Without the dollars that their alumni contribute each year, America's privately supported educational institutions would be in serious difficulty today. And the same would be true of the nation's publicly supported institutions, without the support of alumni in legislatures and elections at which appropriations or bond issues are at stake.

For the private institutions, the financial support received from individual alumni often means the difference between an adequate or superior faculty and one that is underpaid and understaffed; between a thriving scholarship program and virtually none at all; between well-equipped laboratories and obsolete, crowded ones. For tax-supported institutions, which in growing numbers are turning to their alumni for direct financial support, such aid makes it possible to give scholarships, grant loans to needy students, build such buildings as student unions, and carry on research for which legislative appropriations do not provide.

To gain an idea of the scope of the support which alumni give—and of how much that is worthwhile in American education depends upon it—consider this statistic, unearthed in a current survey of 1,144 schools, junior colleges, colleges, and universities in the United States and Canada: in just twelve months, alumni gave their alma maters more than $199 million. They were the largest single source of gifts.

Nor was this the kind of support that is given once, perhaps as the result of a high-pressure fund drive, and never heard of again. Alumni tend to give funds regularly. In the past year, they contributed $45.5 million, on an annual gift basis, to the 1,144 institutions surveyed. To realize that much annual income from investments in blue-chip stocks, the institutions would have needed over 1.2 billion more dollars in endowment funds than they actually possessed.

And-money from alumni is a powerful magnet: it draws more. Not only have more than eighty business corporations, led in 1,954 by General Electric, established the happy custom of matching, dollar for dollar, the gifts that their employees (and sometimes their employees' wives) give to their alma maters; alumni giving is also a measure applied by many business men and by philanthropic foundations in determining how productive their organizations' gifts to an educational institution are likely to be. Thus alumni giving, as Gordon K. Chalmers, the late president of Kenyon College, described it, is "the very rock on which all other giving must rest. Gifts from outside the family depend largely—sometimes wholly—on the degree of alumni support."

The "degree of alumni support" is gauged not by dollars alone. The percentage of alumni who are regular givers is also a key. And here the record is not as dazzling as the dollar figures imply.

Nationwide, only one in five alumni of colleges, universities, and prep schools gives to his annual alumni
received more of it from their alumni than
now education's strongest financial rampart

fund. The actual figure last year was 20.9 per cent. Allowing
for the inevitable few who are disenchanted with their
alma maters' cause,* and for those who spurn all fund
solicitations, sometimes with heavy scorn,† and for those
whom legitimate reasons prevent from giving financial
aid,§ the participation figure is still low.

WHY? Perhaps because the non-participants imagine
their institutions to be adequately financed.
(Virtually without exception, in both private and
tax-supported institutions, this is—sadly—not so.) Perhaps because they believe their small gift—a dollar, or
five, or ten—will be insignificant. (Again, most emphati-
cally, not so. Multiply the 5,223,240 alumni who gave
nothing to their alma maters last year by as little as one
dollar each, and the figure still comes to thousands of
additional scholarships for deserving students or sub-
stantial pay increases for thousands of teachers who may,
at this moment, be debating whether they can afford to
continue teaching next year.)

By raising the percentage of participation in alumni
fund drives, alumni can materially improve their alma
maters' standing. That dramatic increases in participation
can be brought about, and quickly, is demonstrated by
the case of Wofford College, a small institution in South
Carolina. Until several years ago, Wofford received
annual gifts from only 12 per cent of its 5,750 alumni.
Then Roger Milliken, a textile manufacturer and a Wof-
ford trustee, issued a challenge: for every percentage-
point increase over 12 percent, he'd give $1,000. After the
alumni were finished, Mr. Milliken cheerfully turned over
a check for $62,000. Wofford's alumni had raised their
participation in the annual fund to 74.4 percent—a new
national record.

"It was a remarkable performance," observed the
American Alumni Council. "Its impact on Wofford will
be felt for many years to come."

And what Wofford's alumni could do, your institution's
alumni could probably do, too.

* Wrote one alumnus: "I see that Stanford is making great prog-
ress. However, I am opposed to progress in any form. Therefore I
am not sending you any money."
† A man in Memphis, Tennessee, regularly sent Baylor University
a check signed "U. R. Stuck."
§ In her fund reply envelope, a Kansas alumna once sent, without
comment, her household bills for the month.

memo: from Wives
to Husbands

► Women's colleges, as a group, have had a unique
problem in fund-raising—and they wish they knew how
to solve it.

The loyalty of their alumnae in contributing money
each year—an average of 41.2 per cent took part in 1959
—is nearly double the national average for all universi-
ties, colleges, junior colleges, and privately supported
secondary schools. But the size of the typical gift is often
smaller than one might expect.

Why? The alumnae say that while husbands obviously
place a high value on the products of the women's col-
leges, many underestimate the importance of giving wom-
en's colleges the same degree of support they accord their
own alma maters. This, some guess, is a holdover from
the days when higher education for women was regarded
as a luxury, while higher education for men was consid-
ered a sine qua non for business and professional careers.

As a result, again considering the average, women's
colleges must continue to cover much of their operating
expense from tuition fees. Such fees are generally higher
than those charged by men's or coeducational institutions,
and the women's colleges are worried about the social and
intellectual implications of this fact. They have no desire

Since contributions to education appear to be one area
of family budgets still controlled largely by men, the
alumnae hope that husbands will take serious note of the
women's colleges' claim to a larger share of it. They may
be starting to do so: from 1958 to 1959, the average gift
to women's colleges rose 22.4 per cent. But it still trails
the average gift to men's colleges, private universities, and
professional schools. 