When John Figge ’59 and his wife, Pat, traveled with Robert H. McCooey ’52 and his wife, Mary, a church was always part of the journey. “Whenever we’d stop, Bob would say, ‘I wonder if there’s a church around,’” says Figge of his best friend and brother-in-law who died last year.

Daily Mass wasn’t always a part of Figge’s life, he admits, “but because of Bob, it became part of my life.”

So deep was the friendship between the men that the Figges decided to memorialize Bob McCooey by donating $2 million to renovate the College’s Mary Chapel, located in the basement of St. Joseph Memorial Chapel. One of the smaller interior chapels will be named the McCooey Chapel, Figge says, in a fitting tribute to a very religious man.

“When we committed to this gift, they said to think of what I’d like to memorialize,” Figge says. “It could have been ‘Figge this’ or ‘Figge that,’ but that didn’t sit well with me. Then Bob died, and I thought, ‘Here’s a gift that’s perfect for him.’ It’s a perfect way to honor Bob and his Catholic faith.”

The Holy Cross tradition runs deeply in both the Figge and McCooey families. Mary McCooey and Patricia Figge are sisters, part of the extensive Joyce clan. Two of their brothers are graduates of the College—Thomas ’59 and Timothy ’69—and two of their sisters, Bonnie and Cathleen, married Holy Cross graduates. Four of John and Pat Figge’s children—and four of Bob and Mary McCooey’s children—attended the College. Three of the Figge children married Holy Cross alumni, as did the McCooeys’ eldest child. On the Joyce side of the family, there are no fewer than 15 more Holy Cross alumni.

Beyond the gift of memorializing a true friend, Figge says he also made the donation “because of the wonderful experience I and my family had at Holy Cross.”

“There was no doubt Holy Cross truly formed my father,” says Robert McCooey Jr. ’87. “His moral being was already formed, but it was strengthened at Holy Cross.”

McCooey Sr.’s mantra was “I choose to follow Jesus,” his son says, adding that it is on his tombstone. “He truly loved Holy Cross and appreciated not only the kind of education he received, but more importantly the development of the Christian man that was produced there.”

While the Holy Cross tradition in the family is vast, for the McCooey children it was their decision to make as to what school they would attend, says Mark McCooey ’89.
“Dad encouraged us but did not force us to attend—he let us make our own choices,” McCooey says of his siblings; four of six of them opted for Holy Cross. “We really felt a great attachment to Holy Cross. It was a very easy decision to make.”

Bob McCooey Jr. and his dad co-founded The Griswold Company in New York City in 1988, a brokerage firm where Bob is chief executive officer and president and Mark is managing director—a company that has become one of the largest independent brokerage firms on the New York Stock Exchange. The elder McCooey himself was a NYSE member for 46 years, starting his career on Wall Street as an independent broker and later working as a specialist for Henderson Brothers.

As to the gift that his Uncle John made to Holy Cross to renovate the lower level of the chapel, Bob says, “That’s most fitting, since the chapel is where Dad felt most comfortable. He spent a good portion of his life (at Holy Cross) there, sometimes going to Mass a couple of times a day.

“Having a place that will always be there as a reminder to family and alumni and future generations of someone truly dedicated to the Lord, that is the perfect gift,” he says.

The lower level of St. Joseph Memorial Chapel has served Holy Cross in a variety of ways since the chapel was built in 1924. It was first used as an auditorium and in the 1940s as space for the Naval ROTC, complete with monumental cannons in side alcoves that later housed altars.

In 1955, Holy Cross President Rev. William Donaghy, S.J., had the lower level converted to a second student chapel because the upper space could not accommodate the student body at required daily Masses. The Mary Chapel was furnished with seating for 800, an altar and lectern of Italian marble, 20 side altars, four confessionals, and a choir area.

“The current configuration of the Mary Chapel reflects the needs of students and the liturgy of the Catholic Church 50 years ago,” says Paul Covino, Holy Cross associate chaplain and director of liturgy. “Today, the Church’s liturgy has gone through a process of reform and requires a different kind of space. Students’ spiritual activities have changed as well.”

