

GERDIN BUSINE



Stories All Their Own



Why Business Alums Support Their College

The list reads like a who's who of business: John DeVries, retired owner and CEO, Colorfx, Inc.; Ralph Eucher, president, Principal Funds, the Principal Financial Group; Mark Fisher, president, United Community Bank in Milford; Cara Heiden, division president, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage; Julie Middleswart, audit partner, Ernst and Young; and Ruby Trice, business executive, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

Yet all of these individuals have a common interest—helping Iowa State University's College of Business be the best college it can be.

All are Iowa State alumni, but beyond that shared experience, their stories about giving back to the college are as unique as the individuals themselves.



"We believe education changes lives. Not just individuals, but entire families and society."

John DeVries

John DeVries has the longest history with the college. He earned his industrial administration degree in 1959. His first job was in Cedar Rapids, but after working on his MBA at the University of Iowa, he moved to Des Moines. The proximity to Ames made the decision to help his undergraduate alma mater an easy one. His involvement began in the early 1970s when Chuck Handy, head of industrial administration, began hosting

receptions to gather support for the rapidly growing department.

Owner and CEO of Colorfx from 1979 until August 2007, DeVries has been a strong advocate and leader for the department and the college since those first meetings. He has done everything from calling on businesses to ask for support, to helping establish the Founders' Club and serving as its chair, to serving on the Dean's Advisory Council, to leading development campaigns.

One of the early highlights for DeVries occurred in 1984, the year the college was officially established. “Pioneer Hi-Bred International donated the funds for our first endowed chair,” he recalls. “It was proof of the support and credibility we had achieved.”

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cess to Handy’s vision—always be better next year than you were last year. “I have worked with all of the deans—Handy, David Schrock, Ben Allen, and now Labh Hira—and each one has wrapped his arms around this vision and kept it alive,” he says.

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DeVries’ commitment to education is reflected in his service to the university as well. He has served as an Iowa State University Foundation Governor since 1984 and was chair of the Foundation Board of Directors from 1993 to 1995.

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Ralph Eucher began his association with the College of Business when Principal Financial Group agreed to sponsor a welcome event and diversity training session for new MBA students each year. It was his first contact with Iowa State’s business program since earning his M.S. in industrial relations in 1976, but it has led to ongoing interaction, and his leadership is helping increase the focus on business ethics for students.

Eucher’s interest reflects a diverse career that began with a job at 3M while he was an Iowa State undergraduate majoring

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ALUMNI GIVING STATISTICS	
Living College of Business alumni	25,675
Living College of Business alumni in Iowa	11,797 (46%)
Living College of Business alumni in states bordering Iowa	5,738 (22%)
Average age of College of Business alumni	41
Average age of College of Business donor	51
College of Business alumni who made a gift to Iowa State in 2006-2007	3,239 (13%)
College of Business alumni who made a gift to the College of Business in 2006-2007	1,148 (4.5%)
Average gift to the College of Business	\$1,001
Median gift to the College of Business	\$100
Total fundraising production during 2006-2007	\$12,434,104



“As an alum, you feel good about your school when it has a great reputation.”

Mark Fisher

A 1976 industrial

administration graduate with emphasis in accounting, Mark Fisher began his career with the accounting firm Wolf and Company in Des Moines. Fisher has supported the Iowa State College of Business and the athletic department for the past 30 years while residing in the Iowa Great Lakes area.

Although his wife, Pamela, earned her accounting degree at the University of Wyoming, she shares Fisher’s loyalty. In addition, both of their sons are College of Business alumni. Paul is a 2005 management information systems graduate and is now attending chiropractic school in Chicago, and Adam, a 2007 graduate with degrees in accounting and management information systems, works for Ernst and Young in Des Moines.

While the Fishers have been steady contributors to the College of Business, they recently created the Mark and Pamela Fisher Fellowship to support a professor in the accounting department.

“Education is the key

to long-term success,” says Fisher, who is president of United Community Bank in Milford. “I attribute my accomplishments to my education at Iowa State, and hearing Adam speak highly of his professors and the excellent education he received encouraged us to support the faculty.”

Both Mark and Pamela Fisher have served terms on their local school board. Their experiences gave them insight on educational funding issues and recognition that the universities need substantial private support.

“We want the College of Business to continue building on its outstanding reputation,” Fisher says. “As an alum, you feel good about your school when it has a great reputation. Our hope is that our support will help the college continue to attract and retain top professors so it can continue to be an outstanding school.”

