ready. “[Musical Theatre Department’s 25th anniversary celebration in 2009 and the 2013 tribute to Broadway director Jack O’Brien (AB 61, AM 62, HDFA ‘08). The visits occasion a welcome opportunity to reunite with a half-dozen close friends from college, including Hoffman. “We’re scattered to the winds across the country now, so it’s nice to get together and spend time in Ann Arbor,” Foa said. “We’re trying to make it a yearly thing.”

At the same time, Foa is exploring enduring ways to support the future of the musical theatre department at Michigan and to mobilize fellow alumni to join him. “It’s definitely time to give back to Michigan for all it’s given me,” he said. And if a Tony Award should someday come his way? Foa’s speech is ready. “[Musical Theatre Department Chair and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor] Brent Wagner and the University of Michigan musical theatre department’s 25th anniversary celebration in 2009 and the 2013 tribute to Broadway director Jack O’Brien (AB 61, AM 62, HDFA ‘08). The visits occasion a welcome opportunity to reunite with a half-dozen close friends from college, including Hoffman. “We’re scattered to the winds across the country now, so it’s nice to get together and spend time in Ann Arbor,” Foa said. “We’re trying to make it a yearly thing.”

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EVENTS

DONOR APPRECIATION EVENTS

Ann Arbor | October 31 – November 2, 2014

CAMPUS WIDE

Held in conjunction with Homecoming Weekend, this series of events recognized the university’s loyal donors for their philanthropic impact over the past year. Events included a premiering lunchtime lecture in the Michigan Union’s Royce Ballroom; a symposium highlighting the present and future of campus; a red morning tailgate at Michigan Stadium featuring top university researchers and faculty members on the blossoming entrepreneurial scene; and bus tours for alumnae guests with Ann Arbor’s Central Campus, North Campus, and residence halls. An early evening reception followed at the Michigan Theater featuring remarks by President Mark S. Schlissel. On Saturday, guests moved up for a football at Crisler Center, where the U-M regents and President Schlissel hosted a leadership kickoff.

VOLUNTEER WEEKEND

Ann Arbor | October 10–11, 2014 | University-Wide

Celebrating the more than 100 people volunteer their time and skills for the Michigan Law Campaign (MLC) and the University-wide Volunteer Weekend, this series of events connected U-M alumni and friends with researchers and faculty members, providing an opportunity to explore campus’s central priorities and progress comprehensive volunteer opportunities with altruism, efficacy, and impact.

A Friday lunchtime program in the slate and building featured remarks by Campaign Vice Chair B A Rogel (BBA ’70, M.A. ’91) in the form of campaign fundraising for student support and the MLC. Spokesperson Dan McGough (B.B. ’93) presented about their work, highlighting the difference philanthropy makes in creating opportunities for student support, engaged learning, and bold ideas. That evening, university volunteers gathered for a reception and program at the Stephen M. Ross School of Business, featuring a keynote conversation between President Mark S. Schlissel and Campus Chair Stephen M. Ross (BBA ’62, M.A. ’87) and students across the university’s three campuses.

Saturday’s events included a football game and tailgate bringing campaign volunteers together with regents of the university and President Schlissel. That evening, campaign volunteers gathered for a reception and program at the Ross School of Business featuring a keynote conversation between President Mark S. Schlissel and Campus Chair Stephen M. Ross (BBA ’62, M.A. ’87) and students across the university’s three campuses.

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PRESIDENTIAL
INTRODUCTION EVENTS

Selected last January by the regents of the University of Michigan and formally installed as the university’s 14th president during a September 5, 2014, ceremony, President Mark S. Schlissel has begun making his way around the country at events introducing him to members of the U-M family who are based away from the three campuses. Alumni—including campaign volunteers—as well as parents, supporters, friends, and regional faculty and staff greeted the new president in five cities nationwide in 2014. The introductions continue into 2015 with visits to cities including Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Seattle.