Renovation will bring new life to many areas of the lower chapel that haven’t seen activity in years. Liturgies of various sizes will be accommodated in a mid-sized chapel that will be created in much of the area currently occupied by pews and in a smaller chapel that will replace the current sanctuary. The side alcoves will be re-opened, restoring the original arched walkway around the perimeter. The statue of Our Lady of Montserrat will be relocated to a more prominent location, and all spaces will be made handicapped accessible. Much needed storage space will be created, and additional restrooms will augment the two that currently serve the entire chapel.

“The result will be a well integrated and aesthetically pleasing variety of spaces that will have a major impact on religious life on campus,” Covino says, “We have a treasure of underused square footage that feels very much like a basement now, but the renovation will give Holy Cross beautiful space that will be well used.”

As of this writing, no timetable as to completion of the renovation to Mary Chapel has been established.

Of the $2 million Figge gift making the chapel renovation possible, Covino adds, “This gift and this project are signs of the religious vitality of Holy Cross. You don’t do this in an institution that is moving away from its religious roots.”

The gift of a renovated chapel could be no more appropriate nor appreciated, says Mary, McCooey’s wife of 37 years. “Daily Mass was Bob’s whole life,” she explains. “It’s a most fitting tribute to him and unbelievably generous.”

Her husband, who always advised people wanting to get married that “you work at marriage every day in every way.”
What lessons did you learn as an athlete at Holy Cross?

The ones that stick out in my mind are: be prepared, work hard, do things the right way, work together as a team and, lastly, have fun. Those lessons and values have been very important in my career at Morgan Stanley. I am part of an outstanding trading group that incorporates these values, which has contributed to our success.

What did you think of the Holy Cross vs. Kansas game?

I watched the game with many other HC alumni, which was a great deal of fun. The game was very exciting, and the team played tremendously. I called my wife, Susan, at halftime, and we agreed that the family would all go to St. Louis for the next round, but unfortunately they fell a little short. Overall, I am very excited about what the basketball team has accomplished over the last two years. They have won two Patriot League titles and have taken two top-ranked teams to the limit in the NCAA Tournament. Coach Willard has done an outstanding job, and I believe Holy Cross is in a great position to build on these successes. For many of the alumni of my era, this is a very welcome development.

What are your hopes for your gift to the Lift High the Cross Campaign?

We do not have a specific goal for the gift yet. Ideally, we would like something that is targeted toward both academics and athletics, because it was the overall Holy Cross experience that I appreciated. I wanted to make a contribution to the College because it is a great school with great people, and it did a lot for me. Many of my closest friends are still the people I met at Holy Cross. The camaraderie and bond between Holy Cross students, faculty, administration and alumni is very special and the envy of other colleges. We need to continue to leverage this to help Holy Cross reach its tremendous potential.
way” and practiced what he preached, had a “capacity for mixing humor with his own spirituality,” she adds. “He was a very funny man and was just very comfortable in his religion.”

Holy Cross had a lasting impact on McCooey’s life that is still being felt, she says. The family is building a new home and over the dining room will be inscribed the words, “When a guest comes, Christ comes,” the same words gracing Kimball Hall at Holy Cross.

“That was something Bob always felt,” she says. “So it’s going into our new home.”

What made Holy Cross such an integral part of Bob McCooey Sr.’s life made it the same for his children.

“Dad said college should be eight years—four years of study, four years of forming friendships and being with people, interacting with them,” says Bob Jr. “He felt it very important that not everyone’s life was found in a book—it was found in people, at Mass or the library, out with your friends. He was very big on the community of Holy Cross and the way it didn’t have the overriding attitude of grandeur you get at some larger schools.”

According to Mark McCooey, his dad taught him “Fifty percent of what you learn in class, 50 percent of what you learn outside of class, makes you a well-rounded person. It’s not about one or the other, but both.”

Bob McCooey Sr.’s funeral last November had an impressive contingency of Holy Cross alumni in the assembly; and Rev. John E. Brooks, S.J. ’49, president emeritus; Rev. Francis Miller, S.J. ’47, vice president emeritus; and former president, Rev. Gerard Reedy, S.J., served on the altar. Many people were astounded by the sheer volume of McCooey’s charitable works. He served in a variety of volunteer capacities for churches, schools and
In a statement to the Holy Cross community outlining the aspirations of the Lift High the Cross Campaign, Rev. Michael C. McFarland, S.J., writes that a commitment to Holy Cross requires a “rethinking of what it means to be a Jesuit school in the 21st century.” Addressing the issues of Catholicism, education and contemporary society, the question becomes: Where and how does a Catholic liberal arts college fit into the rich and overwhelming diversity of today’s America?

