Are leaders born or made? What makes a good leader? What is the result of good leadership? In the pages that follow, Scranton alumni who volunteer for their alma mater in a variety of ways share their answers to these and other questions about leadership.

Royal Recruiters

Patrick J. Rooney ’64
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Royal Recruiter

As a Royal Recruiter, Patrick Rooney represents Scranton at several college fairs each year. From a table filled with information about academic programs, extracurricular activities and financial aid programs, Mr. Rooney seeks to encourage prospective students to visit campus during Open House. “As the story goes, if a student visits the campus, they generally are sold on The University of Scranton,” he says.

He speaks from the voice of experience. “Each Royal Recruiter has their own story about The University of Scranton based on their experience while attending the U, and we try to convey that to the students that chat with us at our table,” he says.

Completed inquiry cards that he collects from interested students are forwarded to Scranton’s admissions office. Mr. Rooney also delivers a recruitment DVD on “Life at the University” to local high schools to show to interested students.

Q. How can leaders of today help students become leaders of tomorrow?

A. “Today’s leaders inspire students through their work ethic and through the example they set in treating others fairly, being honest, providing equal opportunities to employees and rewarding outstanding performance. At Scranton, students feel the pride of being part of a wonderful institution and experience the passion as they are guided by teachers with enthusiasm, intensity and drive. Today’s leaders can provide the same enthusiasm and guidance to help students become tomorrow’s leaders.

Leaders need to be a constant source of support to their employees, providing needed recognition for a job well done. When students observe this, and later experience it, they will climb the mountain to success becoming what they were prepared to be: ‘leaders of the future.’ They will once again achieve their dreams being fulfilled as a whole person working for and with others.”
“Incredibly rewarding” are the words that Patricia Moran uses to describe her service on the University’s Board of Trustees. Ms. Moran has been a Trustee since 2000 and was named Vice Chair of the Board in 2004.

Her tenure on the Board has coincided with a period of great change at the University. “It has been an exciting time to serve as a Trustee,” she says, citing what she considers one of the most significant events during her service on the Board: the appointment of Fr. Pilarz as University President.

“Fr. Pilarz has proven to be a great leader for the University and I am proud to have been on the Board that appointed him,” she says.

There are numerous other contributions of which Ms. Moran can be justifiably proud. She has been part of a Board that has helped shape plans for and approved the construction of a new retreat center at Chapman Lake and a new campus center. At the same time, the Board has provided strategic leadership with regard to University Advancement initiatives to fund these important undertakings.

“I also have had the privilege of chairing the Board of Trustee’s first governance committee and playing a role in recent governance initiatives designed to maximize the Board’s effectiveness,” she says.

Q. What makes a good leader? What is the result of good leadership?

A. “There is no single quality that identifies a good leader. Among the many qualities that a good leader must possess are passion, open-mindedness and decisiveness. The passion required of a good leader is a ‘fire in the belly’ for the job he or she is undertaking. Open-mindedness means that a good leader must be open to listening and considering the views of others, in particular the persons he or she is leading. Once having listened to and considered these views, however, a leader must have the courage to exercise his or her own judgment and act decisively, even if not everyone will embrace that decision.

If an organization has good leadership, all of its members are empowered and motivated to work as a team to advance the organization’s goals.”
Serving as part of the New York alumni team is a great opportunity for me to honor the education I received at the U and the gift of so many beautiful friendships that have grown over the years,” says Ms. Murphy. In her work as Club President, she helps to organize events through which alumni can network personally and professionally. “When I see how we are able to connect the alumni to one another – and to current students and faculty – it reminds me of how deeply good the mission of the University is, and it pleases me to know that I can help carry on our traditions,” she says.

The Club’s goals for the coming years are to continue to build a strong presence in the New York City area, bringing together alumni from different classes to experience a variety of different activities – from “Alumster” networking evenings and alumni panel discussions to community Masses, the annual ballgame and more.

