

THOSE  
WHO  
DREAM,  
DO.



AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
FOUNDATION

FY19 ANNUAL REPORT



It has been an unusual spring semester for Auburn University – and for the world – as we implemented social distancing and remote operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students completed the semester through online instruction, faculty utilized innovative methods of teaching, and most employees worked from home. It was a unique experience for all of us; and although we changed the manner in which we worked, we did not waver in our commitment to securing a sound future for Auburn University and expressing deep gratitude for the Auburn Family’s generosity.

The pandemic also has had a significant impact on our global economy, the implications of which we likely will see for some time. Nevertheless, this publication highlights the Auburn University Foundation’s fundraising efforts and financial position for FY19, and we are very pleased to report that we had a highly successful fiscal year. Through 86,843 gifts, the Auburn Family provided \$158,426,608 in support of the university, surpassing our goal of \$140 million.

Every gift from our alumni, friends, and corporate and foundation partners, regardless of its purpose, ultimately enhances our greatest asset – Auburn students. This report provides a glimpse into the profound impact your giving has on our students and the amazing educational experience for which Auburn is known.

With Jane’s retirement in June, this will be her final report to you of the activities associated with the Auburn University Foundation. She expresses her thanks for the honor of serving Auburn University and the privilege of working with members of the board of directors who bring invaluable expertise to bear on the important work of the foundation.

On behalf of the generations of students who not only will dream of, but also will create their own Auburn stories, we extend our sincere appreciation to you, our donors, for your generosity and dedication.

**Jane DiFolco Parker**  
Vice President for Development  
*Auburn University*

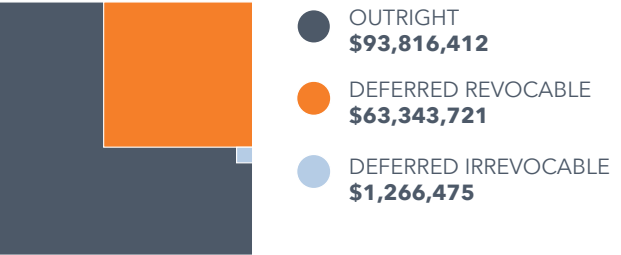
President  
*Auburn University Foundation*

**Benny M. LaRussa, Jr.**  
Chair  
*Auburn University Foundation*

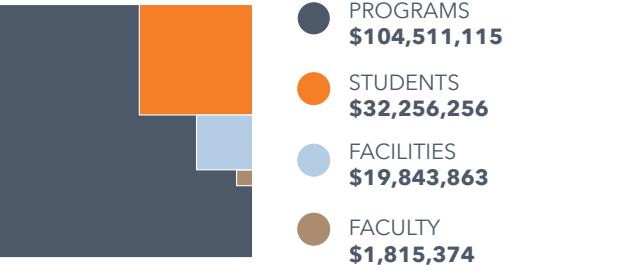
**FY19 TOTAL**  
**\$158,426,608**

**86,843** GIFTS

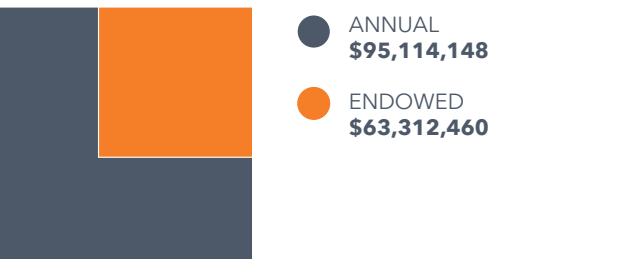
NEW GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS BY TYPE



NEW GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS BY AREA



ENDOWED VS ANNUAL



Throughout Auburn University’s rich history,  
one defining element has always remained — **THE AUBURN STUDENT.**



Portraits by SHANNA LOCKWOOD '09, '11

With different backgrounds, life experiences, and aspirations, our students are all distinctive. They represent the very best of Auburn – a competitive edge on the field and in the classroom, new opportunities after years of military service, the potential for knowledge and discovery, an education that once was only a dream, and experiences that enable our students to soar, literally and figuratively.