There is the critical need, not only for respect, understanding and compassion among all people, but also for colleges to educate students in the broadest sense. To meet its responsibility to students, a successful college must effectively serve as a microcosm of the larger society, preparing young men and women not only intellectually and professionally for life in the world, but socially, culturally and spiritually as well. And in the case of Holy Cross, the challenge is even greater. How does the College do all of the above and stay true to the original intention and identity of the Jesuits? As Fr. McFarland goes on to ask, “How does Holy Cross foster a common culture and set of values in a diverse world?”

The answer, it seems, is in giving. Based on two gifts of one million dollars each from B.J. ’55 and Bebe Cassin, and John ’73 and Monica Murphy P’99, Holy Cross is riding a surge of momentum and credibility in terms of increasing the minority presence on campus. Through a growing network of outreach work in collaboration with on-campus programs, such as the Diversity Task Force, and the ALANA (African American, Latino, Asian, Native American) Recruitment Initiative, the College’s goal not only to recruit and retain students of color, but also to cultivate a college where both majority and minority students become wholly educated people, is becoming a reality.

“I had a great education,” says B.J. Cassin, who majored in economics at Holy Cross and served in the Marine Corps for five years, making captain during that time. He has gone on to become a highly successful venture capitalist in California as well as a two-term chairman of the board of trustees of St. Mary’s College in Moraga, California. Cassin is also a philanthropist with a vision for educational opportunity. His gifts are designed not only to provide education to underprivileged people of color but also to enhance the established academic communities of the majority.

The monument that will exist now, in the form of McCooey Chapel, is a fitting one, John Figge says, of a man who was a great listener and a great friend for more than 40 years.

“Bob was a special person in my life,” Figge says simply. “He was an exemplary Catholic, and he became not only my friend, but my role model.”

Paul E. Kandarian is a free-lance writer from Taunton, Mass.
According to foundation director, Jeff Thielman, the Cassin Educational Initiative Foundation, created by Cassin and his wife in 2000, works with religious orders, dioceses, parishes and other groups to establish faith-based college-preparatory middle schools and high schools in economically challenged areas throughout the country. Cassin’s gift, Thielman explains, was prompted by affection for his alma mater and “concerns about the lack of diversity at prestigious colleges like Holy Cross. Mr. Cassin feels that these schools need to catch up to become better schools.”

Through his grants and efforts, Cassin is providing opportunities to the poor while creating minority links to colleges such as Holy Cross. “The mission (of the gift) is such that we want to make (education) available to those who qualify and show the potential to be successful at Holy Cross,” says Thielman. At the same time, “Holy Cross students should be exposed to the real world, because in four years, they’re going to be dealing with a business world that’s almost completely color-blind. For Holy Cross graduates to not have that exposure (to minorities) in their training is a void in the responsibility the school has to its students.”

John Murphy ’73, enjoys a successful career in the private equity business in New York, investing for years in radio stations, newspapers, and television production companies, as well as the for-profit education business. His firm is the largest shareholder of Mosaic Education, Inc., the nation’s third largest charter school management company, operating 21 charter schools in six states and the District of Columbia. There are 12,000 students and 1,000 teachers and staff.

As Murphy tells it, Holy Cross has given generously to him and his wife, Monica. They met while he was a student at Holy Cross. The College is the source of many of their longstanding friendships. Their son, Dylan, is a graduate of the Class of 1999. Throughout the years, Holy Cross has supported the family’s faith. During the trustees’ retreat a year and a half ago, the Murphys decided that they wanted to give back to the College, not only to recognize “Holy Cross’ preeminence and its uniqueness as a Catholic, Jesuit, liberal arts college,” but also to support its roots, its mission, “to educate the children of immigrants.”

Combining a desire to promote diversity with their involvement in Nativity Schools, most of which are influenced and supported by the Jesuits and focus on populations that have traditionally fallen behind, dropped out, or been left out of the educational system, the Murphys decided to endow a scholarship at Holy Cross to be awarded each year to students who attended any of the 36 Nativity-model schools in the United States. The original Nativity Mission Center is in Manhattan, where Murphy is chairman of the board. Murphy sees this as an “ideal way” to continue to support these students and enrich diversity at Holy Cross.

