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## Giving in Order to Gain

Through a gift in memory of her late husband, Phyllis Greenberg is making a difference—and a personal connection.

A Fitting Tribute: William Greenberg RC'44 found two lifelong loves at Rutgers: a fraternity brother's sister Phyllis, who became his wife of 55 years, and an entire university, to which he remained deeply connected as an alumnus and donor. When William died in 2006, Phyllis knew the best way to keep his memory alive would be to give to Rutgers in his name. She and her two sons, Peter and Don, wanted the gift to have a global impact, so they created a fellowship for a graduate student researching climate change.

An Unexpected Bond: The first recipient of the William H. Greenberg Fellowship was Dinali Nelun Fernando, who will earn a doctorate in geography with a concentration in climatology from the Graduate School-New Brunswick in October. When Nelun, as she likes to be called, sent Phyllis an update on her research, which deals with monitoring and predicting drought in Nelun's native Sri Lanka, the two women clicked and continued to correspond by email. Their discussions extended to their personal lives—"girl talk," as Phyllis puts it. Their relationship deepened after Phyllis's oldest son died of cancer in November. "She was very much there for me during a difficult time in my life," Phyllis says.



Phyllis Greenberg (right) established a fellowship at Rutgers in memory of her late husband, William, a Rutgers alumnus. She has since formed a friendship with the first recipient, Dinali Nelun Fernando, a climate-change researcher and doctoral candidate. Photography by Michelle Baffuto

What a Wonderful World: A professional wildlife photographer who has been to all seven continents, Phyllis cares deeply about the future of the planet. She has even named Rutgers in her will so that, eventually, the fellowship will be endowed yielding perpetual funding for future graduate students conducting globally important research. "It's the most meaningful thing I've ever done in my lifetime," says Phyllis, who plans to visit Nelun in Sri Lanka.

— Lara De Meo RC'97

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