



UNH Students Grant Dream To Retired Businessman And World War II Veteran

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DURHAM, N.H. – A group of University of New Hampshire students has made a dream come true for a World War II veteran and successful businessman who always wished he had went to college.

The UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics students made John Heim of Bedford, NH, an honorary member of the Entrepreneurial Venture Creation Class of 2009 during a special celebration of his achievements Saturday, Dec. 13, 2008, at the Carlyle Place.

“The event touched each and every one of us there. It felt great to give such a unique and special person like Mr. Heim something that will mean a lot to him. He has seen a lot in his 101 years and has served both his country and his family business very well and he deserved nothing less. Mr. Heim showed each of us his entrepreneurial spirit through all the amazing things he accomplished up until his retirement at the age of 80. Overall, the event was very special and I was proud to be able to make this happen for him,” said Cole Connolly, UNH Whittemore School student and member of the Entrepreneurial Venture Creation Class of 2009.

Born in 1907, Heim’s formal education ended in the seventh grade when he left school to help with the family business, a New Jersey meat and fish market. As an adult, Heim taught himself accounting and managed several family businesses, including accounting for mortgage debts during the Great Depression. He went on to have a successful career as a real estate manager and financier.

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He and his wife of 46 years, Gladys, retired to New Hampshire 25 years ago. For the last eight years, Heim has lived at the Carlyle Assisted Living Facility in Bedford, NH. His wife passed away seven years ago.

Now at age 101, one of Heim’s only regrets in life is that he never went to college. The students hoped that by including Heim as a member of their class and presenting him with a class membership certificate, they would help make his academic dream come true.

“Working with the Ageless Dreamer Foundation to present John Heim with a certificate of achievement was an amazing experience. Seeing Mr. Heim's reaction to the surprise event made it even more amazing. You could tell he really appreciated what was done for him, and it felt good to be a part of something like this,” said Michael McKee, UNH Whittemore School student and member of the Entrepreneurial Venture Creation Class of 2009.

Founded in January 2006, the Ageless Dreamer Foundation is a Dover, NH-based nonprofit that makes long-held dreams come true for the oldest generation. The group aims to erase the stigma of being older, which has become so prevalent in our society, and encourage the nation’s oldest generation to continue to dream.

The students involved with the Ageless Dreamer project are just one of several groups of students in the UNH Internship in Entrepreneurial and Management Practice class who conduct a consulting project with area nonprofit organizations. This semester, students also are working with Autism Respite Resource Outreach, Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy, Krempels Brain Injury Foundation, NH Art Association, NH Carbon Challenge, NH Department of Corrections, Correctional Industries, Southeast New Hampshire Habitat for Humanity, and Women's Business Center, Inc.

The course was created in 2000 by Jeff Sohl, professor of decisions sciences and director of the Center for Venture Research, and Ross Gittell, James R. Carter Professor and professor of management.

"What we try to instill with our entrepreneurship students is the idea of giving something back to society and the business world using their business skills. Working with these various nonprofit groups affords students the opportunity to understand the importance of using their skills to help nonprofits in the business world," Sohl said.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a New England liberal arts college and a major research university with a strong focus on undergraduate-oriented research. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

PHOTOS

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/WSBEDream1.JPG>

John Heim and his dream requestor Mary Gutsell (front) with UNH students (left to right) Tom Loosigian, Michelle Pirro, Mike McKee, Cole Connolly, Jason Norton, and Laurie Widmark, founder of the Ageless Dreamer Foundation.


<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/WSBEDream2.JPG>

Mary Gutsell, who requested the dream for John Heim, reacts with John Heim following the presentation of the certificate.

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/WSBEDream3.JPG>

UNH student Jason Norton presents the certificate of achievement to John Heim.

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