Alumni donations not only ensure the continuation of quality education, they allow the College “to be creative,” as Fr. McFarland says. With tuition income and the annual fund going to pay salaries and ongoing costs, gifts from alumni help to establish new resources as well as expand and solidify established ones, giving them priority status, as is the case with The ALANA Recruitment Initiative. The concept and dedication behind the recruitment of students of color has been present at Holy Cross for years, but it wasn’t until these recent gifts that the program attained the level of a formal initiative, elevating its overall scope and resources, allowing the program to come into its own.

Due to Cassin’s gift, Ann Bowe McDermott ’79, director of admissions, has been able to enhance her staff significantly, hiring three additional people to cover more ground at both the local and national levels more effectively, and getting Holy Cross on the radar as “a known option, a college of choice,” among high schools with minority populations across the entire country.

With the ultimate goal being the establishment of sustained “pipelines” between Holy Cross and these high schools—including not only students but also their counselors, who ideally become advocates of the College—Kevin Fudge, the assistant director for Community Outreach, and Anabel Paniagua-Villalobos, the assistant director for National ALANA Recruitment, two of the new additions to the program, take as their primary focus “becoming a presence.”

For Fudge, whose particular territory is the diocesan schools in Boston, this means constantly visiting the schools, spreading enthusiasm and the story of Holy Cross among the students and performing various services.
Dovetailing nicely with this influx of minority students are both a pledge on the part of the administration to match Cassin’s grant—spending a million dollars over four years in increased financial aid—and the Murphys’ scholarship, which is a great incentive to a student who wants to go to college. ... made an enormous impact. We have 30 ALANA students in the early decision pool already. Compare that to the last three years, where there were 31 total.”

“There is a critical mass that needs to be attained at the College before it has a sense of validity to it,” confirms Weiss. “And the Cassins’ grant is really going to make the most obvious change in numbers.”

Joe Reilly ’55, a longtime friend of Cassin’s, who heads the Bishop Healy Committee, a program designed to cultivate alumni in the effort to foster interracial relations at Holy Cross, cites the increase in minority students from 8 percent to 12 percent in the past four years as a sign that the commitment to minority recruitment at Holy Cross is in place. Reilly urges that the new goal become a sign that the commitment to minority students is crucial to the overall recruitment effort. She credits alumni gifts with allowing the College to continue to do that.

“We can carry out the things we’ve always wanted to do but were purely limited by manpower,” McDermott says. “The Cassins’ gift is incredibly valuable and has already... will make donations in the form of scholarships, McDermott makes the point that being able both to admit and fund students is crucial to the overall recruitment effort. She credits alumni gifts with allowing the College to continue to do that.

“That’s actually what this campaign going forward is all about,” says McDermott—“to enable us to continue to meet need, so that we’re a realistic choice for any and all students.”

How does a Jesuit college position itself in the 21st century? Simply becoming a “realistic choice” may be one answer. Combining generosity, faith and a commitment to provide a quality education in all aspects of life for any student willing to work hard and better him or herself may be the goal for which to strive. The effort, it seems, reaps both actual results and the inspiration to keep trying.

As Charles Weiss says, “Knowing the commitment of the College, we’re going to have a new day here.”

Maria Healy is a free-lance journalist from Northampton, Mass.
For the Argiz Family, Education is Priority

For Antonio Argiz P’02, a Cuban exile, education has always been a top priority. Argiz graduated from Florida International University in 1974 and became a certified public accountant in 1977. Now his daughter and oldest child, Carolina, will graduate from Holy Cross. Tony and his wife, Conchy, have been so pleased with Carolina’s experience at Holy Cross, that they have committed $50,000 to the Lift High the Cross campaign. The Argiz are delighted to be a part of the Holy Cross community, and have, for the past two years, invited alumni and parents into their home for the Miami area alumni receptions.

Tony is an audit partner in the Miami, Fla., accounting firm Morrison, Brown, Argiz & Co. He has received a number of awards for his technical skills and has served on many boards, including the National Governing Council of the AICPA, the Board of Governors of the FICPA and the National Steering Committee of Lending Services of AFAi. He is a board member of the Florida Foster Care Review Project, Inc., past chairman of the board of trustees of the Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart and is currently the chair of the United Way Campaign of Miami-Dade County. He and Conchy live in Coral Gables, Fla., with their sons, Antonio and Andy.

