

Captain's Log Book September, 2009

Background:

As part of the privilege of serving on the NDSA Board you have a grand opportunity to meet some very special "Domers", those Notre Dame's Senior Alumni (age 55 and older) who number approximately 40,000 and represent about 36% of the entire Alumni Population. Many are now retired but still very active, while others remain active in their career or profession. Since graduation, many have held multiple leadership and prominent positions in government, public service, and in some of the world's most prestigious and well known corporations. Many have started very successful companies and ventures. A substantial number are recognized for their generosity in both time and money, not only to their community projects, but also to Notre Dame. Oftentimes, graduates' names and accomplishments are well known and recognized in their communities and professions. It is safe to say a large majority have excelled in their professional and private lives. Many have served with distinction in the military, hold various leadership positions, and serve as a good example in their parish.

Several things they all hold in common...among them...their love for Notre Dame, their memories of those great years on campus, their lifetime Domer friends, and their concern for this year's "Football Fortunes".

Senior ND Club Membership:

Unfortunately, a review of the annual schedule of future events at some of our club's indicates there are not sufficient activities planned to attract, interest, or truly involve "Seniors". This situation is further complicated by the fact that only about half of the clubs have a "Senior Alumni Coordinator". With sparse Senior Membership in several clubs, many of the current Senior Coordinators are really not truly active and don't have an action plan or any real program or agenda to attract and interest the Seniors.

The Result:

- **The clubs will not reach their true potential:**...in utilizing the fantastic talent, leadership, and experience that made these seniors successful. Many clubs are losing the influence, recognition, contacts and connections, new ideas, and the wealth of knowledge additional senior members would bring to the club. These clubs are not taking advantage of the enormous and lasting influence seniors could have on the younger members and the "know how", stability, and prominence they possess. In addition clubs are losing substantial potential dues revenue the additional seniors members would bring.

- **The Seniors Lose:** ... Many are already involved in “give back” activities outside the framework of the local club. They work on community or church related charitable opportunities. Potentially, some of these programs could involve the club and younger alumni, and would fit into the NDSA Initiatives or spawn new Initiatives that could be operated by the club and offered to other Notre Dame Clubs. Not being active club members, they do not have the opportunity to explore these opportunities or share in the NDSA Initiatives that may need the prestige and the support of a well known Senior to be accepted by a potential “Catholic Community Professional Assistance Program” client for example. Seniors lose the opportunity for camaraderie and the chance to associate with other ND seniors with similar interests and goals. Further, by not being active in their club, seniors tend to lose contact with Notre Dame and the spiritual opportunities available through the clubs, as well as participation in other meaningful club activities.
- **Notre Dame Loses:**...The University loses contact with a very important group of Alumni who love the University and, being mindful of their Notre Dame heritage, want to stay connected on both a University and local level. There is much more potential for greater financial support if the alumnus is involved and “Living Notre Dame” each day. The publicity and good will the Seniors could bring to the University should increase with their concentrated involvement in Club Activities, Projects, and Initiatives initiated and guided by their ever present Notre Dame commitment.

HAVING STATED OUR CASE...HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

This is not solely an NDSA concern as such...but a reality we share with the clubs and all alumni. NDSA plans to address this situation as part of the new Initiative: “Enhancing Senior Connections to Notre Dame”. It is now a work in progress which will benefit not only seniors and the clubs, but all of Notre Dame. We welcome any and all suggestions. We look forward to major successes resulting from this new Initiative, and from our coordinated efforts in using the data and guidance we derive from our seniors themselves in developing meaningful and productive programs that will involve and interest not only our senior alumni...but all alumni!!!

What do we anticipate as the end result as it relates to the clubs?

- More prominent and stronger clubs with greater ND presence in their communities
- Senior Alumni more involved in ND “give back” opportunities and in projects that will energize their clubs
- Seniors closer to Notre Dame and their ND roots, with possible future financial benefits for the University
- The benefactors of the Initiatives and the good work of Notre Dame Alumni will become more visible to the community and in the local parishes
- The younger Alumni will benefit from the learning experience of being associated with the Senior club members while working on NDSA Initiatives and other projects

- Favorable Notre Dame Publicity and club recognition from the resulting good works done in the name of Notre Dame.

While we are in this “work in progress” mode...NDSA will not rest!!! Through our eighteen Regional Directors, we will continue to work with the clubs to assist with the adoption and implementation of our 4 national Initiatives. We will continue to encourage clubs to appoint strong and active senior alumni coordinators and encourage our seniors to utilize their many talents. As always...we will be there for the clubs and classes and their senior members.

Thanks for all you do for Notre Dame...and...Go Irish!!!

Jim

JEG: 9/28/09