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I was asked by Dr. Scot Hibbard, the department chair, to share some memories of my time at DePaul University as a political science student in the late 1970s, and the impact of that time on my accomplishments over the course of a 40+ year professional career. I also have a personal story to share of Dr. Cathy May, DePaul's long-serving political science professor who recently passed away. We became very close friends during the '79-'80 school year - my senior and her freshman year. I first met Cathy during her Freshman Orientation, an encounter I'll never forget, as I struck up a conversation with this beautiful young lady with a quick wit who wanted to change the world for the better. The conversation quickly turned into a debate, and we rapidly realized that we shared a passion for politics. From that first day, when we met before the start of the semester, through the end of the school year, we grew inseparable. I knew back then, in the fall, that I would be heading off to military service as an Army officer upon graduation to repay my scholarship. As Cathy and I became closer, the thought of leaving her greatly weighed on my mind.

Cathy, like me, also declared Political Science as a major. We were study buddies, played on the basketball 2v2 intramural team together, and could talk about anything and everything for hours at a time. Although we never called ourselves a couple, it was apparent to everyone who knew us – and eventually to us both – that we were more than just friends. We enjoyed every day of that school year – our mutual company and our passion for political science.

I would be remiss not to mention another important influence from that time, my favorite professor Dr. Dick Farkas, who is still at DePaul. I was very fortunate to join him on a trip to the then Soviet Union and Poland during the winter break that year, where I really got a firsthand look at two communist states and realized that the people there yearned for the same things we do. Cathy very much wanted to travel with the group, but her dad wasn't quite ready for that, so she stayed back in Chicago.

The school year sped by quickly and as we neared the end, Cathy and I tried to figure out what would be next for the two of us. My thoughts were that I would serve the minimum required four years in the military, and then return to Chicago to go to law school and meet back up with Cathy. It didn't quite work out that way. In June of 1980, immediately following graduation, I headed off to infantry school, followed by a four-year assignment to Germany.

Initially, Cathy and I kept in touch via letters and a few phone calls, yet the time and great distance proved too much, and gradually we grew apart without the convenience and connection offered by today's modern technology. Eventually we lost contact completely and life moved on for the both of us. Four years came and went, and I wound up making my first career that of a military officer.

Fast forward 40 years: after retiring from the military, I spent the past 20+ years working for what is now the University Maryland Global Campus (UMGC). The past 5 years of that I have served in Tokyo, as the Vice President and Director of UMGC's Asia division. My youngest son Jeffrey came along with us to Japan, where he earned his Associate's Degree with UMGC. We decided that earning his bachelor's degree at a more traditional institution would make sense for his goals and, since my family was still in Chicago, I thought: Why not DePaul? My dad was also a DePaul alumnus, having earned his degree on the GI Bill after WW II, and I followed his footsteps. My love for political science was passed on to Jeffrey, and while helping him research options, I decided to check DePaul's website and review the programs before assisting my son with the application process.

While browsing the site, I noticed a Dr. Cathy May listed under the Political Science department faculty. A quick review of the information made it obvious this was the very same Cathy May from my school days. I reached out to her and shared our family's plan of sending Jeffrey off to DePaul in the spring of 2020. Cathy forwarded my message to Dr. Farkas, and the three of us started corresponding. Jeffrey was admitted to DePaul and we flew to Chicago in February 2020 to see him off, not knowing COVID-19 was on the way...trailing closely behind us. We arrived and spent a couple of days at DePaul visiting both Cathy May and Dick Farkas. In just the few hours over those two days, Jeffrey and I got to spend valuable time with Cathy. I could tell she was the same selfless person I knew so many years before. Her passion for people and caring had not dimmed in the least. As we were having our final lunch, before she had to get back to class, Cathy said she hoped to help Jeffrey get an internship and provide him any advising help he needed. At that final meeting, we hugged goodbye and promised that next time, we would get together and catch up on our lives. I had been invited to return that May, for the annual Political Science reception, to make some remarks as a distinguished graduate. I really looked forward to seeing for myself, in person, how my son was doing as a DePaul student and

also, to catching up further with Cathy and Dr. Farkas. Then of course, COVID-19 hit, and life as we knew it changed.

Jeffrey never moved on campus and instead, stayed with my sister and took all his classes via Zoom. Sometime around May, Cathy messaged my son and told him she would not be able to help with his internship, as she would be out the remainder of the year with medical issues though she hoped to be back in the Fall. I emailed asking her if there was anything I could do for her, but did not hear back. The last week of September, Jeffrey called and told me about Cathy's passing.