Gary Carskaddan, director of parent giving, says, “Tony and Conchy are warm and enthusiastic parents who have clearly been pleased with Holy Cross. They want to stay close to the College. As advocates for Holy Cross in the Miami area, they have hosted over 100 alumni and parents in their home. I am very grateful to them.”

Moran ’77 Creates Merit Scholarship

Mary Coffey Moran ’77 has established the F. Grant Waite and Mary Coffey Moran ’77 Merit Scholarship with a gift of $500,000. F. Grant Waite, her partner whom she seeks to memorialize with this gift, died in September 2001 after a short battle with cancer. Waite, a certified public accountant, was an avid sportsman and tennis player. His great great uncle was the 18th president of the United States, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant.

Mary Coffey Moran majored in economics at the College and received a master of science degree in accounting from Northeastern University. She worked as a certified public accountant for Peat Marwick & Co., before becoming senior vice president of Boston Sand & Gravel Co. Currently working as a consultant, Moran lives in Andover, Mass.

Merit-based scholarships, which include tuition and fees, are awarded by the Admissions Office to students of exceptional academic potential—or who possess unusually strong talents. Merit scholarships allow the College to compete more effectively for high-achieving students who could not consider Holy Cross without scholarship support.
William J. Phelan ’73 is described by his friend and classmate John Murphy ’73 as being deeply involved in and committed to Holy Cross, his community in Fairfield County, and the Catholic Church. “Bill has a great love of Holy Cross and has been an active supporter with his time and his talents, his financial resources, and three of his children thus far! His energy and enthusiasm for Holy Cross and the Jesuit mission is infectious.” Phelan, a partner in the law firm Phelan & Mitri in Stamford, Conn., is a Benefactor’s Circle member of President’s Council, a member of the New York Leadership Council, and the New York Regional Campaign Committee. He and his wife, Patricia P’04, ’01, ’99, have made an unrestricted gift of $100,000 to the campaign.

Two of the Phelans’ daughters, Kate and Peg, are Holy Cross graduates, and their son Bill is in his second year at the College. Phelan says, “Holy Cross is part of who I am, and I am fortunate to have been able to share the College with my children. It is striking how much of what is at the core of Holy Cross has not changed since I graduated 29 years ago.” The Phelan family lives in New Canaan, Conn., and also includes Mary Patricia, a graduate of Providence College, and John, 12.

On giving to Holy Cross, Phelan says, “My wife, Pat, and I made our gift because we believe in Holy Cross. We are privileged to be part of this institution and support its work and its goals. I strongly believe that our society needs Holy Cross. It needs the College’s serious and critical commitment to the liberal arts, to the Church, and to excellence in undergraduate teaching.”

P.C. Attendance Forces New Format

Because annual attendance at the President’s Council dinner has shot well above 800 people in recent years, the current format—one large dinner for all members held in Kimball—is no longer workable. According to Paul Sheff, vice president for development and alumni relations, “It has become increasingly difficult to provide a high-quality experience for members given the sizeable attendance. In addition, fire code regulations prohibit seating more than 900 people in Kimball, and dinner attendance has nearly reached that mark.”

After studying a variety of alternative options, a decision was made that beginning in the fall of 2002, the President will host two annual dinners on campus for President’s Council members.
members. As is the current tradition, the dinners will be a part of a Saturday-Sunday weekend, scheduled, if possible, around a home football game.

One dinner will be held for President’s Council members at the junior and patron levels. This event will be held in Kimball Hall. The Junior and Patron members’ weekend is scheduled for Nov. 2-3, 2002. A second dinner will be held for members at the Distinguished, Regent and Benefactor’s Circle levels. This event will be held in Hogan Ballroom during the weekend of Nov. 9-10, 2002. If there are questions, members may contact Patricia Gibbons Haylon at (508) 793-2369 or by e-mail at phaylon@holycross.edu.

The Reunion Gift: What Counts?

During the Lift High the Cross campaign, all gifts and pledges made during a reunion year, prior to June 30, will count toward a class’s reunion gift total.

