

From the Desk of Founding Dean Charles Handy

My story begins in 1940, at the start of my senior year in high school. My family had just completed its third move in

four years—moves necessitated by my father’s work. The situation was somewhat traumatic for a small town boy from Missouri. However, by move number three, to Independence, Iowa, I was beginning to adjust.

Leo “Dewey” Donnelly was a new friend at Independence High School. It is a friendship that continues to this day. Through the years Dewey and his wife Therese have parented nine children. All have completed undergraduate work and some have earned master’s degrees. Their grandchildren have continued the family tradition.

In the fall of 2003, Dewey told me that his granddaughter Molly, valedictorian of her high school class, was entering the College of Business. In addition, she would be interviewing for a position in the Union Pacific Undergraduate Programs Office. At the time I was not well acquainted with Molly, but knew the family was solid. I volunteered to call Dr. Ann Coppernoll, director of undergraduate programs, and put in a good word.

A few days later, Leo called with the following statement: “Handy, you’ve got more pull than



MOLLY DONNELLY

Bush.” Yes, Ann hired Molly. (Dewey’s statement takes on more significance when one realizes that ex-President W’s approval ratings were much higher in those days.)

Molly justified my recommendation and Ann’s hiring; she proved to be a very busy and successful undergraduate. While majoring in marketing, she also took on these student activities: three years of employment in the CB Undergraduate Office, one year of employment in the Frederiksen Court Office, participated in a Business Learning Community where she became a mentor, served on the Business Week Steering Committee and the VEISHEA Central Committee, worked as a student assistant for the wrestling team, and was selected to give the address at her college graduation in December 2007.

Following graduation, Molly stayed on at Iowa State. She now serves as the first director of operations for Cyclone wrestling. This relationship led to an interesting set of events last fall. While low-keying the activity, Coach Cael Sanderson took his wrestling squad on an unusual team retreat—a full day in Cedar Rapids helping clean up debris left by the 2008 flood. To get an early start, the team camped overnight on an acreage near Independence. As you might suspect, the acreage is owned by Molly’s parents, Tim and Cathy Donnelly.

I will close with two sentences from Molly’s speech: “For me, Iowa State is the place where I became something of my own creation and something I am proud of. It is the place where I met some of the best people in the world and some of the people with whom I know I’ll be friends for the rest of my life.”

My thoughts exactly. ■

Coach Cael Sanderson took his wrestling squad to Cedar Rapids for a full day helping clean up debris left by the 2008 flood.



IOWA STATE WRESTLING TEAM