Making A Difference

A Flat Tire Changed It All

Fergus Lopez enrolled with St. Paul’s College in 1989. During his tenure on the Fort Garry Campus he served a term as Senior Stick, the highest elected position in student governance at St. Paul’s and was the driving force behind, the then, St. Paul’s Players, a drama club that put on several College productions. Because of his enthusiasm and dedication to the College Fergus in his graduating year was honoured by being named the Paulinian of the Year the highest student award bestowed annually by the College’s student membership.

In spite of all of Fergus’s successes as a university student, there were indeed some hardships. The summer of 1991 was a particularly difficult year for Lopez. Outside of a few odd jobs he was unemployed and as he describes it, “poor”. He had managed to save enough for tuition fees, however, his daily expenses were stretched quite thin. He recalls “October and November of 1991 is fondly remembered as a period of creative financing.”

On one of those days he experienced a flat tire on his way to school. Frustrated, broke and feeling hopeless, he made a difficult decision to quit school and return to the workforce. On his way to voluntarily withdraw from his courses, he ran into Fr. Roussin (now Bishop) who was the Chaplain at St. Paul’s College where he informed him of his decision to quit school. After listening to his story Fr. Roussin asked Fergus to return the following day to further discuss the matter. When Fergus returned Fr. Roussin surprised him with a cheque for $400. It was a small sum but it was enough to buy some time to work on a few options other than quitting school. Shortly after Fergus found a part time job that suited his academic schedule and in 1995 he graduated with a B. Comm (Honours).

After graduation he joined the Executive Committee of St. Paul’s College Alumni and Friends Association and served as chair from 1996-97. Fergus tried to repay Bishop Roussin the money he had lent him and he refused instead requested the Fergus “help someone else in need.” In 1997 Fergus did just that and created the Bishop Roussin Bursary Fund.

Eventually Fergus would become part of a larger global community securing a position with a Canadian aviation company. Through his work, he has had the opportunity to live and work in Asia, Australia and Europe. Today, Fergus works for an American aerospace company as their Director for Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa. He is married to Shareen and they reside in Singapore.

Since then friends of both Bishop Roussin along with Fergus Lopez contribute regularly to the fund and with the assistance of MSBI (Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative) matching funds, it now stands at $12,550 producing an annual bursary of over $500 for a College member who demonstrates the ethos of St. Paul’s and is in desperate need of funds.

In December of 2009 a recipient of the Bishop Roussin Bursary wrote to Dean Chris Butterill “the monies... will definitely go a long way in reducing my financial burdens during the year. It is worth mentioning that St. Paul’s College has positively impacted my life/education since I started studying at
the University of Manitoba. I hope and promise to continue contributing my own quota to its
development during my entire studentship, and most importantly, after graduation.”

Thank you Fergus Lopez for Making A Difference.