

## **In Memoriam: Thomas J. Wolff, Life-long Benefactor of UConn and Life Itself**

**(11/10/2008)** - Thomas J. Wolff, a 1956 cum laude economics alumnus and lifelong benefactor of UConn, as well as an accomplished businessman, passed away on October 27, 2008 in Boynton Beach, Florida, at the age of 80. Wolff's accomplishments are many, but all share the theme of getting and giving the most out of life. From military service with the 43rd division in Germany during the Korean War to dominance in the life insurance industry, Wolff dedicated his life to success both professionally and personally and imbuing that success and exuberance for life to all that he touched.

A respected leader in the life insurance industry, Wolff pursued his professional development with fervor achieving positions of leadership and coveted awards for his performance. He served as chairman emeritus and former chief executive officer of Wolff-Zackin Associates and Vernon Publishing Services; president of the Hartford Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, the Connecticut Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, and the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors; president of the Million Dollar Round Table Foundation in Chicago; and chairman of the Board of Life Underwriters Training Council. He was the recipient of the Huebner Gold Medal in 2001, the Founders Award Gold Medal for Excellence from the International Insurance Society in 1991, the New England Entrepreneur of the Year from Ernst & Young and Merrill Lynch in 1990, the John Newton Russell Award in 1983. The International Insurance Society in their citation of Wolff reflected that, "Tom Wolff created capital and financial need analysis which has revolutionized the way life insurance is sold all over the world."

While his professional achievements are many, Wolff's dedication to his community and family are equally inspiring and reveal the amazing philanthropist, civic leader, father, and husband he was. Giving freely of himself to the Vernon Town Council and Board of Education, Wolff committed a significant portion of his time to his church as well serving as a Sunday School Superintendent and Church Council member. Wolff enjoyed sixty years of marriage with, in his words, his "advisor, sounding board, critic, companion, friend, and lover," Bette. They had three children and seven grandchildren.

The School of Business and the entire University will truly feel his loss as his presence is forever intertwined with its physical campus, its mission, and its future academic development. From a quick perusal of the University map, one can readily see Wolff's philanthropic generosity. From the Wolff-Zackin Natatorium to the Thomas and Bette Wolff Family Park, the University has been the recipient of Wolff's altruistic nature.

Wolff's on-going dedication to the University's future academic development is most readily seen through the Wolff Family Chair for Entrepreneurship, the Wolff Program for Entrepreneurship at the School of Business, and four endowed athletic scholarships which Wolff and Bette enjoyed seeing in action as continuous basketball season ticket holders for over 60 years. Wolff served for many years on the Board of the University Foundation, where he was elected director emeritus in 2004, and on the School of Business Board of Advisors.

The University recognized him on numerous occasions selecting him as a distinguished alumnus in 1981, awarding him the UConn Club's Outstanding Contribution Award in 1991, and inducting him into the School of Business Hall of Fame in 1993. UConn recognized Wolff's lifelong contribution to the University in 2003 when he was the 26th person in UConn's history to be awarded the coveted "University Medal."

Tom Wolff's spirit will live on through a vast legacy abundant with success, altruism, and volunteerism. The School of Business as well as the entire University community grieve alongside the Wolff Family and we thank the Wolff family for allowing us the privilege to have shared in Tom's life and legacy.

