A Message from Your New President

Dear Fellow Alumni:

Have you ever considered whom we honor at our Alumni Achievement Awards? More often than not, they are fellow alumni who have given of themselves in service to others. For over 125 years, our alma mater, the national university of the Catholic Church, has offered an opportunity to experience the interconnection between faith and reason in service to all. Deus Lexe Miini En, God is My Light, is not simply a motto for CUA, but how we all are called to live our lives. We need to be examples of selfless service to those we encounter, especially to our current students. We have the opportunity not only to show them how to serve, but also to learn from them.

They cannot learn what we have learned if they cannot come to CUA. You can help by completing alumni grants for students who are applying. The grant is a perfect way to build right from the beginning an ongoing relationship with an incoming student who we hope will join us one day as a proud CUA alum!

Over the last several years, I have had the privilege to come to know many of our students who give of themselves in time, talent, and treasure, not only on the CUA campus, but who now as alumni do so in different parts of the world. Want to experience what I have? Then I invite you to sign up for Cardinal Connection, CUA’s online career networking service, which will give our students the opportunity to ask you career questions and receive the benefit of your knowledge and experience as they discern their future.

Another way to serve is to support fellow alumni at events hosted by the Alumni Association. At the events, we rekindle or deepen our relationships with one another, no matter when we attended CUA. Very often at these events, I and others have heard of ways that we can serve the needs of fellow alumni, even if it is something as simple, and yet profound, as keeping them in prayer.

Finally, please know that your service to CUA as alumni, including your financial support, is very much appreciated by our current students, faculty, staff, and administration. Please join us for events sponsored by the Alumni Association and the University. For a current listing of alumni events, visit cuaatoday.com.

May God always be your light!

Father Frank Donio, S.A.C.
President, The Catholic University of America Alumni Association

Alumni Travel Club: Eternal Rome

The Office of Alumni Relations invites alumni and friends to participate in the annual excursion to Rome, May 19–24, 2014.

The trip features:

• Three days in Rome, a day in Florence, and a day in Saluncio to walk in the steps of St. Benedict.
• Attendance at the Papal Audience.
• A visit to the rooms of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order.
• An intimate Mass at St. Peter’s Tomb followed by a unique tour of the Basilica of St. Peter.
• Plus much more.

Cost per person is $1,899 (does not include airfare). For more information and to make a deposit, visit cuaatoday.com/Rome2014.

Alumni Grants

Graduates of Catholic University may nominate freshmen or new transfer students for a $1,000 award, renewable for up to four years. Receipt of the grant is not automatic. Limited funding is available and will be awarded based on a strong personal profile, shown through leadership experience and extracurricular activities.

To find out more about the grant and to download the forms, visit admissions.cua.edu and click on “Scholarships and Financial Aid” or contact cua-admissions@cua.edu.

By J. Paul Molloy, J.D. 1965

When my wife, Jane, and I were students at CUA’s law school, it never occurred to me that some of the most satisfying moments of my life would be in the company of recovering alcoholics and drug addicts. It wasn’t the way I’d planned my career; however, that was how it turned out — and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

Jane and I spent this past Labor Day weekend at a high-class convention at the Washington Hilton Hotel. The main difference between this convention and the many others I attended as a successful Capitol Hill staffer and lawyer was that most of the more than 700 participants at this convention were Oxford House residents or alumni in recovery — and many had been in jail or homeless during the prior years. I can relate. I am one of them. I am also the CEO and co-founder of Oxford House, Inc., the host of the convention and the umbrella organization for more than 1,600 self-run, self-supported Oxford Houses. Since its beginnings in 1975, Oxford House has enabled more than 250,000 individuals to achieve recovery without relapse.

My path to leadership of Oxford House was truly from the bottom up. In 1975, after 15 years of marriage, Jane got fed up with my trying to kill her. She had me committed and declared the marriage over. When I left the psych ward, I lived for a time as a drunk on the streets of Washington. After I finally admitted that I was an alcoholic and moved into a county-run halfway house, the county decided to close it.

Following much discussion, those of us in the house decided that we had to stay together to avoid relapse, so we rented the house ourselves. That was the first Oxford House. We wrote a manual of operations, opted for no residency time limits — since recovery doesn’t happen on a set timetable — and agreed that we would throw out any resident who returned to using alcohol or illicit drugs. The system worked for us and, when the first Oxford House had no vacancies, we rented another house, then another.

While in the halfway house, I got a job on the Hill and then with a Chicago firm — Islam, Lincoln & Beale. In 1988, when the Anti-Drug Abuse Act authorized state start-up loan funds for recovery homes based on the Oxford House model, I began to spend all my time leading the organization and expanding Oxford House.

I am especially grateful for two things that I got from Catholic University. My legal education was particularly valuable as we faced NIMBY challenges in city after city. Neighbors didn’t like our placement of Oxford Houses in good neighborhoods — or integrating them. But we didn’t back down. At one point we were in federal court in 14 jurisdictions. The turning point came in 1995 when we won a Supreme Court case — City of Edmonds, WA v. Oxford House, Inc. (514 U.S. 725).

Second, in 1991, CUA social work professor William Spillane surveyed alumni of Oxford Houses and documented a relapse rate of less than 20 percent — vastly better than most outcomes. Since then, we have continued to embrace both in-house and independent academic research on our program and recovery outcomes. In 2011, based on peer-reviewed studies, the federal government listed Oxford House on its National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

Trust that “the inmates can run the asylum” is a hallmark of the Oxford House system of operations and a major reason for its success. Residents, not managers, counselors, or jockers, run Oxford Houses. Residents elect House officers, get jobs, pay House expenses, and socialize together. In the process, they learn or relearn leadership and citizenship skills. But many more programs like Oxford House are needed. Perhaps today’s concern about health care costs will serve as a catalyst for meeting the widespread need for recovery housing.

I’m one of the lucky drunks. I have a happy-ending story. In 1988, after being divorced for 13 years, Jane and I remarried — pleasing both us and our five children.

J. Paul Molloy is founder and CEO of Oxford House, Inc. He and his wife, Jane, are law school graduates and alums of thirty-five children and a son-in-law have CUA degrees. He is pictured above at right with Alumni Association then President Thomas Zoeller, B.A. 1984, receiving a 2013 alumni achievement award.

Alumni Essay

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