

# Former Shoeshine Boy Learns to Beat the S&P 500

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**GRADUATING BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENT COLIN KELLEY '12 CAME TO UNH AS A “SHY MATH GEEK.” HE’S GRADUATING AS A RISING TALENT IN INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT.** One day, when Colin Kelley '12 was an eighth grader at Hampton Middle School in New Hampshire, his mom gave him a tip about a job opportunity opening up at her place of business, Fisher Scientific, a Hampton-based, healthcare equipment maker.

After school on the following week, Kelley the younger went to Fisher and began the first and only job he would ever have during all the years leading up to his graduation from high school. He became a shoeshine boy for some 200 corporate executives as they bought and sold companies or lunched in their capacious offices.

“The money was good,” recalls Kelley with smile. “But even more important was the way they mentored me.”

They talked to him about deals—big deals—and how, in the end, business is all about relationships. But what Kelley recalls most clearly is the way they *behaved*, day to day. “They loved what they did,” avers Kelley. “And I wanted to be like them.”

It’s safe to say he’s on his way. A finance and international affairs dual major, Kelley made what he calls his “second great decision” of his life—taking the shoeshine job was the first—and joined the Whittemore School’s (now Paul College) student-run Atkins Investment Group as a sophomore. The Atkins Group is a 35-student strong company-within-a-business school that manages a real stock portfolio called the Wildcat Fund. It’s competitive to get into the group whose members take pride in regularly besting the S&P 500.

As a member, Kelley advanced from stock analyst to portfolio manager and, finally, to president. As president, the quondam “shy math geek” came out of his shell to polish his communication skills and hone a personal leadership style. “I think people perform better when they like what they’re doing,” avers President Kelley. “I try to match people up with sectors that interest them.”

As Atkins president, he became a game changer when he began partnering with Dean Daniel Innis to raise private funding for the group. Doing so will “enable more students to enjoy the Atkins experience, increase our portfolio, provide access to better research, and reduce our transaction charges,” Kelley explains.

To date, they have increased their portfolio from \$50,000 to more than \$100,000 by pitching their ideas to heavy-hitting alums. While Kelley hopes the group will eventually increase the pot to the “several hundreds of thousands range,” he is satisfied to have helped move the Wildcat Fund to “the same ballgame as other student-run funds around the country.”

As Kelly looks toward graduation in May, he has reason to be optimistic. The company where he’ll work—the Portsmouth office of the investment management firm Prime Buchholz—employed him as an intern during the past two years, providing valuable experience for a time when Kelly sees himself “breaking through the Ivied ranks” of the high-end investment management or private equity fields—maybe in New York and just to prove to himself he can do it.

With a job lined up at Prime Buchholz, he’ll finish out a productive UNH career rooming in Hetzel Hall with his kid brother Robert, a first-year computer engineering major, and doing what he’s always done. Thinking big.

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