The net effect of this rule is that the College will now keep track of three figures during a reunion year: cash gifts to the Holy Cross Fund, cash gifts to all other purposes, and pledge balances.

With this rule in effect immediately and extending through June 2006, every class will have an opportunity to set a record in the year of its reunion, because all classes will have a reunion between June of 2002 and 2006. At the end of the campaign, the total each class has pledged and contributed during the entirety of the campaign will be tabulated and announced.

New Faces

There are several new faces in the Holy Cross Fund. The new director, Sr. Rita Sturwold, SND, CFRE (front and center) came to Holy Cross from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, where she was assistant superintendent for development. Jennifer Baker (second from left) was membership and operations manager at the Museum of Transportation in Brookline, Mass. before joining the fund as an assistant director. Leigh Mikulka ’00 (second from the right) is also a new assistant director, returning to alma mater after working as a consultant for Winter, Wyman & Co. Anne Carraher (far right), the new secretary, is a 2000 graduate of Regis College. Seasoned associate directors Ed Burgess ’78 (center) and James Dyer ’95 (left) predict that the 55th annual Holy Cross Fund drive will reach or exceed its goal of $6.4 million and 52% alumni participation.
Ray Bruttomesso

“THE LUCKIEST GUY IN THE WORLD”

By Phyllis Hanlon

Even though Ray Bruttomesso’s schedule keeps him busy these days—he is father of five and grandfather of 12, a practicing certified public accountant and attorney, a member of Holy Cross’ President’s Council and frequent traveler to Europe as well as to various locations stateside—he always makes time to think of his alma mater. Fond memories, overwhelming gratitude and love of the College have prompted him to support the institution morally and financially through the years.

Bruttomesso ’56 credits good fortune for all that he has. The son of first generation American parents who never had the chance to attend high school, Bruttomesso didn’t anticipate that college, especially one as prestigious as Holy Cross, would be part of his life plan. However, a generous employer in his home state of Connecticut enabled him, through scholarship, to achieve his academic dreams. As the recipient of significant financial aid for his college education, Bruttomesso has always felt a responsibility to repay the kindness shown him. In a spirit of gratitude, he has initiated several scholarships, particularly for students in Connecticut who are interested in attending Holy Cross.

Lady luck continued to smile upon Bruttomesso after graduation. Through persistence and destiny, he secured a full scholarship from the Wharton School of Business, where he earned his MBA. A short while later, a providential meeting at a friend’s wedding with Holy Cross Jesuit, Fr. McFadden, inspired him to enroll full-time at Boston College. With Father McFadden’s help he received a full scholarship; his education at BC resulted in a law degree.

“Primarily, I consider myself the luckiest guy in the world,” says Bruttomesso. This overwhelming sense of gratitude has inspired him to munificently give not only to his alma mater, but also to encourage the generosity of his fellow classmates. He has been instrumental in increasing matching corporate gifts from a former employer and other large companies as well. In addition to establishing a charitable remainder unitrust (CRUT), he and his wife, Susie, contribute to a pooled income fund and make other liberal donations throughout the year. He points out that pooled income funds as well as charitable remainder trusts allow the donor to receive a current tax deduction for the gift and may solve the problem of future cash flow, as an annual income for the donor is provided. The value of the appreciating gift is not in the taxable estate and can be covered by insurance should the heirs object.

Gifts to a pooled income fund are combined for investment purposes. Individuals who contribute to a pooled income fund receive a proportionate share of the net income earned by the fund annually. But Bruttomesso notes that there are a number of ways to give to the school. Outright gifts, charitable remainder trusts and scholarship funds also provide Holy Cross with the backing necessary to support educational activity and growth at the school, according to Bruttomesso.

“I believe each of us owes something of ourselves to others, in accordance with our means and abilities. I give to Holy Cross as others have given to me,” says Bruttomesso.

Phyllis Hanlon is a free-lance journalist from Charlton, Mass.
Tom Maher: A Bridge Builder

By Mark J. Cadigan

Tom Maher ’84 is a firm believer in the value of a Jesuit education. As concrete proof of that, he has set up The Jeanne R. Maher Scholarship Fund, which assists students from Xavier High School in Manhattan who want to attend Holy Cross. The fund, named after his late mother, represents a minimum commitment of $100,000 on Maher’s part and is the second-largest gift to Holy Cross from an alumnus who graduated less than 20 years ago.

