

“It changed my life.”



BSBA 2019

Gratitude from an Olin alum
to an impactful donor.

Logan Bash, BSBA 2019, said the road from his small Ohio town to a promising career with Walmart ran straight through WashU Olin Business School — the school gave him the skills and connections that made it possible for him to excel as a buyer for the megaretailer.

But that road would have been nearly impassable without the help of another Olin alum, Sarah Boles, BSBA 1980, MBA 1981, who provided scholarship funding that helped put a WashU education within Bash's reach.



In a full-circle moment recently, Bash reached out to Boles to let her know how much that opportunity continues to resonate in his life.

"I grew up in Appalachian Ohio, where opportunity often felt out of reach — the average household income in my hometown is \$26,000. I come from a long line of hard workers, but no one in my family had ever gone to college, let alone a school like WashU."

"You gave me the chance to attend WashU, not just as a student, but as someone who could fully focus on learning without the crushing weight of financial worry. Because of you, I graduated debt-free and was able to seize opportunities that I never dreamed possible."

"I've changed not just my life, but the entire trajectory of the Bash family."

For Boles, who has been sponsoring scholarships at WashU since 2010, Bash's email was an unexpected reminder of why she continues to support students at the university.

"Contributing to scholarships is the most effective way I can think of to invest in the future — for the betterment of our country, our planet, and civilization," she said.

OHIO TO OLIN TO WALMART

Bash grew up in Zanesville, Ohio, a small town east of Columbus. He first learned about WashU when football coach Larry Kindbom contacted him, marking the beginning of a recruitment journey in which Bash became excited about the university.

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Logan Bash
Buyer, Walmart Corporation

"I went on a visit, and thought, This is awesome — I could play football, and it's a great school," he said. "And then it clicked to me at some point: I should probably figure out what this place costs. I remember looking it up and just being heartbroken, thinking there's no way I could do that."

As an NCAA Division III school, WashU doesn't offer athletic scholarships. But Bash soon learned the school works with promising students to provide various types of financial aid. In Bash's case, that included a substantial scholarship from Boles.

A few years later, Bash had the chance to meet the person behind that generous assistance at a scholarship banquet.

"It was at that moment when I realized how impactful she had been," he said. "I thought, Wow! This woman went out of her way to give this money, to give me this opportunity."

That sense of gratitude has stayed with him throughout his professional career.

He went to work for a subsidiary of Walmart and has since moved up through the ranks, becoming a buyer for the company. His most recent promotion reminded him once again of the role that Boles had played in his success.

"I just felt so fortunate and grateful not only for what Sarah was able to provide for me, but for future generations of my family," Bash said. "I hope to one day be able to send my kids to a school like WashU. I hope to one day be able to do what Sarah did for me for other kids who don't have the means."

PAYING IT FORWARD

Boles said she has met with many recipients of her named scholarship over the years and has received notes of thanks from some of them, often around graduation time. But Bash was the first recipient to reach out to her years later.

She said she was impressed "on so many levels" by Bash's email.

"It touched my heart deeply," Boles said. "To hear someone his age understand that his experience will change his family's legacy reflects a mature perspective and sense of responsibility."

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Sarah Boles
William H. Danforth
Leadership Society

The scholarship had lifted the burden of worry about taking on substantial debt or a part-time job that might have interfered with studies and extracurriculars, Bash had noted.

Boles said that offering that relief was intentional: "It's a lot of work to be a full-time student. That alone is a full-time job. I'm blessed to be able to help."

Boles was particularly moved by Bash's intention to follow her example and support other students when he is able to do so:

"I'll never forget what you did for me, and I'll spend my life striving to pay it forward."

Of Bash, she said, "He articulated why I support scholarships. It can change a family, a community, and a legacy. It's how you spread hope, understanding, and light."

She encouraged others to similarly "pay it forward" in whatever way they can.

"Make a contribution at whatever level works for you. Every bit helps — it all has an impact," Boles said.