

Alfred University trustee's gift to create a more beautiful campus

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James Jordan '72

Alfred University's campus will look like a million bucks, thanks to a gift from Trustee James Jordan '72.

Jordan, an architect and a long-time chair of the Board of Trustees' Building and Grounds committee, is creating an endowed fund designated for campus beautification; some of the funds are also earmarked for immediate use to enhance the campus's appearance.

"Alfred University did something for me, and I wanted to do something for Alfred," said Jordan. "I feel very strongly about Alfred. I grew up at Alfred, and I received an excellent education. I like to say that I met myself at Alfred."

While his philanthropy includes other organizations, Jordan said he "feels more comfortable about giving to Alfred University. I just feel it's put to better use."

"One of the things about Alfred University that many visitors comment on is how beautiful the campus," said President Mark Zupan. "But maintaining and enhancing the campus's appearance is expensive. We are grateful to Jim Jordan for recognizing that need and helping us to meet it."

As a young man, Jordan may have met himself at Alfred, but it was a chance meeting on a beach in the Virgin Islands that brought him back to Alfred University nearly 20 years ago.

Jordan and his brother, Peter, a 1974 alumnus of Alfred University, used to vacation at a beach in the Virgin Islands every year. “We would eat breakfast together, then my brother would go find a hammock and read a book, and I would go back to my room and do some work,” Jordan said. One day as he was walking along the beach on his way back to the room, he spotted a man in a yellow Alfred University tee-shirt and a floppy hat also walking on the beach. On impulse, he asked the man who happened to be the late Joel Moskowitz &61, an Alfred University trustee if he had attended Alfred too.

Joel&s wife Ann recalls the meeting as well, “Joel was wearing a yellow tee-shirt with the Alfred University seal spread all over his round self, and had just said that no one had asked him about Alfred, when Jim walked past us going the other way, stopped and asked if we were affiliated with Alfred.”

That began an enduring friendship. Joel and his wife Ann, who joined the Alfred University Board of Trustees in 2017 after Joel&s death in 2015, and Jim and Peter Jordan met the Moskowitzes at the resort each winter for two or three years. Joel, who at the time was chair of the Board&s University Relations committee, suggested Jim as an alumni-elected trustee and Jim joined the board in 2003. Once his three-year term as an alumni-elected trustee was over, Jordan was elected to the board as a regular trustee.

His talents as an architect were soon put to work as chair of the Building and Grounds committee, and he found himself working with the Moskowitzes, who created first Joel&s House, then Ann&s House and most recently Moskowitz Hall, through a gift Ann made following Joel&s death. Jordan “was a great help in encouraging the school to tear down the former Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity house and starting over, which resulted in Ann&s house,” Ann Moskowitz said.

Jordan&s family roots are deep in Otsego County. Following his graduation from Alfred University with a degree in business, Jordan went to Syracuse University, where he earned his degree in architecture, along with an MBA degree. He returned to Richfield Springs, NY, to join the family architectural firm started by his father in 1934; he is now the principal in the firm.

His first major gift to Alfred University, then, was to create an endowed scholarship for graduates of Richfield Springs Central School. The first recipient was John Soule ‘09, whose mother, it turns out, had been Jordan&s date to his junior prom.