In these pages are just a few stories that demonstrate the Auburn Family’s generosity and the role it plays in fostering the patriotism, hard work, determination, and ingenuity of our students.

The Auburn University Foundation’s FY19 Annual Report celebrates the success of another fundraising year but, more importantly, reminds us of the ageless character, formidable spirit, and many faces of the Auburn student.



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ANNUAL FUND DONORS



ASHTON  
ALEXANDER

# THE CHAMPION

*Ashton Alexander had a childhood that was anything but conventional.*

Growing up in “the horse world” meant homeschooling and long hours at the local barn. She began riding at age 4. Her parents and trainers taught her the value of work – hard work. By 12, she was flying to a horse show by herself, becoming independent and self-sufficient.

The first 18 years of her life were spent in the equestrian community of Ocala, Florida. Developing into a fierce competitor, Ashton earned a treasure trove of junior equestrian titles from shows on the east and west coasts and states in between. At a young age, she already had attained some of the greatest achievements in the sport.

Her future was set. Or was it?

The equestrian world of junior and professional competition consisted of only individual pursuits. Ashton had never been part of a team. And she very much wanted to be.

Accepting an equestrian scholarship to attend Auburn provided that opportunity, but also meant stepping off her current path toward becoming a professional equestrian.

She never hesitated.

“You learn so many things about yourself and the world when you step outside of your comfort zone,” Ashton said. “I had never been in a real classroom before I came to Auburn, and I almost had a panic attack during that first class. I look back now and can’t believe how far I’ve come and all that I’ve experienced.”

Among her most memorable Auburn experiences is the team’s bid for a sixth national championship in 2019. Ashton recalls the pivotal moment that determined the outcome – a moment she had prepared for her whole life.

“I had hoped that it wouldn’t come down to me,” she said. “And maybe I could’ve accepted not winning my point if it were just about me. But I wasn’t going to let my teammates down. It was my last ride on the team, and I just wasn’t going to let them down.”

She scored the winning point that claimed the NCAA national championship title for Auburn – again. The win also secured another milestone for the team – the first time any equestrian program has completed a full season with no losses.

Among the team’s many followers, John and Kristie Thomas have given generously to Auburn’s equestrian facility upgrades because they believe in the champion spirit, strong work ethic, and bold determination that define Auburn’s equestrian team.

“For us, it starts with Coach Greg Williams and his staff, and their ability to recruit and inspire outstanding student athletes,” said John, president and CEO of Physicians Realty Trust. “They demonstrate their excellence in their ability to practice, study, maintain high GPAs, and earn six national championships.”

Ashton, who earned a degree in entrepreneurship and family business last year, is pursuing a master’s degree in adult education with a minor in sports management. She won’t be stepping back into the professional equestrian world after she graduates, however.

Being on a team and learning about other student athletes created new dreams for her and a love of other sports. She is ready for entirely new challenges, including working in the world of sports marketing for a major athletic franchise.

“I’m not completely abandoning my future as a professional in the equestrian world,” Ashton said. “That world is still there for me. But now I know there are some other things I want to do, too. And then maybe I’ll go back to the horse world and shake things up a bit.”

578  
STUDENT  
ATHLETES

22  
NCAA SPORTS  
AT AUBURN

“We believe that ‘to whom much has been given, much is expected.’ We’ve been very blessed and seek to share those blessings. ***The Auburn Family, its spirit, and The Auburn Creed draw our admiration*** and devotion to help sustain and grow the program. We just want what’s best for Auburn and these student athletes.”

