A Scholarship Drive in honor of David M. Becker, associate dean for external relations and the Joseph H. Zumbalen Professor Emeritus of the Law of Property, encapsulates his deep commitment to his students and his ability to inspire others to pay it forward. Alan Bornstein, JD ’81, a partner at Dentons LLP in St. Louis and member of the law school’s National Council, led the Becker 50th Scholarship Initiative.

This Initiative is an extension of the law school’s 2009 Scholarship Initiative to raise $7.5 million in gifts and pledges by 2014. That successful effort was co-chaired by National Council members Maury Poscover, JD ’69, a partner at Husch Blackwell LLP, and Howard Cayne, JD ’79, a partner at Arnold & Porter LLP in Washington, D.C. In 2011, the Becker Scholarship Initiative Committee, backed by the 200 alumni members of the “Becker Brigade,” decided to link the celebration of their beloved professor to the scholarship drive. Becker himself was firmly behind the move, stressing that any plans to honor him should also benefit students. Including Becker gifts, the scholarship gifts and pledges now exceed $8 million.

“Combined with our emphasis on alumni volunteerism, the Becker 50th Scholarship Initiative is a natural way to honor David,” Bornstein says. “Supporting students in achieving success, including through financial support, has long been near and dear to David.”

The law school’s current scholarship aid goal, which is part of the law school’s Leading Together: The Campaign for Washington University, is to build on this strong foundation and raise $18 million for student programming, including scholarships and financial aid.

“Our ability to attract and support exceptional students is based, to a large extent, on the funds available for financial aid,” says Kent Syverud, dean and the Ethan A.H. Distinguished University Professor. “We are grateful to the generosity of alumni and the greater law school community in helping provide vital resources for scholarship support.”

Scholarship support is increasingly important as graduating law students, on average, face a debt load of $100,000. Currently, more than 75 percent of students at the law school receive merit- or merit/need-based scholarships, which are guaranteed for three years.

Through the years, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends have contributed to a total of 113 endowed scholarships at the law school. During the 2012–13 academic year, these endowed scholarships benefited 133 law students.

The Scholars in Law Program offers the opportunity to sponsor a named scholarship at the law school on an annual basis, and additional opportunities are available to support students for summer and externship opportunities.

The scholarship drive supports current students in their pursuit of an outstanding legal education.