Karen Murphy ’94, President of the Scranton Club of New York, (fifth from left) was joined by other Club members during a communications panel discussion hosted by the Club in January. From left: Matt Kelly ’00, Matt Celli ’95, Jim Reilly ’79, Club Vice President, Kathryn Mariani ’02, Ms. Murphy, Matt DeNinno ’00, Rob Keenan ’95, Mike Bonner ’95 and Brendan Deneen ’95.

Q. What, from your Scranton education, helped you to understand the importance of good leadership? How can you share this with others?

A. “I think leadership is fundamentally about honoring yourself, serving others by helping them seek their highest good, making choices that support your integrity, and above all dealing honestly and respectfully with others. The U was the place where I began to learn about who I really am and who God is calling me to be. Some of my greatest experiences while at the U came not from the classroom, but from the many extracurricular activities in which I engaged, especially through Campus Ministry. Through volunteer opportunities and many weekends at Chapman Lake, I came to understand just how important issues of peace and social justice are to me: issues of fairness and finding common ground, of building bridges, honoring goodness and beauty, and seeking to resolve conflict from a deeply respectful place. The self-wisdom I received at the U has been a lasting gift and continues to shape my choices.

What is so amazing to me is that these principles are manifested in so many different ways. Alumni from different classes, with different interests and careers come together and find they have so much in common! The Jesuit principles of service and compassion continue to live on as our alumni travel further and further from their days on campus. What a legacy for us to offer the world.”
For John Lanahan, being involved with his alma mater provides him with “a sense of being and a pride of ownership that you can make a difference – large or small.” Through his service to Scranton as a former Club President and now on the Alumni Society Board, he believes he can give back to Scranton while sharing in its growth and excitement.

More importantly, he says, “Being part of the Alumni Society provides the opportunity to be part of a ‘club’ that is unique to Scranton alumni.”

In his service as President of the Scranton Club of New Jersey, John found himself renewing friendships from his college days while forging new friendships with other Scranton alumni. Working with Joseph Hanlon ’90, he coordinated the launch of the Scranton Alumni Mall, an online “store” for Scranton merchandise. The Scranton Alumni Mall, managed by students in The Kania School of Management’s Business Leadership Program, raises funds for alumni programs, while providing increased visibility of the Scranton name through branded merchandise.

In January, Mr. Lanahan was elected Vice President of the Alumni Society Board. He serves as Committee Chairperson for the Club and Affiliates Resource Committee.

Q. Are leaders born or made? What kind of leader do you most admire?

A. “Leaders are made. There are many examples of those born to privilege who become leaders (George Bush or John Kennedy), and those persons who succeed and lead without a head start and must overcome many hurdles and challenges (Abraham Lincoln or Mother Theresa). There is no particular type of leader that I hold in high esteem. I admire the person who quietly serves and leads. It’s easy to grab the spotlight when doing something of value. But I admire the person who simply serves and leads, and when the assignment is complete simply asks, ‘What next?’”.

It wasn’t until John Farkas moved away from Scranton that he fully appreciated the need to reconnect with his alma mater. While he was pursuing a Ph.D. at Georgia State University in Atlanta, he remembers feeling that “I hadn’t given back a fraction of what I took away from the University.”

Little by little, he started to reconnect with his alma mater and his classmates and served as the first President of the Scranton Club of Atlanta. In doing so, he reaffirmed his belief that, “The friends you make in college are your friends for life.”

This year, Dr. Farkas is playing a particularly important role as a Class Chair for Reunion. Together with 13 other committee members, he is networking with classmates with the hopes of bringing back to campus a large contingent from the Class of 1976. At the same time, he says he hopes his class will rise to the challenge of Reunion giving through increased financial gifts that are so important in helping meet the vital needs of the University.

Q. What, in your mind, are the inherent qualities of a leader? Is leadership contagious?

A. “Listening is one of the most important qualities of a leader. I learned a lot about being a good listener during my master’s degree studies in Counselor Education at Scranton. Today, I continue to use those skills by encouraging my staff to share ideas and make recommendations. The input I receive from them helps me to make the best possible decision.

When your staff members see that their ideas are welcome and respected, they feel as though you are ‘in it with them.’ If they feel I’m going the extra mile, they will, too.”

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