**JOHN THOMAS**  
President and CEO  
Physicians Realty Trust



BEN  
BARRONTINE

# THE PATRIOT

*Ben Barrontine, a sergeant first class in the Alabama National Guard, comes from a long line of soldiers — and Auburn fans.*

After serving in the infantry and with a special operations unit, deploying all around the world, and fulfilling his ambition to serve, Ben realized a dream 10 years in the making — he enrolled at Auburn University.

“I’ll never forget my first day as a student,” he said. “I got here around 6:30 a.m. because I couldn’t sleep — I was so excited. Auburn was the only place I had ever wanted to go to college. As I walked down Donahue, the sun was coming up around campus. I stopped to take it in because it was absolutely perfect, just like I’d always imagined it would be.”

Generations of student veterans like Ben have walked Auburn’s campus, replacing their military rucksacks with backpacks. Described as nontraditional students, they are on average 10 to 15 years older than typical college students, and unlike most 18-year-olds, have garnered a lifetime of experiences before they walk into an Auburn classroom.

Ben’s first day encapsulates one of the extraordinary things about student veterans — they have a deep appreciation for the privilege of being at Auburn. Most of them have had a less-than-direct path to the university. Deployments, training, and family responsibilities often lead veterans to put their education on the back burner. Because of this, their gratitude for the Auburn student experience runs deep, but so does their need for extra support and resources.

That’s where the Auburn Veterans Resource Center (AVRC) comes in. The AVRC helps student veterans balance classes with families, jobs, and, for some, service-related trauma and disabilities. But it’s the unofficial role the center plays in bridging the gap between

their days of military service and their current lives at Auburn that resonates most with students like Ben.

“It’s easy for people to feel isolated when they’re surrounded by students who are a lot younger, with different life experiences, and who communicate so differently,” he said. “But once student veterans visit the center, they get it.”

And they’re not the only ones. Donors like U.S. Air Force veteran and aerospace engineering graduate Walt Woltosz, and his wife, Ginger, also recognize the distinctive needs of student veterans and the importance of resources uniquely tailored to them. The Woltoszes recently made a generous investment in the future of the AVRC and student veterans at Auburn.

“These men and women are my heroes,” Walt said. “You just have to meet them one time to know there’s something special about them, about their community, and their commitment to Auburn and to our country.”

Ben will graduate in May and embark on an invitation-only opportunity — training to work in federal law enforcement. Some of his most meaningful experiences are those from his time on the Plains. Last year, he welcomed his father, a retired U.S. Army colonel with more than 30 years of service, into the ranks of student veterans at Auburn.

“My dad’s service has had a huge impact on me,” Ben said. “He was stationed at the Pentagon on 9/11, so obviously that really affected me as a kid. But also, I grew up wanting to be G.I. Joe and my favorite movie was John Wayne’s ‘Green Beret.’ A lot of that was because of my dad.”

The elder Barrontine is pursuing an Executive MBA through the Harbert College of Business and will graduate in 2021. He was present when Ben was honored as the “Game Day Hero” during the 2019 Iron Bowl.

“We were on the field together — father and son,” he said. “Both of us veterans and both of us Auburn students. It was one of those experiences I’ll never forget.”

400  
STUDENT  
VETERANS  
AT AUBURN

RANKED IN TOP  
5%  
OF BEST  
COLLEGES FOR  
VETERANS

“Ginger and I believe ***we owe our student veterans a debt of gratitude***, and our investment in Auburn’s Veterans Resource Center allows us to support them the way they’ve supported so many through their military service.”

**WALT WOLTOSZ ‘69, ‘77**  
Chairman and  
Retired President & CEO  
*Simulations Plus, Inc.*



SHELBY  
OSBURN

# THE INNOVATOR

*Shelby Osburn chases innovation in the same lab where she first fell in love with scientific discovery as an undergraduate student.*

A researcher in the Molecular and Applied Sciences Laboratory in Auburn’s School of Kinesiology, Shelby becomes completely animated when she talks about her research into the Long Interspersed Nuclear Element-1 or LINE-1 gene.

