



Norman Snyder's \$5 million commitment — the most substantial individual gift in University history — will help future generations of students at UAlbany's School of Business.

Norm Snyder: Portrait of an Entrepreneur

By Carol Olechowski | Photography: Mark Schmidt

President Kermit L. Hall presents a UAlbany lapel pin to Norman E. Snyder Jr., B.S.'83.

A lot has happened to Norman E. Snyder Jr., B.S.'83, since he entered the University at Albany as a freshman in 1979. He became a certified public accountant, worked for some of the most prestigious organizations in the world — and even founded a few highly successful businesses himself along the way. Now, with a personal commitment of \$5 million — the most substantial individual gift in University history — the 44-year-old entrepreneur is providing the means to help future generations of students at UAlbany's School of Business realize their career objectives.

"When I arrived at the University as an 18-year-old green and wet behind the ears, I never in my wildest dreams imagined that I would be standing up here today," Snyder said during the October 17, 2005, press conference announcing his commitment. He credits the "confidence and knowledge I gained at the University," along with the "extraordinary guidelines and encouragement" his parents provided, with helping him to achieve business success.

Snyder majored in accounting, then began his career with an eight-year stint at PriceWaterhouse, one of the largest accounting and consulting companies in the world. Later, he moved on to the National Football League, serving as comptroller for NFL Properties, Inc., the league's marketing unit.

By 1995, seeking new challenges, he helped to establish the South Beach Beverage Company, or SoBe, initially taking on the role of chief financial officer and later assuming the chief operating officer's post. A stroke of genius inspired Snyder and his partners to market their premium, non-carbonated beverages as "healthful refreshment." The line of ready-to-drink teas and fruit juices proved wildly popular with consumers in the United States, Canada, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom and throughout the Caribbean. The partners sold the company to PepsiCo for \$370 million in early 2001, and Snyder retired later that year.

The business world soon beckoned again, however, and Snyder founded Redyns, a consulting firm that offered

financial and operational advice to small and medium-sized companies. He put Redyns on hold in 2003 to join one of his clients, New York City-based Rheingold Brewing Company, where he served as chief operating officer. Rheingold was sold in the fall of 2005, and Snyder is now "awaiting the next project."

Snyder made the \$5 million commitment to UAlbany's School of Business with his wife, Michaela. Their No. 1 objective, noted the father of five, is "to bring in the best faculty possible. The students will benefit from that. When I got out into the real world and began rubbing shoulders with people from all over, I discovered that UAlbany graduates are just as well qualified as graduates from Ivy League schools but don't have the pedigree. Look at the (University at Albany) alumni out there and the success they have enjoyed. I am just one of many."

At UAlbany, Snyder regarded the late Professor of Accounting Harold Cannon as his mentor. "He was an adviser, and he was very good in terms of suggesting the proper approach to many facets of life — academic, business and social. I got to be pretty close to him," remembered Snyder.

Snyder, a Wilton, Conn., resident, feels he and other successful individuals are obligated to give back by supporting organizations that help the community. "I'm inspired and motivated by the success I have achieved, and by that of other alumni," he said.

University at Albany President Kermit L. Hall said, "The University is very grateful to Norm for his commitment to the School of Business and for

advancing our goal of becoming the premier business school in the Northeast." Added Dean Paul A. Leonard of the School of Business: "Norm is one of our most committed alumni, and we are grateful for his leadership and vision in helping the school realize its full potential."

Lazar Joins Business School As Executive-in-Residence



Robert Lazar

Robert Lazar, M.S.'77, former president and chief executive officer of the New York Business Development Corporation (NYBDC), has joined the University at Albany's School of Business as executive-in-residence.

Lazar, who led the NYBDC for 18 years until his retirement in 2005, "will help the school strengthen its ties to the local business community and serve as a mentor to students," explained School of Business Dean Paul Leonard. Lazar is also a longtime member of The University at Albany Foundation.

Last October, Lazar presented a \$51,000 check from NYBDC to the University to support the school's new \$40 million, 80,000-square foot home. The building will feature student-focused, technologically advanced classrooms, wireless Internet access and other amenities designed to help the school become the premier business school in the Northeast. Lazar's company earlier funded a classroom renovation and the school's M.B.A. team suite.

— Carol Olechowski

In addition to pledging to enhance academic, student and faculty programs, Snyder is eager to see work begin on the new School of Business building. The 80,000-square-foot facility will incorporate technologically advanced classrooms and meeting spaces, wireless Internet access and various other amenities into the school's infrastructure.

"I'd like to see the School of Business become one of the pre-eminent business schools in the Northeast," Snyder said. ■