“The important thing for me,” Maher says, “was to build a bridge between the Jesuit college I attended and the Jesuit high school I attended, because it was such a formative and important eight years, both at Xavier and Holy Cross. I wanted to provide other students with similar opportunities.”

Maher, 39, is a principal and chief financial officer (CFO) at Eastern Development, LLC of Woburn, Mass., a real estate development firm specializing in retail and office projects throughout New England. He credits his alma mater, where he majored in history, with getting him ready for life after college.

“Holy Cross taught me to think critically,” he says. “It provided a great education and an essential road map within a strong Catholic and Jesuit background. I worked very hard at Holy Cross, and it allowed me to be well-prepared as I ventured out into the business world.”

He worked in real estate finance for Citibank and BayBank before becoming CFO of Atlantic Retail Properties, which grew into Eastern Development.

Maher and his sister, Mary Jane (Maher) Higgins ’88, an elementary school teacher, were raised in New York by their parents, Jeanne, a school secretary, and Bill, who retired after working for Citibank for 39 years. “One of the great memories I have of my mother was her graduating from college in her mid-40s,” Tom recalls. “She never had the opportunity to go to college early in her life, but it was a great lesson in perseverance and the value of education.”

Holy Cross Provost Frank Vellaccio notes, “Tom Maher’s generosity to Holy Cross in his mother’s name honors her memory and will provide deserving students from Xavier a chance to attain a Holy Cross education. Tom’s great generosity is also noteworthy given that he graduated in 1984.”

“While this is in honor of my mother,” Maher points out, “my father deserves equal mention. He showed me how to be a good father and husband, dedicated to my mother in her last days and constantly kindling hope.”

Maher and his wife, Nancy (Kendall), live in Andover, Mass., with their children, Peter and Colleen. Rev. Michael F.

Other members of the Holy Cross community who Maher says had an impact on him include William Green, retired history professor, Rev. Paul F. Harman, S.J., former executive vice-president of the College, and Rev. Robert E. Manning, S.J., former chaplain.

“I’ve made wonderful friendships at Holy Cross—Jesuits, alumni/ae, and classmates,” Maher says. “Their values, especially their commitment to ‘do the right thing,’ are extraordinary.”

His parents’ examples started shaping his morals as a child, Maher says. “I think my parents instilled at an early age that you should give what you can, when you can,” he explains. “They were always very conscious of what they had, and they shared what they had with a lot of different people. At an early age, I remember my mother taking children from the Lower East Side who lived in apartment buildings that didn’t have playgrounds, to our apartment complex, which did have playgrounds, and got them to enjoy some of the things that we had. Simple things like that had a profound impact on me, and I just saw more and more examples of that as time went on.”

Maher, who has also donated money in memory of his mother to Epiphany, his elementary school, and Xavier, his high school, says he thinks that the $175 million goal of the Lift High the Cross fund-raising campaign is feasible. “There’s a strong commitment among alumni/ae to give to Holy Cross, and I think that has increased under the direction of Fr. McFarland and others,” he says. “I think most importantly, there’s a tremendous commitment to the great things that are accomplished at Holy Cross.”

Mark J. Cadigan is a free-lance writer from Stoneham, Mass.
270 Tremont St., Boston

April 11: The Boston Regional Campaign Committee and 200 guests celebrated the Lift High the Cross Campaign with a cocktail buffet and reception at The Shubert Theatre, followed by an eight o'clock performance of Disney’s Aida at the Wang Center for the Performing Arts. Ann Marie Connolly ’74, of Concord, Mass., chairs the Boston Committee. Ryan Collar, Class of 2001 valedictorian, spoke to the group about how his Holy Cross education has helped him prioritize in his life. Collar, who has been serving as a Jesuit Volunteer, will attend medical school in the fall.
The Scene

Fifth Avenue & 42nd Street, N.Y.

April 29: President and chief executive officer of the New York Public Library, Paul LeClere '63, welcomed 115 guests to kick off the New York Regional Campaign. Anthony Fauci, M.D., '62, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the NIH, was the featured speaker. Fauci spoke about the depth and breadth of his Holy Cross experience and the implications that "training according to the spirit" would have on his life.