“LINE-1 is a very interesting gene,” explained the Oxford, Alabama native. “When you think about genes, you think about them in terms of being in charge of making you who you are – you get a copy from your mom and a copy from your dad. Those are protein coding genes. But this LINE-1 gene – it’s different.”

Shelby, a doctoral student in exercise physiology, is committed to thoroughly exploring this complicated gene, often linked to muscle degeneration. Her research examines the role exercise can play in combatting muscle loss brought on by LINE-1. Her pursuit is ambitious and has the potential to improve the quality of life and longevity of the world’s aging population.

People lose muscle mass at a consistent rate as they age. Because muscles are responsible for moving, getting out of the chair, and other basic tasks, losing even a moderate amount of muscle mass could impair the ability to do these daily tasks.

“We know this gene increases in muscle tissue with age, and we think it’s contributing to muscle loss and tissue inflammation that breaks down muscle proteins,” Shelby said. “The focus of my dissertation is to do a life-long exercise study, hoping to prove that in addition to being good for you throughout your life, exercise as you age produces a better quality of life.”

Mike Roberts, associate professor in the School of Kinesiology, directs the laboratory in which students like Shelby find practical solutions for today’s issues.

“What inspires me and what I believe also inspires students like Shelby is a pursuit of truth,” he said. “The observations we make here lead to bigger discoveries and findings. And that leads to real solutions for people; and then to more research.”

Shelby would not be forging the path she is on today had she not had the opportunity to pursue research experiences as an undergraduate. Student research opportunities are essential to shaping future discovery leaders, as well as advancing the pursuit of knowledge across the university.

These experiences often are possible because of the generosity of donors like Compound Solutions, Inc., the Center for Applied Health Sciences, and JUVN3 Holdings, LLC. These companies work together to research, develop, and bring to market products with real-world benefits for people in the areas of health, nutrition, and fitness.

Their investment in the Molecular and Applied Sciences Laboratory is empowering Auburn to produce future scientists whose quest for innovation changes lives.

“Our philosophy incorporates our desire to make a difference in the world and in our industry,” said Dr. Tim Ziegenfuss, chief scientific officer and partner of the Center for Applied Health Sciences and JUVN3 Holdings, LLC. “For us, that includes collaborating with partners like Auburn in the research domain as we continue to develop ingredients and solutions that help us improve health and wellness for people.”

4,765  
GRADUATE STUDENTS

1,893  
GRADUATE DEGREES  
AWARDED LAST YEAR

“My hope is that our collaboration with Dr. Roberts and his students will *inspire unending curiosity*, specifically for the science we’re focusing on now, but also for science in general. If students stay curious and passionate about science, they’re going to be able to make a huge impact on the world they live in.”

**DR. HECTOR LOPEZ**  
Chief Medical Officer and Partner  
Center for Applied Health Sciences  
and JUVN3 Holdings, LLC



JARIOUS  
AVERY

# THE TRAILBLAZER

*Jarious Avery grew up too quickly.*

That's what happens when you're orphaned at age 11. But he's not the type to feel sorry for himself. In fact, the Auburn University freshman and biomedical sciences major credits that defining experience with giving him the determination to make his dreams come true.

"You just can't stay sad for the rest of your life," Jarious said. "Don't get me wrong, you have to grieve, but once you get past that, you have to keep going. You have to live your life."

He grew up in Gadsden, Alabama. After his mom died, he moved in with his older brother, AJ, a welder by trade and his younger brother's caregiver by necessity. It was AJ who raised Jarious from then on. And it was AJ who helped him move into his dorm room in Auburn last summer.

"AJ was proud when I told him about receiving scholarships to Auburn, but I don't think it really hit him until we got here," Jarious said. "He didn't want to leave. He told me, 'I want you to make us proud.' But then he looked at me and said, 'No, what I hope is that you just make yourself happy, okay?'"

