



*For our Alumni,
Parents and Friends*

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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2006-07 Alumni Board

By [Roopa Swaminathan](#)

Members of Christopher Newport University's Alumni Board are driven to volunteer time from their busy schedules for one reason – a deep and urgent desire to give back to the University that helped shape their lives and make them better human beings. We invite you to get to know them a little better.

Mark Bernecker – outgoing president ('96)



Mark Bernecker met more than his future wife at CNU; he met himself. After taking time off after high school, he joined the Navy and was on active duty for two years before he decided to go to college. The Navy stint brought him to Norfolk and then to Newport News and CNU.

He says that the wonderful education he got at CNU opened many doors in his life, and volunteering through the Alumni Board has been a great way to give back to the University. He joins other members of the Board in a quest to increase the Alumni Society's membership. Having reconnected with many of his CNU friends through the Society, Mr. Bernecker hopes that fellow Alums will share that joy and contribute even more to President Paul Tribble's vision for the University.

Mr. Bernecker thinks that with more support from Alumni, the CNU Alumni Board could take a more active role in increasing the number of scholarships to deserving students or support student organizations with special needs like upgrading computers.

Mike Koontz – incumbent president ('01)

The stoic, driven and purposeful demeanor of Mike Koontz reflects



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what's on his mind – increasing scholarships for aspiring and worthy students.

Mr. Koontz came to CNU without a clue as to where his life was headed. That changed through a leadership class that helped him become class president his senior year. He has never forgotten the role that CNU played in his life, and volunteering through the Alumni Board is a way to stay in touch with his alma mater and be a part of its future. It's also allowed him to re-connect and network with fellow Alumni.

As incumbent president, Mr. Koontz has plans. Along with his goal for the Board to raise more money to fund scholarships, he also hopes it can move into its own independent building on campus soon. This year, the Board sponsored a 5K race, raffled a car and sold 50/50 raffle tickets – proceeds of all these events go toward fulfilling his goals.

According to Mr. Koontz, few things give him greater gratification than wearing the customary green-colored 50-50 scholarship T-shirt and selling raffle tickets. Like he says, "Every ticket that's sold gets some deserving kid closer to his or her dream of going to college."

And nothing could make Mr. Koontz happier.

Priscilla Bele – vice president ('81)



Priscilla Bele is proud to have been a part of the Newport News Public Schools before getting her degree from CNU. She wants to be a part of President Tribble's vision for the University and its growth. For her, volunteering with the Alumni Board means not just giving back to a university that guided her, but it's also a way to connect and bond with her daughter, who is a student at her alma mater.

Ms. Bele graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, obtained her CPA designation and is the Chief Deputy Commissioner of the Revenue for Newport News.

As vice president, Ms. Bele is responsible for many of the Society's fund-raising activities. She oversaw the car raffle committee, the 50/50 raffle committee, the 5K race and the silent auction. Many of these activities seek the support of

Newport News organizations in CNU's growth.

Dave Edwards – secretary ('96)

When he first came to CNU, Dave Edwards wanted to be a lawyer. However, a chance meeting with a few members of the Sigma Pi fraternity during orientation week changed his life. Someone who started with zero interest in the fraternity life, he became an active member immersed in student activities. His four years with the fraternity caused him to rethink law, get a bachelor's degree in business management and eventually wind up with a full-time job as consultant with his fraternity. Mr. Edwards currently works as a banquet and hotel manager with the Virginia Beach-based resort company, GOLDKEY PHR Hotel and Resorts.



This is his second term on the Board. His first term was while a psychology student in the five-year master's program. As a former student who thoroughly enjoyed his years at CNU and his fraternity, Mr. Edwards sees working with the Alumni Board as a way of sharing his enthusiasm and passion for higher education with current students.

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