The vestibule at AKA Rittenhouse buzzed with activity. A woman carrying a half-dozen boxes scurried to a waiting elevator. Then a deliveryman strolled past, steering his hand truck toward the front desk. And not far behind, someone held the door for another man, this one wheeling a little red wagon with a puppy in tow.

Pulling a cream-colored retriever named Maggie, the wagon came to an abrupt stop when a sharply dressed man in a charcoal suit stepped in its path.

“There’s ‘Marley & Me,’” said Steven H. Korman, referring to the popular autobiography, “but how about a picture of Maggie and me?”

All the while, Korman beamed with delight.

Korman has plenty to smile about. The founder of Korman Communities, he’s a real-estate innovator whose concept of extended-stay suites revolutionized the industry. He’s the head of a family-owned company that’s rooted in 100 years of business excellence. Korman is the Chairperson of the Board of Visitors at Temple University’s School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, for which he also serves on its Dean’s Council.

“Those details don’t shape who I am,” Korman said.

Instead, philanthropy and charity define Korman, who in November 2012 changed the lives of nearly two-dozen STHM sophomores. Hand-selected by STHM administration, for their academic merit, program dedication and leadership skills, the students had gathered at the Musser Award for Excellence in Leadership reception and dinner at Temple’s Mitten Hall. In the weeks prior, the students had addressed their financial needs in letters and video testimonials to an anonymous donor.

They believed they were competing for a single $10,000 scholarship. On the night Korman was to receive the Musser Award, the highest honor conferred by Temple’s Fox School of Business, he identified himself to the students as the benefactor. Then, he unveiled two more details he had kept secret: Korman announced he had raised the scholarship’s value to $12,000, and that he’d award one to each of the 20-plus STHM students.

Memories from that emotional evening have not been lost on the STHM students who have come to be known as “Korman Scholars.” Lessening student debt was one of Temple President Dr. Neil Theobald’s six commitments to the university, upon his 2013 inauguration, and that’s exactly what Korman’s gift accomplished.

For the Korman Scholars, who graduated in May 2015, the scholarships could not have come at a better time.

The cost of Carlos Deno’s college education fell primarily on his mother, Jannette Diaz, a single parent. From the periphery, Deno said he watched as his mother worked to provide for him and his sister, Amanda, a February 2015 graduate of STHM.

“I didn’t know it was Mr. Korman at the time,” said Deno, who spent the Spring 2015 semester in New York City, interning with the Madison Square Garden Network, “but I remember in my letter to him, I said, ‘You’re inspiring me to someday be a shining light for a kid who’s like me.’”

At the time of the 2012 Musser Award reception, Michelle Siporin’s family was struggling, too. Her brother Sam, CST ’11, had benefited from scholarship money as an honors student, and she wanted to earn a similar academic opportunity.