In the years before coming to Auburn, Jarious began his pursuit of happiness with vague dreams of attending college and pursuing a career in medicine. As a first-generation college student, he was alone in the complicated process, navigating every decision by himself – from which school to attend to admission requirements and financial aid possibilities. He weighed many options and then set his course for Auburn.

But college is expensive. Without financial aid, it is often outside the grasp of students like Jarious.

Donors, including Wendy and Ed Thomas, are making dreams come true for students with financial need. Ed, a 1996 Auburn graduate, is the Charles W. Barkley Endowed Professor of Physics and associate dean for research and graduate studies in the College of Sciences and Mathematics. The Thomases created a scholarship for underrepresented students in the college, with the goal of advancing diversity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, or STEM, fields.

"I've been involved in the work of increasing minority representation and diversity in physics and STEM fields for years," Ed said. "We wanted to target students who have been traditionally underrepresented in STEM because it's so important to grow that cadre of students in these fields."

Jarious received eight scholarships to start his college career and has earned even more since then. He studies. He works hard. But he also is having the time of his life. He has joined multiple campus clubs, works in his college's Office of Inclusion and Diversity, and seeks out study abroad and undergraduate research opportunities.

For someone who has become accustomed to carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders, Jarious chooses laughter and joy. In short, Jarious is grateful for his life and for his opportunity to be at Auburn.

"I want what everyone wants – a career, a home, a family," he said. "But I also want to set an example for my nieces and nephews and other kids from Gadsden and all over. I want to show them that you can come from a situation that might be hard, but you can make it what you want it to be. You can make a new life for yourself."

184  
NEW SCHOLARSHIPS  
CREATED IN FY19

67%  
OF FRESHMEN  
RECEIVED A  
SCHOLARSHIP  
OR GRANT

"Attending a university is challenging for a lot of students. We want them to be able to *focus on what's important — getting their education* — and not on juggling their studies with working so they can pay for tuition."

**DR. ED THOMAS '96**

Charles W. Barkley Endowed Professor of Physics  
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies  
*College of Sciences and Mathematics*



THE

# COMPETITORS

*Kendall Higdon and Caitlyn Miller have flown the friendly skies around Auburn for years.*

What they hadn't done, until last summer, was compete as a team in a four-day, 2,400-mile air race.

Known as the pinnacle of women's air racing, the annual Air Race Classic hosted more than 50 teams. And Auburn's War Eagle Women's Orange team finished second-place overall and first among college teams.

But the race was more than just a competition for the recent graduates of Auburn University's professional flight program.

"I wasn't expecting the level of camaraderie or the opportunities to ask so many women aviators about their experiences and careers," Caitlyn said. "It was incredible to see women from all backgrounds and how aviation has played such a pivotal role in their lives."

For Kendall, who had competed in the race once before, this time was very different.

"I went into it more comfortable, more competitive, and more focused, especially being supported so strongly by the Auburn Family," she said. "We wanted to do well and show them that their support was worth it and really have it pay off."

Their race was made possible, in part, by 163 generous donors who participated in Tiger Giving Day, Auburn's 24-hour day of giving, held in February.

Among these donors is Nelda Lee, a pioneer in aviation and a veteran of the Air Race Classic. In 1969, she became only the second woman to receive an Auburn degree in aerospace engineering. She blazed trails in aviation as a McDonnell Douglas Corp., now Boeing, design and flight test engineer

for 45 years, racking up firsts, including the distinction of being the first woman to record flying time in an F-15.

She's been there, done that. That's why she wanted to help Caitlyn and Kendall seize their opportunity to do the same.

"I knew firsthand what these two women were about to undertake," Nelda said. "I knew their dreams, goals, expectations, shortfalls, and joy. So, when this appeared as a Tiger Giving Day project, I was glad to help and felt fortunate that I was able to give."

The significance of Nelda's involvement was not lost on Caitlyn and Kendall. They already were huge fans.

