

A Passion for Ideas

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"WHEN YOU WERE WITH ED, THE FOOD AND THE WINE TASTED BETTER, THE VIEW WAS MORE SPECTACULAR, THE MUSIC WAS CRISPER," SCOTT HENDRICKSON '89 OF HIS FRIEND, ED FRIEDLANDER (ABOVE). "HE MADE YOU FEEL MORE ALIVE." [COURTESY PHOTO/VESTMARK]

When Scott Hendrickson first met Ed Friedlander, the two young men were standing in line to register for classes on their very first day at UNH.

It was 36 years ago, and what is now a fast, online process was, in 1984, a very manual one — long waits standing in slow-moving lines in the sweltering late summer heat in the gym forced students to make small talk with each other to pass the time, asking where they're from, what dorm they're in, what they want to study.

It was a cumbersome registration process — but also fertile ground for strangers to become lifelong friends.

After meeting Friedlander that day in line, says Hendrickson, “I quickly learned you never have an average day with Ed by your side.”

The friendships Ed created and cultivated from his UNH days continued for more than three decades, until his untimely death at the age of 53 in June 2020. He was struck suddenly by a non-COVID illness, which took his life in just a matter of weeks. In addition to friends and extended family, he leaves his wife, Debra Pulpi-Friedlander, two children, Madison and Colton, and his sister, Jane (Friedlander) Bannister '87.

Wanting something positive to come from such a tragic loss, that circle of friends, family and business colleagues have donated to create a scholarship in Ed’s name at UNH, to foster the entrepreneurial spirit in students that Ed exhibited nearly all of his life.

The Edward M. Friedlander '88 Memorial Entrepreneurship Scholarship will be awarded through [UNH's Peter T. Paul Entrepreneurship Center](#), or ECenter, to students who express entrepreneurial interests and skills, much like Ed’s.

Hendrickson said it felt appropriate to inspire future entrepreneurs through this scholarship at UNH. “UNH is really the thread that we all have in common. We all had such an amazing four, five, maybe six years at UNH, and post-college, our friendships have only grown stronger.”

Ian Grant, director of the ECenter, looks forward to honoring Ed’s legacy by awarding this scholarship to a top performing, innovative student coming out of high school.

“Knowing that the student will share the same passion that Ed had for new ideas and opportunities and get the chance to pursue them — here at UNH and beyond — is one of the best ways to celebrate Ed’s life. This will be the first scholarship awarded by the Entrepreneurship Center, so it takes on additional significance. We’re thankful for this gift, and truly humbled and honored that Ed’s friends and family have chosen to memorialize him by helping future UNH students.”

Friedlander graduated from UNH with a degree in civil engineering, and as such was a serious student — at least until Thursday nights would come around. He was a brother at Sigma Alpha Epsilon, and while he enjoyed the socializing on the weekends (especially costume parties, say his fellow SAE brothers), he also took seriously his various leadership positions within the fraternity.

IDEAS ARE EVERYWHERE

To help an entrepreneurial student in Ed’s memory, you can donate to the Edward M. Friedlander '88 Memorial Fund. [Learn more](#)

In the years since UNH, Ed served as a tremendous motivator to a close group of 20 or so friends from those days, says Scott. Ed was the one who would always get the friends together for annual ski trips, camping and fishing trips, or even a night out “being knuckleheads in Boston,” says Hendrickson.

“He was this magnet ... he took every opportunity to pull people together,” Hendrickson says, recalling countless conversations where Ed would engage his friends in meaningful discourse, whether it was over a campfire during a rafting trip, or over martinis at a high-end restaurant. “Ed was one of those people who made you feel more alive. He inspired a lot of us to be our best version on our best day, every day.”

After graduating in 1988, Ed spent more than a decade in sales at Newmarket International in Portsmouth, and for the last 15 years was the senior vice president of business development at Vestmark in Wakefield, Massachusetts.

At Vestmark his tenacity and commitment made an immeasurable contribution to the company’s growth and culture.

“Colleagues who knew and worked with Ed say universally that he was a friend, a trusted and respected source of knowledge, levity, perspective, advice, counsel and ideas, and always giving of himself and his time,” shares John Lunny, CEO of Vestmark. “Ed had a great sense of humor and a creative and mischievous streak that made so many of us laugh and love him.”

Friedlander made it a point to not only hire UNH students or graduates, but also mentor them. Several of them were among the people who spoke at Ed’s celebration of life held in July, which drew a crowd of nearly 200 people, either in-person at an outdoor venue or online.

While his career was based in software sales, those who knew Ed say he was, at heart, an entrepreneur. “His mind was always thinking of ideas,” says friend Matt Witkos ’89. He could see opportunities in places overlooked by others. An avid skier and snowboarder, shortly after graduation, Ed developed a concept to use the wickets used to attach ski passes as a way to sell advertising. “Ed had that innovative spirit in his blood from an early age.”

Jane (Friedlander) Bannister, Ed’s older sister by 16 months, was part of the reason he came to UNH as a freshman. The two had grown up close, and stayed close throughout their college years, sharing a car, at one point living across the street from each other. She said while many remember her brother as outgoing and personable, she recalls the shyness he worked hard to overcome, especially at college.

“My brother came to UNH and did things that were hard, like rushing a fraternity,” she says. “He took advantage of his time at UNH to learn his strengths, and overcome challenges. For him, college was about growing and experiencing new things.”

He grew up in Gaithersburg, Maryland, but he and Jane spent summers and winters with their parents Gloria and Edward on Moose Pond in Bridgton, Maine, where many college friends remembered meals prepared by Gloria and good times for a group of “holiday-break orphans” who couldn’t make it home for long weekends or breaks at UNH.

Many friends recalled Ed talking about being part of the SEL, or Society for Excellent Living. It’s how Ed would describe his philosophy on life: taking advantage of good opportunities, pursuing extraordinary experiences, being passionate and working as a means to enjoy your family and friends.

“Ed was always open to trying new things; that’s the reason I ended up marrying him. He has a great sense of ‘Hey, why not try something and see what that’s like,’” says Debra. “That’s the reason he met so many interesting people; he loved to interact with people.”

In thinking of what kind of student should receive the scholarship, Witkos says it should go to someone whose mind was always humming with ideas. “Ed would love this idea of being able to harness those ideas when a student comes in as a freshman and having this scholarship help guide that person to be an entrepreneur throughout their life.”

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