

# DEVELOPMENT REPORT

## Paul E. Thornton '63



Those who work on gift-giving as we do on behalf of our students and faculty are “half-full” people. We are always encouraged by the continual expressions of support from alumni and friends, often from people who know us now only through e-mails, appeal letters and these days, our website and videos. Their responses – no matter how small or large – always give us hope that our messages convey how much their support means for the mission of teaching and learning that our faculty, monks and dedicated men and women, carry on with our students each day.

2011 was a curiously uneven year for us in development. We placed new energies into identifying more foundations and friends who might support us, and several new major responses followed. This doesn't always happen, but this past year it did. One new family foundation, the Grossman Family Foundation, that had some business involvement in Newark some years back, responded to our appeal for new, substantial support for our Leahy House residence program with a \$500,000 grant, one of the largest one-time grants we have ever received. Another new contact with a history of support for Catholic schools in the Newark Archdiocese looked with special favor on us and made a commitment that will yield over \$1 million over the next five years. We also received strong added support for our highly successful counseling program, which serves all students who need it and directs special attention to the young men in Leahy House.

We also received critical sustaining support from our alumni and friends, who gave annual dollars in amounts that fell a little short of our goal, but still provided the solid base of funding for all our programs. The special foundation support noted above made up for the slight fall-off in alumni and friends support.

There were other bright signs in our annual appeal, which led 30 percent of our alumni to contribute. The 50th Reunion class of 1961 set a new record for participation with 70 percent of the class responding, many with their largest-ever single gift to St. Benedict's, yielding a total of \$212,000, fully six times the amount of their previous year's giving. A

huge increase in support and attendance, especially from our younger alumni, bolstered our St. Benedict's Dinner, which honored two longtime coaches – Mike DiPiano H'82 (also athletic director 1977 – 2010) and Rick Jacobs H'90, as well as Tom McCabe H'02, author of *Miracle on High Street*.

The year ended with another miracle: Eric Ross, whom we made an honorary alumnus in 2009 to recognize his decades of help to us in honor of his lifelong friendship with Tom Durkin '43, provided a \$1 million bequest for scholarships in honor of Tom and his family. We have always cherished our friendship with this former Newark industrialist, widely known for his philanthropy to Jewish organizations both local and national. His bequest perpetuates his generosity to us and his bond with the Durkin family.

We could not succeed in our efforts without tremendous volunteer support. Year-in and year-out that comes from both our Board members, who are occasionally recognized for their help, and from our alumni class agents, rarely given the recognition they deserve, for they write the letters and make the calls to, and plead and cajole and more, their classmates to urge them to support us.

Perhaps no one recently has exemplified that generous service more than Kevin Moore '64, who devoted the entire academic year to helping us organize our development efforts to greater effect. Our successful year, raising \$5,197,000 in annual and capital gifts and pledges, is due in no small part to his fresh eyes and enthusiasm for meeting our challenge to support the inspiring work each day with our students.

*Paul E. Thornton*