"She's an incredible role model," Caitlyn said. "I knew who she was from my first day in the program. Ms. Lee has had such an impact on so many people. We just couldn't be more thankful for her support."

Since graduation in 2018 and 2019 respectively, Kendall and Caitlyn have continued their training at Auburn, working as certified flight instructors while they prepare to pursue careers as commercial airline pilots.

As Nelda has been for them, Caitlyn and Kendall recognize that they have the opportunity to inspire countless young girls.

"Even if they don't want to pursue aviation as a career, I think it can be a real light for them to see women in typically male-dominated fields having so much fun and doing well," Caitlyn said.

"We take being role models very seriously," said Kendall. "We want to set a good example and show young girls that this is attainable. It's not like wanting to be a Disney princess. Being a pilot is something you can actually do. But I guess you can still hold on to all the qualities of a princess, too. They're not mutually exclusive."

3,807

TIGER GIVING  
DAY DONORS

31

PROJECTS  
FULLY FUNDED  
IN FY19

"Caitlyn and Kendall were undertaking a lot more than flying in an air race. They were representing Auburn and serving as ambassadors for all of us. As an alumna and woman in aviation, ***I wanted them to know we all were supporting their endeavors.***"

**NELDA LEE '69**  
Retired Design and  
Flight Test Engineer  
Boeing

KENDALL  
HIGDON

CAITLYN  
MILLER



# THE FAMILY

## ANNUAL FUND FY19 TOTAL

\$5,260,960

+9.6% OVER FY18

22,667

DONORS

5,400

FIRST-TIME  
DONORS

16,396

ALUMNI  
DONORS

+35%

NEW ALUMNI  
DONORS

## ANNUAL FUND: 5-YEAR GROWTH

FY19	\$5,260,960
FY18	\$4,798,962
FY17	\$4,306,214
FY16	\$3,498,354
FY15	\$2,180,455

*The Auburn Family's loyalty and generosity are the foundation of the unique student experience found only at Auburn.*

Through the Annual Fund, donors – who make gifts of less than \$25,000 – provide consistent support for Auburn students, faculty, and programs.

Each year, loyal members of the Auburn Family support the university through gifts of all sizes. These annual gifts not only demonstrate the dedication of our alumni and friends, but also provide vital resources for a multitude of initiatives and programs that are the foundation of the unique Auburn student experience. Through online contributions, the student call center, and effective appeals highlighting the positive impact of philanthropy, donors invested in a variety of areas across campus. In FY19, gifts to the Annual Fund totaled \$5,260,960 from 22,667 donors, including 5,400 new donors.

ANNUAL FUND  
HAS EXPERIENCED

141%

GROWTH SINCE FY15

18%

MORE DONORS  
THAN FY18

“A big part of my personal Auburn experience is being a student caller in Auburn’s Call Center for the past two years. I always enjoy talking to our alumni and hearing the stories and memories of their time at Auburn. ***I am amazed at their generosity and so proud to see how excited they are to support our students*** through their gifts to the university.”

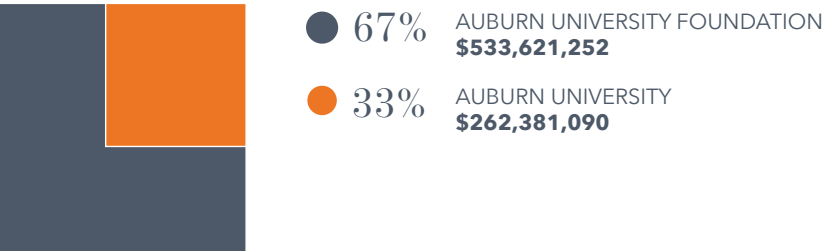
**BROOKE BAYUGA**  
Junior  
School of Nursing