INTRODUCTION EVENTS

**NEW YORK, N.Y. | OCTOBER 23, 2014**
LINCOLN CENTER

**BIRMINGHAM, MICH. | SEPTEMBER 16, 2014**
THE TOWNSEND HOTEL

**BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF. | NOVEMBER 5, 2014**
UNITED TALENT AGENCY

**MENLO PARK, CALIF. | NOVEMBER 6, 2014**
ROSEWOOD SAND HILL

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. | DECEMBER 2, 2014**
JW MARRIOTT

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# CENTER FOR CHINESE STUDIES
NAMING CEREMONY

A ceremony celebrating the naming of the Kenneth G. Lieberthal and Richard H. Rogel Center for Chinese Studies in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts included a panel discussion moderated by Professor Lieberthal on relations between the United States and China. Professor Lieberthal is an Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Political Science and the former director of the Center for Chinese Studies. A public reception and private dinner followed.


# BLUE LEADS GREEN
ANN ARBOR | OCTOBER 30, 2014
DANA BUILDING AND FORD COMMONS

The U-M School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) celebrated the formal installation of Marie Lynn Miranda as the inaugural Samuel A. Graham Dean in the school with a public lecture by Dean Miranda titled “Blue Leads Green: SNRE’s Bold Ideas for a Better World.” A reception followed in the Ford Commons. The Graham Deanship recognizes the exceptional generosity of Donald C. (BSE IO ’55, MSE ’56, PhD ’84) and Ingrid A. (BSE IO ’57) Graham, as well as the lifetime contributions of Donald’s father, Samuel A. Graham, a foundational figure in SNRE’s history.


# CENTER FOR CHINESE STUDIES
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Ann Arbor | October 16, 2014
Rackham Graduate School

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EVENT ON MAIN
ANN ARBOR | JUNE 19, 2014 MAIN STREET

Michele and Ryan Gregg chaired the fifth annual Event on Main, featuring a first-class dining experience in downtown Ann Arbor with entertainment by the band 50 Amp Fuse. The event raised more than $290,000 to benefit the Charles Woodson Research Fund by Pediatric Cancer at the C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital.

1. Laure (AB ’86, TeachCert ’86) and Lloyd Carr 2. 50 Amp Fuse 3. Kristin Finn (Biomedical ’01, MSE ’02), Charlie Casgrain III (BSEMech ’70), Mary Hearm 4. Jean and Jeff Little 5. Gene (BSPharm ’80) and Nancy Eavy 6. Jordan Morgan (BSE ’13, MEA ’14)

CEW 50TH ANNIVERSARY
ANN ARBOR | OCTOBER 18, 2014 MICHIGAN LEAGUE

The Center for the Education of Women celebrated its milestone half-century anniversary with a scholarship luncheon and an evening gala. The luncheon brought together generous CEW donors and the U-M students whose education their support makes possible. The evening celebration featured a strolling dinner and whose education their support makes possible. The evening featured a strolling dinner and dancing. Among the many guests were friends from TIAA-CREF—the event’s premier sponsor—and from Morgan Stanley, the Michigan League.

1. CEW Director Gloria Thomas (PhD ’04) 2. Melissa Grant (School of Social Work Class of 2016), Vaughn Brown 3. Kedicsia Grant (LSA Class of 2015), Stephanie Buitrey (BSE ’77, MS ’77) 4. Paul Weber 5. Thomas, Sanja Savic-Berhamovic (AB ’02)

L.A. RECEPTION
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIF. | OCTOBER 21, 2014 SUNSET TOWER HOTEL

Hosted by U-M and the Stephen M. Ross School of Business, this reception for alumni and friends in the Los Angeles area featured a conversation with Bobby Kotick (’82), CEO of Activision Blizzard, Inc., interviewed by NFL Network Sportscaster Rich Eisen (AB ’90).


STUDENT SEND-OFFS
NATIONWIDE | SUMMER 2014

First-year students set to arrive at U-M in fall 2014 received a summertime send-off from parents and family members at events across the country. Families from the Los Angeles area gathered on July 23 for the C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital.


SUMMER UP NORTH
BAY HARBOR, MICH. | JULY 16, 2014 | BAY HARBOR YACHT CLUB

University friends, faculty members, and leaders gathered for a special program and reception bringing the best of U-M to northern Michigan. Judy Istock (ABEd ’62, TeachCert ’62), welcomed guests and introduced Christopher Kendall, who is the Paul Brohan Collegiate Professor of Music, a professor of music (conducting), and dean of U-M’s School of Music, Theatre & Dance (SMTD). The lively summer program showcased the musical talents of students from the school.


