BEQUESTS

WHAT IS A BEQUEST?

A charitable bequest is a gift that comes from your estate and is designated through your will or trust. Most bequests are made in cash, but any type of property is eligible: stocks, bonds, real property, tangible personal property, and business interests. You can make a bequest to Swarthmore College by simply including language in your will or trust, leaving a specified amount or percentage of your estate to the College.

BENEFICIARY DESIGNATIONS

Another meaningful way to give is by designating Swarthmore as a beneficiary of a retirement plan, financial account, or life insurance policy. Assets such as individual retirement accounts, 401(k), 403(b), and certificate of deposit (CD) assets are often overlooked as potential charitable gifts. By designating Swarthmore as the full or partial beneficiary, the full value of the gift transfers tax-free upon your passing and provides your estate with a charitable tax deduction. To make this gift, please contact your financial institution or retirement plan administrator and complete their beneficiary designation form.

BENEFITS OF MAKING A BEQUEST

A bequest costs you nothing now yet gives you the satisfaction of knowing you have provided for future generations of Swarthmore students. You retain complete control and use of your assets during your lifetime. You have the flexibility to modify your bequest if your circumstances change. Gifts to Swarthmore from your estate are exempt from federal estate taxes.

If you inform the College of your plans, you will be honored as a member of the James A. Michener Legacy Circle. The Michener Legacy Circle honors individuals who have supported the College through estate gifts or life-income gifts. To show our gratitude, we invite members to special events – including receptions, lectures, and discussions – held virtually and on campus.

HOW TO MAKE A BEQUEST

A bequest to Swarthmore can be made for a fixed-dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, specific assets, or for all or a portion of what remains after bequests to your family. To make a gift to the College from your estate, add a codicil to your existing will, amend your current trust instrument, or sign a new will or living trust instrument.

Sample bequest language:

I give and devise to Swarthmore College (Tax ID #23-1352683), located in Swarthmore, PA, the sum of $____________ (or asset) to be used for its general support (or for the support of a specific fund or program).

PLANNING YOUR BEQUEST

When planning for a bequest, you will need to consider how you would like your gift to be used to benefit Swarthmore. Gifts can also establish an endowed fund that will last in perpetuity.

- An unrestricted bequest allows the College to determine how to use the funds based on a careful assessment of its most urgent needs. Unrestricted bequests are extremely valuable because they provide Swarthmore with the most flexibility in responding to the greatest needs of today and in the future. Gifts towards unrestricted and general use will go into the Swarthmore Fund.

- A restricted bequest directs your gift to a specific fund, area, or purpose that you are most passionate about. Because restricted gifts are specific, Swarthmore encourages donors considering a restricted bequest to speak with a member of the Office of Gift Planning about the appropriate language for the will or trust.
- An endowed fund provides philanthropic impact every year in perpetuity through an annual distribution, determined by the College's spending rule policy, to carry out the designated purpose of the fund. Please note: endowed funds have minimum required amounts depending on the designation. The Office of Gift Planning can assist if you are considering this type of bequest gift.

A LASTING LEGACY AND IMPACT

If you are considering establishing an endowed fund through your bequest, there are several possible purposes. Some of the most common options include:

- Academic programs and research
- Academic scholarships
- Endowed professorships and chairs
- Programmatic initiatives, like Chester Children's Chorus or Scott Arboretum

An endowed fund can carry your name, your family name, or the name of another person significant to you whom you would like to honor. Endowed funds are a wonderful way to make an everlasting impact on the many generations of Swarthmoreans to come.

INTERESTED IN SETTING UP AN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP THROUGH YOUR ESTATE?

- Contact the Office of Gift Planning to share your interests and learn about Swarthmore's long-term priorities.
- Finalize a revocable endowment agreement that establishes the blueprint for your fund.
- Contact your attorney or financial account administrator to update your beneficiary information.

LET US THANK YOU

If you have included Swarthmore in your estate plans, please let someone in our Office of Gift Planning know. We want to thank you for your generosity and kindness. We would also like to ensure that the purpose of your gift is clearly understood by the College and welcome you as a member of the James A. Michener Legacy Circle.

CONTACT US

The Office of Gift Planning is happy to discuss charitable giving options with you, such as a bequest, and help you determine which strategies will work best to meet your needs and goals.

swarthmore.giftplans.org

Renée P. Atkinson, CAP

Associate Vice President, Gift Planning

866-526-4438 | giftplanning@swarthmore.edu

 Document updated December 2025.

Swarthmore College, 500 College Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081 | Federal Tax ID#: 23-1352683