After over 40 years without contact, getting the chance to meet Cathy again was truly special for me. Her death left me really feeling very sad. What a warm and wonderful lady Cathy was and, attending her DePaul memorial showed me how much she had inspired and helped so many students and colleagues in her life.

My education at DePaul was the springboard to my professional careers. During my professional life, I've had two complete careers: the first, I served as an Army officer for 20+ years and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. During my Army career I served assignments in Germany, Korea, and Bosnia and completed several temporary duty assignments in the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America. I was privileged to command different companies of 100-350 personnel, and served as a brigade executive officer where I was second in charge of 2,000 personnel. I also held various positions in public affairs, interacting with the media. During my time in the Army, I was to learn and practice a set of values which have stayed with me forever: duty, which is quite simply fulfilling your obligations. Respect, or treating others how they should always be treated. Selfless service, putting the welfare of those around you, especially your subordinates, before your own. And always, acting with integrity, doing what is right even when no one else is watching.

My second career has been in higher education – I joined the University of Maryland Global Campus in 2000 and was instrumental in setting up an entire new department that supported educational opportunities for military servicemembers, and their families on military installations throughout the United States. As I worked my way up the organizational ladder, I focused on program management and using technology to improve student processes, in an institution with distinct campuses throughout the world. In 2013, I was appointed the Vice

President of Stateside Military Support, and in July 2016, I was selected for my current role as Vice President and Director of UMGC Asia – our Asia division consists of 25 education sites on military installations throughout mainland Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, and Guam, with additional support for Australia, Singapore, and Diego Garcia. I am responsible for day-to-day operations which educate close to 12,000 students a year, with a workforce of over 50 collegiate and 250 adjunct faculty, plus 200 staff members. I have also served as an adjunct associate professor at UMGC, teaching Introduction to Public Speaking.

Lastly, I feel very honored to have been inducted into the International Adult Continuing Education Hall of Fame, in November 2017. During my time at UMGC, the university has really focused on educating people who did not go straight to college out of high school, or may have had to cut short their traditional campus experience and pick it back up later in life - students who are often juggling all the responsibilities of adult life such as parenthood, while working a full-time job as well as trying to go to school. I really came to appreciate how much some people must sacrifice to achieve their educational dreams and realized that while it is important to keep academic quality high, we need to help remove unnecessary barriers that get in the way of their education.

So, what have I learned that might be helpful to any student reading this, knowing that I am now in my 60s, and the world has changed so much since I was a DePaul undergraduate? Here are the main things I have found to hold true, and difficult lessons learned that might help you, as you move forward in creating your own life journeys.

- **Believe in the education you have received at DePaul; it will truly serve you well:**

When I went off to my Basic Officer Infantry Course, I was paired up with the graduates of the United States Military Academy (USMA) that had also chosen the Infantry. Those who got selected for USMA all received a full scholarship with an estimated value of over \$200k. It is a very competitive process, and these are well-educated individuals. My classmates included at least one Rhodes Scholar. At first, I was a bit daunted, but quickly came to the realization that I had been given a solid foundation in critical thinking and reasoning and, that I was able to realistically examine myself, reflect, and be flexible. I was able to utilize the skills and knowledge I had gained at DePaul and articulate them effectively to external audiences. I was able to work towards goals independently and in collaboration with others. All of these are attributes that DePaul attempts to foster in their

graduates. Before my son Jeffrey went off to DePaul, he often saw many things differently from me, but couldn't always fully explain his views — now, I often feel like I have to play catch up to him, to keep a grasp on the changing world. Throughout my entire career, I have always been able to rely on those skills that were first sown back at DePaul. Perhaps, more important than the skills, were the values that DePaul charges you to go for in the world: integrity, being hospital, a belief in the dignity of every individual, and special attention to the poor and marginalized. These values will always give your life real meaning.

