

# 1870 Society Newsletter

News for 1870 Society members  
and friends of Syracuse University

## DONOR PROFILE: VISHAL SHUKLA '89

# Sharing the Importance of Education



Vishal Shukla '89 had the good fortune of growing up in a family that stressed the value of education. Understanding the importance of learning gave him a solid foundation to build upon, and it led him to begin thinking about laying a similar bedrock for future students in the College of Engineering and Computer Science. Through a gift to the Forever Orange Campaign, which closed Dec. 31, 2024, Shukla is honoring his parents and their emphasis on education by establishing scholarships in their names to benefit future students.

"I wanted to do something with my estate that would add value," says Shukla.

“ I thought back to the benefits and what I got out of being at Syracuse University for four years. Providing other people with the opportunity to do the same would be a great way to make a difference.”

*Continued inside →*

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*Continued from cover*



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The values instilled in Shukla by his parents are at the core of all he has attained, and his gift will ensure those principles continue to ripple through to future generations. For aspiring engineers and their families, a scholarship can be more akin to lowering a drawbridge than opening a door.

Reducing barriers for brilliant young students can have a long-lasting and far-reaching impact.

"I'd like to think that one kid, that might not have been able to stay, got a scholarship and then went out and did something that changed the

world," says Shukla. "If you're lucky enough to have a good career, you can pass those values on to your kids. It's ongoing."

It is likely the chance Shukla is giving to young talent will have a quantifiable impact for years to come.

"It's incredible to think what our alumni base could be over the next few decades. I'd love to help bring that opportunity to future students," says Shukla.

## → MAKE AN IMPACT ON FUTURE SYRACUSE STUDENTS

Like Vishal, you can make a difference in the lives of students by including Syracuse University in your estate plans. If you would like to learn how, please contact our Office of Gift Planning at **888.352.9535** or [giftplan@syr.edu](mailto:giftplan@syr.edu) to get started.

## COMMENCEMENT 2025



Syracuse University's 2025 Commencement Weekend includes school and college convocations, the University-wide Commencement ceremony and other celebratory events. The full schedule of Commencement Weekend events can be found at [commencement.syr.edu](http://commencement.syr.edu)

## CELEBRATING 'CUSE GIVING DAY—ONE DAY FOR ORANGE

The global Syracuse University community united on March 27, 2025 for Giving Day. More than 7,200 donors from all 50 states and a dozen countries participated, with the classes of 2025, 2024 and 2023 topping the donor leaderboard. In Schine Student Center, 38 student organizations tabled to raise awareness for their projects while 15 live shows co-hosted by student broadcasters helped showcase how gifts are used. Thank you to everyone who made our One Day for Orange annual giving day a resounding success!





# ESTATE PLANNING: IS DOING IT YOURSELF RIGHT FOR YOU?

Estate planning usually conjures up visions of costly consultations with lawyers, mountains of paperwork, complex questions, and lots of decisions, many of which can feel overwhelming. Today, online services offer a fast and affordable way to create wills, trusts, and other essential estate planning documents. But are these do-it-yourself solutions right for you?

## Cost-effectiveness and Convenience

Typically, online estate planning services guide you through a series of questions about your heirs, beneficiaries, and assets, and your wishes for how your estate is to be distributed. The service then generates legal documents like wills, living trusts, power of attorney forms, and living wills for you. Compared to traditional lawyers, these services are significantly less expensive. Some of these resources, such as our partnership with Giving Docs, provide these services for free! Online services allow you to complete the process any time you choose, from the comfort of your home, and at your own pace.

## Limitations to Consider

While online estate planning services are convenient, there are limitations. The services typically do not offer legal advice specific to your situation. Many include a warning that complex estates with significant assets or unique family dynamics require a lawyer's expertise. Here are some ideas you might think about to help move your planning forward and help you determine if an online service is sufficient:

- **What has changed in your life?** Marital status, new or changed, ownership of assets or entities, children or grandchildren born, or loved ones who have passed, or changes in personal health conditions could all impact long term plans.
- **Does it provide for any special needs your loved ones may have?** Does it minimize taxes and name a capable executor to oversee your affairs?
- **Do you have a health care proxy?** Have you given directions to be followed in case you become incapacitated and can't make decisions for yourself?

- **How much of your savings and investments will you need to maintain the lifestyle you envision?** When will you need them? Have you planned ahead for required minimum distributions and the taxes associated?
- **How will you support the people, institutions and causes important to you?** Have you considered the right plan to make your goals a reality?

You should carefully evaluate whether your circumstances require the advice of a professional to ensure everything is handled correctly. Additionally, some online wills may not be valid in all states, so it is crucial to confirm compliance with your local laws.

## Follow Through

Remember: while online services can produce legal documents, you will still need to review, sign, and execute these documents, often before witnesses and sometimes with the assistance of a Notary Public. To be certain that your plans are carried out as you intend, you will need to ensure that your assets are properly titled, and beneficiary designations are appropriate. You will also need to consider how to manage your digital assets, including online financial holdings and social media accounts. Some online services offer add-ons for digital asset management, but it is important to understand the limitations of these features.

## Some Downsides

Let's be honest: completing your estate plan can be a lot of work. There are many decisions and sometimes difficult choices to be made. When using an online service, it can be tempting to procrastinate and put off your estate plan for another day.

Online estate planning services offer a valuable tool for creating basic wills and other documents. However, they should not be a substitute for professional legal advice in complex situations. For example, providing for relatives with special needs or for minors requires precise documentation to ensure they are protected. Carefully consider your needs and the limitations of these services. For a comprehensive estate plan, consulting an experienced estate planning attorney may be the wisest choice.



## Leave Your Legacy

To learn more about gift planning ideas—such as naming Syracuse University as a beneficiary of your bank, certificate of deposit, or brokerage account, please contact us at [GiftPlan@syr.edu](mailto:GiftPlan@syr.edu) or **888-352-9535**.



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## The 1870 Society

Your planned gift to Syracuse University will have a strong and lasting impact on preserving the University's cherished past while securing its bright future. To properly thank you and welcome you as an 1870 Society member, and ensure we understand how you'd like Syracuse University to use your gift, please let us know of your bequest intentions. If you'd like to remain anonymous, we will gladly honor your request.