# FY19 ENDOWMENT

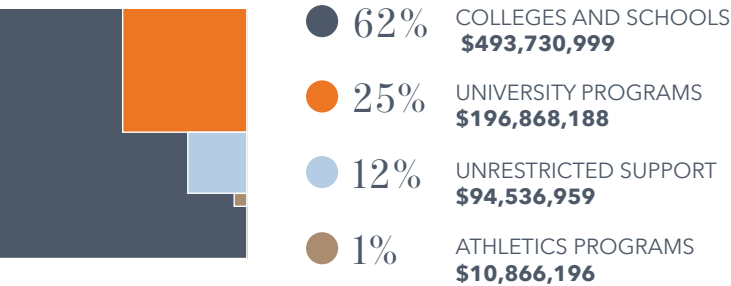
## ENDOWMENT VALUE



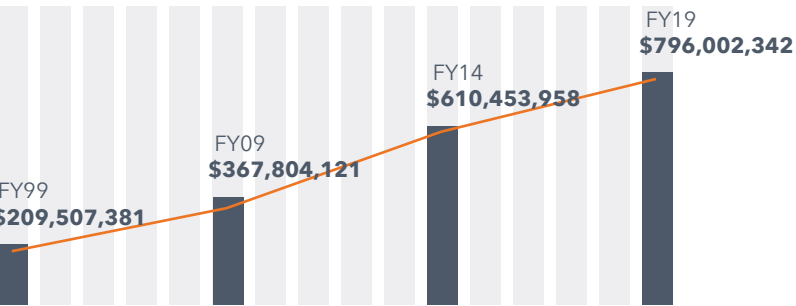
## SHARE OF ENDOWMENT PORTFOLIO VALUE



## SHARE OF ENDOWMENT PORTFOLIO VALUE BY AREA



## ENDOWMENT PORTFOLIO VALUE GROWTH OVER 20 YEARS

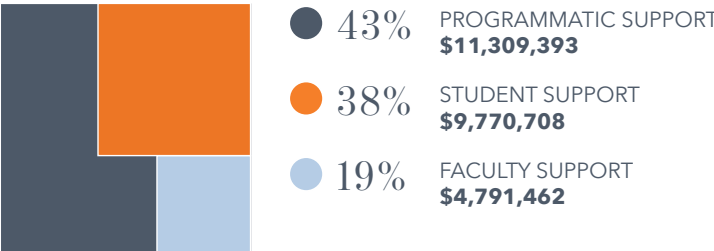


As the source of permanent, self-sustaining funding, gifts to establish endowments provide great opportunity for Auburn. Because these funds are invested and the generated income is used to support the university, endowments produce stable and flexible support for students, programs, and faculty.

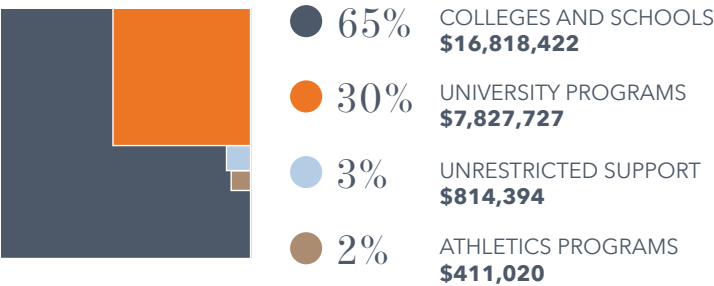
## ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION



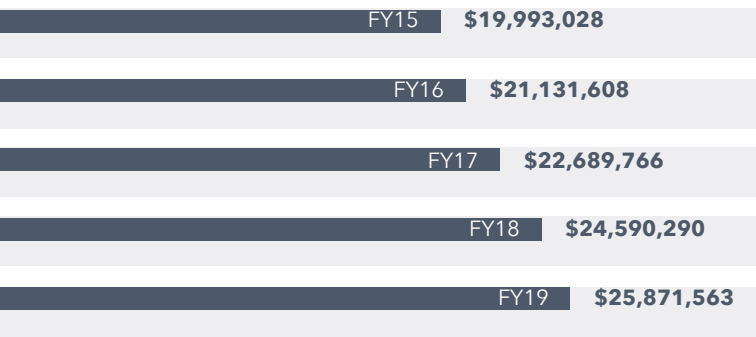
## ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION BY DESIGNATED PURPOSE



## ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION BY DESIGNATED AREA



## ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION: 5-YEAR IMPACT



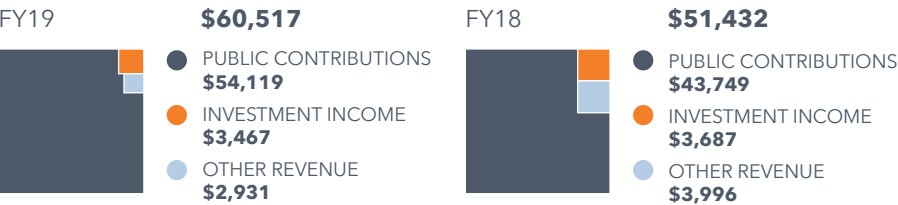
# FY19 FINANCIALS

The following represents the condensed financials for the fiscal years ending Sept. 30, 2019 and 2018, respectively, for the Auburn University Foundation and the Auburn University Real Estate Foundation, Inc. The consolidated financials were audited by Warren Averett, LLC of Montgomery, Alabama, and the firm issued an unmodified opinion dated December 17, 2019.

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF THE FOUNDATION'S FINANCIAL POSITION (in thousands)

	FY19	FY18
TOTAL ASSETS	\$687,846	\$675,514
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$34,015	\$32,634
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$653,831	\$642,880
INVESTMENT GAINS (LOSSES)	\$6,753	\$30,591
TOTAL CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	\$10,951	\$11,199

## REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT (in thousands)



## EXPENSES (in thousands)



# BOARD

Chair  
**Benny M. LaRussa, Jr. '82**  
CEO  
Sterling Capital Management

Vice Chair  
Chair, Investment Committee  
**Cheryl L. Casey '83**  
Senior Vice President (retired)  
Dreyfus Investments

President  
**Jane DiFolco Parker**  
Vice President for Development  
Auburn University

Treasurer  
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President & COO (retired)  
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Chair, Audit Committee  
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Quality, Risk, and Regulatory  
KPMG, LLP

Chair, Directorship Committee  
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Owner & Managing Partner  
Campbell Wealth Management

Chair, Development Committee  
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Owner and President (retired)  
Central Alabama Nursing Service

Chair, Auburn University  
Real Estate Foundation, Inc.  
**Steven R. (Steve) Spencer '78**  
President  
Economic Development Partnership  
of Alabama

EX OFFICIO  
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President, Auburn University

**Carl A. Stockton**  
Chancellor, Auburn  
University at Montgomery

**Van Henley '80**  
President, Auburn Alumni  
Association

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**Leslee Belluchie '83**  
**Kerry Bradley '79**

**Steve Cates '85**  
**Bruce Donnellan '76**  
**Ronald (Ron) Dykes '69**  
**Sharlene Reed Evans '86**  
**Javier Goizueta '81**

**Gregory L. Heston '85**  
**James M. (Jim) Hoskins '81**  
**Paul Jacobson '94**  
**John A. Jernigan, M.D. '75**

**Olivia Owen '77**  
**Gerald W. Smith '61**  
**Beth Stukes**  
**Walter S. (Walt) Woltosz '69**

BOARD SUPPORT  
**Wanda M. Sperow**  
Foundation Secretary  
**Laurel D. Hendrix '98**  
Foundation Assistant Secretary  
**Regena B. (Gena) Isbell '84, CPA**  
Foundation Assistant Treasurer  
**Shauna Monroe '03**  
Foundation Assistant Treasurer  
**Mark R. Thomson, CPA**  
Foundation Assistant Treasurer

