March 18, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

 With a very heavy heart, I want to inform you of the passing of Trustee, distinguished alumnus and Heidelberg benefactor Theodore “Ted” Hieronymus, ’65, on Thursday, March 14, 2019.  Ted’s legacy, which extends through his wife and Heidelberg sweetheart, Jane (Hoernemann), ’64, and members of their extended family, is so firmly entrenched in Heidelberg’s history over the past six-plus decades that it is nearly incomprehensible to imagine our ’Berg community without his presence in it.  Few alumni have been stronger champions for Heidelberg.

Ted committed his career and life to spreading the love of music and other activities by teaching young people in the classroom, on the stage and on the athletic field.  When he arrived at Heidelberg as a freshman music major and a track and field student-athlete in the fall of 1961, he was quick to sign on with the Concert Choir, performing all four years and experiencing the international tour in 1966.  Along with Jane, Ted was among the founding members to form a new swing choir called the Singing Collegians.  After graduation, Ted earned his Master’s degree in Music from Kent State and then became the vocal music director at Mentor High School, where he shared his love of music with students and the community for the next 32 years.  He was the weight coach at Mentor High and the originator of the school’s Mentor Top 25 Show Choir.  When the Top 25 celebrated its 50th anniversary, many Heidelberg alumni were among those who returned to pay tribute to the man who was not only their director but who recruited them to enroll at Heidelberg (close to 100 by some counts).  But that was just the beginning.

Ted joined the Board of Trustees 16 years ago, in 2003.  His clear vision and wise counsel on the Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and University Advancement & Marketing board committees has been immeasurable in helping us move closer to our strategic goals.  Along with Jane, he was a long-standing member of the Fellows Organization.  Their loyalty to Heidelberg music has reverberated in their support for the Ohl Endowment and in providing much-needed new chairs for Ohl Concert Hall.  Ted also provided hundreds of chairs for indoor and outdoor usage across campus.  Essentially, when Ted saw a need, he found a way to address it.  He and Jane generously supported the Brenneman Hall campaign, the annual Concert Choir tour and the Christmas concert.  As a member of Berg Bravo!, Ted’s (and Jane’s) friendship, wisdom and advice have uplifted the School of Music & Theatre more times than we can count.

As a former track athlete and coach, it was also important to Ted to support ’Berg student-athletes.  He had been a member of the “H” Association for many years.  In honor of Jane’s late father, the legendary coach Paul Hoernemann, the couple provided a major gift to Hoernemann Stadium.  The family also provided gifts to the annual Hoernemann Prize for student-athletes and music majors, as well as to the Sarah Welsh Scholarship.

While music and athletics may be a theme, when I think of the areas of our University and campus impacted by Ted’s generosity, I’m awestruck and very, very grateful.  Ted has lent his support to every major capital campaign dating back to Gillmor Hall in the early 2000s, including the Saurwein Health & Wellness Center, Frann’s Field, the France Hall Restoration/Renovation campaign, ACCE, the Quellhorst Endowment for Student Community Service, the Enrollment Branding, Marketing and Website Growth Plan, and the Strike Up the Bands campaign.

As members of the Heidelberg Heritage Society, the Hieronymus legacy will be perpetuated in the planned gift Ted and Jane have established for Heidelberg.  We are so proud to count them among our most generous donors as inaugural members of The 1850 Society of the Builders and Benefactors organization for those whose lifetime giving has surpassed $1 million.  Ted and Jane made their first gift of $10 to Heidelberg for a “TV in Science Hall” in December 1964.

It will be difficult to say goodbye to this unassuming gentleman and friend who has meant so much to this institution.  Back in June 2011, we gave Ted and Jane the well-deserved Outstanding Alumni Award.  Just last June, I was even more honored to surprise Ted with the 2018 Trustee Distinguished Service Award for the many ways he made a difference in the lives of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and this University.

Ted is survived by his wife, Jane; children Paul, Victoria and Bryan; seven grandchildren, including ’Berg senior Christian Hieronymus; and his brother, Lee.

Calling hours for Ted will be from 3-8 p.m. Friday, March 22, at the Brunner Sanden Dietrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center, 8466 Mentor Ave., Mentor.  A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 23, at First Church, Congregational, 22 Liberty St. Painesville.  You can read Ted’s full obituary [here](https://heidelberg.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=aedcf85e9275dba4a51d423f2&id=57fa2af6d4&e=97159f85d8).  The family has requested any memorial contributions be made to Heidelberg in his honor.

In my comments about Ted while giving him our Trustee Award in the packed Wickham Great Hall last June, I said that Ted was probably unaware of how much his presence on the Board meant to me (and to others I am sure).  He always asked good questions, approached problems with common sense, and demonstrated selfless care for this University.  Once earned, he always trusted others.  I loved his slow measured expression of caution when things warranted a pause:  “Well, I don’t know about that.”  The truth is that I don’t know about a lot of things and Ted always seemed to know exactly what was worth knowing in that moment.  I miss that great quality about Ted already.

Today, we return one hundred-fold the affection Ted had for his alma mater and we express our deepest sympathy to his family, friends and alumni to whom he meant so much.  Rest in peace, my friend.  We will all miss you dearly.

Sincerely,

Rob Huntington
President