MILESTONE REUNIONS
ANN ARBOR | OCTOBER 31–NOVEMBER 2, 2014
ANN ARBOR CAMPUS

In its first milestone reunions weekend to span so many class years, U-M invited alums of the Classes of 1954–56, 1964–66, 1974–76, 1984–86, and 2004 for a weekend of events including M-SaKo; bus tours of residence halls, Central Campus, and North Campus; and a gala dinner where members of the Class of 1964 received their emeritus pins. A Saturday football tailgate at Oosterbaan Field House—featuring remarks by leaders including President Schlissel; Susan M. Collins, the Joan and Sanford Weill Dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy; and Michael G. Ford. Entertainment included the Men’s Glee Club, joined by club alumnus Bob McGrath (BMus ’54) [featured, at right]; current and alumni Michigan Marching Bands; and the U-M Cheer Team, among others. Sunday morning started early with the Victors 5K Walk/Run through the heart of campus and proceeded to a celebratory brunch.

1. Michael Akbar, Katherine Metres (AB ’54)
2. Zach and Samantha (BS ’16) Richards with son Cooper
3. Barry and Jane (AB ’64) LeSly
4. Peg Carter (ABEd ’54, TeachCert ’54, AM ’59)
5. Pam (AB ’84) and Dan (AB ’84) Grantham
6. Scott (BBA ’76) and Lisa (BS ’76) Higby with daughters Sydney and Megan
7. Ryan Liening, Frances Korsal
8. Robert Chambers II (BBA ’69, MBA ’71), Scott Chambers
9. Steve C. Grafton, president of the Alumni Association of U-M; Bob McGrath (BMus ’54)

MILESTONE REUNIONS
ANN ARBOR | OCTOBER 31–NOVEMBER 2, 2014
ANN ARBOR CAMPUS

Growing up on a farm in Illinois, Bob McGrath (BMus ’54)—better known as Bob Johnson for his decades-long tenure on television’s longest-running children’s program, Sesame Street—remembers when his family inherited a big, old upright piano from McGrath’s grandmother. He was six years old.

McGrath’s mom was an enthusiastic musician. “By the time my dad came in from the fields one day, I had learned ‘In the Good Old Summertime’, and my mom was off and running with her boy soprano, Bob,” McGrath said at the Milestone Reunions Weekend gala dinner October 31 (photo, above).

McGrath sang “all the way through grade and high school,” he said, and then “a wonderful thing happened.” An amateur music club provided him a weekly scholarship to a summer music camp near Chicago. At week’s end, distinguished music instructors asked McGrath his plans. “I’m all signed up to go to Illinois and become an engineer,” he said.

“You have ever thought of music?” they asked.

“I don’t know,” he said. “Can you make a living doing that sort of thing?”

They let on that sometimes, one could. McGrath was intrigued, and from then forward, his plans changed.

Inspired by a close school chum, F. Michael Scherer (AB ’54)—who was set to attend U-M like his father and uncle before him—McGrath enrolled for “four extraordinary years here.” He said, studying music and singing in the Men’s Glee Club. After graduations, McGrath moved to New York City.

He got his start as one of the original four human cast members on Sesame Street after bumping into a U-M fraternity brother, the late Dave Connell (BBA ’55, AM ’56), in front of Carnegie Hall one day. The show was holding auditions. A classically trained vocalist, McGrath had little interest at first, but “it took me like three minutes to see some of the films they’d put together and realize this was a very, very different show,” he said.

“Here we are, going into our 46th season of Sesame Street,” McGrath told the more than 200 dinner guests in the Taubman Biomedical Science Research building. “The show is now in 120 English-speaking countries and about 60 foreign co-productions.”

At Michigan, in addition to sharing his stories with milestone reunion celebrants in October, McGrath volunteered during the Michigan Difference campaign and guest-emsoked the Men’s Glee Club’s 150th anniversary in 2009. He faithfully supports the club and the School of Music, Theatre & Dance, helping students receive the kind of life-changing scholarships that altered his own plans so fundamentally during a week at music camp in the good old summertime, years ago.

McGrath lives in Teaneck, N.J., with his wife of 56 years. Ann. They have five grown children and eight grandchildren.