“Look what happens when you plant the right seed,” said Provost James Staros at the dedication of the Louis & Hilda Greenbaum Gallery and Louis S. Greenbaum Classroom.

“Professor Louis Greenbaum founded the first Honors Program in 1960. Now, we have Commonwealth Honors College and the Residential Community,” he said.

Louis Greenbaum was a professor of history at UMass from 1955 to 1992 and co-founded the Honors Program with the late Professor of History Howard Quint. Greenbaum served as the program’s first director and has dedicated sixty years to supporting undergraduate education at UMass. Professor Emeritus Greenbaum and his wife Hilda made a $250,000 donation in support of the Residential Community, which CHC Interim Dean Daniel Gordon noted is “one of the largest donations a faculty member has ever given back to the University.”
In addition to extending gratitude to the Greenbaums, Gordon, also a professor of history, highlighted the close relationship between the career tracks of the two men and between their families. Gordon was hired in the history department to replace Greenbaum, as both specialized in French history. Over the years, the two also found many other intersections among their family members, including a shared interest in the education of talented undergraduates. Gordon also thanked the history department for decades of support for honors education.

Joye Bowman, chair of the history department, said that Greenbaum’s legacy is still vibrant more than twenty years after his retirement. She noted that many alumni from the 1960s through 1990s say that they wouldn’t be where they are today without Professor Greenbaum because he challenged students to work hard and accept new points of view.

“It’s easy to say that I am humbled by these kind words,” remarked Greenbaum. “The Honors Program was embraced by the campus, and that support has not flagged in fifty years.”

Greenbaum said that CHC and the Residential Community is the best investment made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to support thousands of future leaders. He acknowledged the joy he experienced in the classroom and serving on the UMass faculty for thirty-seven years.

“After all is said and done, it is the students that matter the most,” said Greenbaum, “We have students as good as those at Harvard, but they are unique in one respect: that is gratitude.”

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