When Cara Heiden is passionate about something, she contributes financially and she gets involved in leader-

ship so she can see the cause advanced. The Iowa State University College of Business is one of her causes.

A 1978 industrial administration graduate with options in accounting and finance, Heiden says her education has been key to her success. The division president for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Heiden made an unrestricted donation toward the Roger P. Murphy Professorship in Accounting. Her financial support for the college is continually directed to retaining and recruiting the very best professors.

“The impact that a professor can have on your life is nothing short of profound,” Heiden says. “My professors took a personal interest in me and helped me achieve my goals. Along with encouraging my intellectual curiosity, they made certain I had options and access to many different professional opportunities.”

Heiden’s leadership role with the college extends back to the mid-1990s when Dean Ben Allen asked her to serve on the advisory council. “The

College of Business was young and growing, and it was an exciting opportunity to help craft the future,” she says.

“As alumni and employers, we want to help ensure that Iowa State produces the highest quality of graduates,” Heiden says. “We provided input on planning for the new building, using our experience as students—even though for some of us that was a long time ago—and from what happens in the day-to-day corporate world to create the most effective learning environment.

“We also give feedback on what competencies we look for in recruits. I am proud to say,” she adds, “that Wells Fargo is the number one hiring corporation for Iowa State College of Business graduates.”

Heiden has been active with the Iowa State University Foundation and served as chair of the Board of Directors for 2005–2007. In this role, the focus has been to advance the mission of Iowa State through fundraising.



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Ruby Trice

Ruby Trice, a 1987 graduate in management, gives back to the college in three ways. She contributes to scholarships, serves as an Iowa State ambassador, and is an alumni association board member.

The youngest of seven children, Trice grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. “We weren’t in the best situation financially,” she says, “and I give back because I know there are other kids like me who want a chance to make a difference. Iowa State gave me my chance.” Trice received need-based aid to support her education.

Trice, who began working for the Department of Defense (DoD) in a fellowship program in 1983, is now a business executive with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, a DoD support agency.

She became an Iowa State ambassador in 1992 and has recruited students both in St. Louis and in Maryland where she lived for eight years. In this role, she attends education fairs sharing her experiences as a minority student from a big city who went to Iowa State.

“I formed some really strong bonds with people I met at Iowa State—black and white, Iowans and non Iowans, rural and urban,” she says. “I tell prospective students that college gives you the opportunity to make friends with people who aren’t like you. It will help you embrace all of the different people you will encounter in the workplace.”

As an alumni association board member, Trice attends regular meetings in Ames. It is an opportunity to network and provide input, and it also allows her husband and two children to visit campus.

“My daughter is quite excited to know that George Washington Carver went to the same school I did,” Trice says. “I just emphasize we were not here at the same time.”

Julie Middleswart, of Indianola, also makes regular trips to Ames. A 1991 accounting graduate, she serves on the advisory board for the accounting department and is an advisor for her sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta.

Middleswart, an audit partner with Ernst and Young in Des Moines, says the motivation for being involved with the college is helping it to get better.

“As successful professionals coming in, we provide a sounding board,” Middleswart says. “And, we use our individual experiences in industry to provide a perspective that helps the department come up with new approaches to addressing challenges and moving forward.”

Serving on the board also has rewards. It helps Middleswart stay in touch with what is happening in the college today. “Last spring we had a professor come and talk about Second Life. It is a virtual environment he uses to teach class. I had no idea it even existed,” she says.

“Also, I have gotten to know many people from industry and the college. Helping the college is a way to be connected beyond my work environment.”

Middleswart has also gained new insight regarding college funding issues and the need

to raise money for faculty and scholarship support. While she contributes regularly to the college, she is organizing an effort to reach out to Iowa State alumni, working at Ernst and Young offices around the world, to establish a scholarship fund.

Her work with the sorority has made Middleswart especially conscious of the struggles for students. “When I was in school, it seemed people got jobs because they wanted a little extra spending money,” she explains. “These girls are working so hard at jobs, keeping their grades up, and staying involved. I really admire all that they are doing.”

Middleswart has a busy schedule as well. In addition to her job and volunteer activities at Iowa State, she and her husband have a three-year-old son, Alex, and infant daughter, Anna Catherine, born May 30. ■



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