- **Follow your heart; it's not always about the money:** Back in early 2000, I had submitted my military retirement paperwork and was job hunting. I was lucky that at the time the job market was good, so I had a few opportunities to choose from. The choices came down to 1) working as a Public Affairs Specialist at the Commonwealth Edison Tri-City Power Plant along the Mississippi river in Illinois or 2) working for this adult education university in Maryland (UMGC), which was trying to expand their presence in the military student segment, in a somewhat undefined role as they had not entirely decided what the end result would look like. I was flown first class to the power plant, and had a connection through the head of Commonwealth Edison Public Affairs team, who was a retired Army Colonel, plus the plant manager was a retired Navy officer. They offered me lots of money to include bonuses, but I did not feel like my job would have any real impact nor was there any potential for professional growth. At the UMGc interview, I really hit it off with the first three team members of the envisioned four-person team...to the point we began mapping out what our first steps together would be as a new department. Within a day of visiting, I had a job offer at Commonwealth Edison, with the large salary and bonus package. For the next week, I waited for UMGc to make an offer, and it finally arrived. The salary was far lower, and there were no bonuses. However, I did not sense much positive energy from Commonwealth Edison and after really thinking about it, I trusted my feeling and chose UMGc. Over the next several years, we built the university department of four employees to over 150 employees. I had the good fortune to lead it for five years and then, take a similar role, leading UMGc's Asia division, which I have been doing for the last five years. I made

my initial decision not focusing on the money, but in the end, the money came, and I have been enjoying my second career which every single day, makes me want to work.

- **Think globally and multi-culturally:** From my first military assignment to Germany, as a young officer in the early 1980s, to my current role at UMGC Asia (living just west of central Tokyo), I have spent close to a third of my professional life living overseas. I have found that building genuine relations with people from varying cultures and countries is often the key to achieving significant success, and immensely rewarding. I also learned very quickly that the world doesn't center around the United States. I often thought about how difficult it was growing up with eight siblings in a lower-middle class family, attending Chicago public schools, but visiting places like the most impoverished areas of Port-au-Prince, Haiti and Cairo, Egypt, I realized I was in fact extremely privileged to get a college degree. DePaul has a fundamental academic goal of intercultural and global understanding, and you have been given solid tools to build on but, moving forward, you need to focus on serving others. From that, success will come... not by focusing on your own individual success, where we will likely always come up short.
- **Work on being resilient:** Being resilient doesn't mean that we don't experience stress, suffering, anguish and emotional upheaval. Resiliency means that we can withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events. My first wife was paralyzed by a drunk driver, and eventually died from her injuries. I lost my closest friend right around the same time, and it really took a long time, with lots of help from family and friends, to be able to move on. Most of you know someone who has lost their life or a close loved one from the coronavirus pandemic. Life, at times, seems unbearably difficult. Studies show that over 80% of people feel they are resilient, while only a little over 50% are resilient, and even if they are, certain events can break down that resiliency. There are positive things you can do to increase your own resiliency and I would begin doing them now. There are literally thousands of online articles on this topic, but to focus on a few points: 1) Believe in your abilities 2) Find a sense of purpose in your life 3) Make sure you have caring, supportive people around you 4) Embrace change, because it will be a constant in your life 5) Think positively and 6) Work on problem solving and goal

setting, which you will need in difficult times. We will all face difficult times throughout our lives but being flexible allows you to take what life gives you, and move on.

- **Have empathy – understanding how others feel, so you can respond appropriately, is critical to your success:** Most of us learn empathy while growing up and observing others around us. Empathy is more than feeling sorry for others; it is not pity, but more akin to really walking in another’s shoes, so you can make the best decisions by taking their experience into account. Having empathy allows you to demonstrate helping behavior. If empathy doesn’t come naturally to you, it can be learned. Look for signs of emotion others are experiencing. Don’t judge too quickly. Talk to people that you meet and work with, really focusing on listening.
- **Finally, treat everyone with respect and kindness:** I wish that I had this learned this trait when I was 21, and just leaving DePaul, but it came a little later in life. I have worked hard on myself to get better at this, and for at least the 15 years of my life, I have used every opportunity to share with those who work for me that there is a never a reason not to be respectful and kind to everyone that we come into contact with – especially those we have any kind of power or advantage over. I believe that we all have a higher responsibility to our fellow citizens of the world. When we focus on being respectful and kind to everyone we meet, we simply make the environment around us better.

I hope this DePaul alum story, shared from the perspective of my sixties, offers some key lessons learned along the way and will help inspire you as you begin your careers. As I look back to my time at DePaul University, as a fellow student with Cathy May, and our paths crossing unexpectedly over 40 years later, I was so appreciative to meet up with her again, even for such a very short time. Learning what an impact she made as beloved professor Dr. Cathy May, and the lives she changed for the better, was truly inspiring to me. I am forever grateful and cherish these DePaul memories – both then, and now – and am proud to see my son as a soon-to-be third generation DePaul graduate.