Randee S. Fieselmann (70BA, 72MA, 01PhD) and John F. Fieselmann (68BS, 72MD) believe in giving back—and they have done so generously at the University of Iowa. The Iowa Citians have invested in causes close to their hearts, including medicine and art, and are longtime museum supporters. They recently made a $250,000 gift to the fund for rebuilding the UI Stanley Museum of Art that will help support a new gallery space. Here, the couple explains what inspires their visionary giving to the museum:

Q. WHY GIVE BACK TO THE ARTS?
Randee: We’ve always liked the message from Matthew 6: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” In other words, who we really are and what we really care about is directly connected to how we spend our money. One of the first things we discovered that we had in common was the love of art. It was one of the sparks that ignited our love for each other.

John: The summer after we married, we took advantage of a university-sponsored charter flight to Europe and spent the summer camping in a tiny tent and cooking on a single burner stove. Our itinerary was planned around the artists whose works we wanted to see, especially Italian and German Renaissance and Dutch masters. We saw London and Paris and traveled throughout Germany, Austria, Italy, and Greece, ending up in Belgium and Amsterdam. We camped for 70 nights. Since that summer, our travel has been mostly directed toward this shared passion, especially Western art of Europe and the United States. If our hearts beat faster because of art, then we want to give to the arts.

Q. HOW HAS ART SHAPED YOUR LIVES?
John: Whenever my family visited a city, a first stop was the art museum. My father also was a doctor, and he subscribed to the Journal of the American Medical Association, which always featured a work of art on the cover. It was tradition for him to show my sister and me the featured work and to ask questions and teach us a bit about the artist.

Randee: We each grew up exposed to art, although in very different ways. By viewing and thinking about art, John and I came to understand each artist had something to say and a way to communicate his or her viewpoint. This process helped us think about art as an encounter with an artist. And one of the most amazing aspects of this process is that an artist, even hundreds of years after death, can catch our attention and come alive through these encounters. Art has greatly enriched our lives and the lives of others.

Q. WHAT DO YOU HOPE WILL BE THE LASTING LEGACY OF YOUR GIFT?
John: The legacy is not ours to leave. The legacy has been created by the artists we love and by the dedicated museum staff and Director Lauren Lessing.

Randee: We feel so lucky to be able to help showcase works like Max Beckmann’s Karneval, Joan Miro’s Drop of Dew, Grant Wood’s Plaid Sweater, Lyonel Feininger’s In a Village Near Paris, Pablo Picasso’s Flower Vase on a Table, or Henri Matisse’s Blue Interior with Two Girls. These artists have created emotional punch, and the new museum will offer all of us the opportunity to experience that. We can’t wait to re-encounter these works.