Leading by Example

By Troy Watkins

David and Rosalie Gronen: the driving force behind the Centennial Campaign

The success of the Centennial Campaign depends on the leadership, dedication, and commitment of thousands of Assumption's alumni, parents, employees, students, and friends. One of the College's finest examples of these ideals is embodied in the partnership of Campaign Chair David Gronen Hon.'86 and his wife, Rosalie, who share a long-standing relationship with the College.

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Rosalie Gronen

"Our relationship with Assumption dates back to when we were both teenagers," Rosalie explained. "Dave was a student at Assumption Preparatory and was going door-to-door, soliciting funds in Worcester. As I accompanied my father on his mission to respond to a request for assistance from Fr. Armand Desaulniers and Fr. Joe Pelletier as the College was recovering from financial damage in 1953. After we were married, our ties with Assumption were nurtured and strengthened as Dave served as a Trustee of the College from 1971 to 1985. We have attended many College functions, participated in fund-raising activities, and welcomed College personnel and their guests to our home on several occasions. All of this we do because the College has always welcomed and included us as part of the Assumption family."

President Tom Boughn knows how fortunate he is to have the Gronens working with him. "There is no higher benchmark of volunteer leadership and stewardship than that which David Gronen has brought to Assumption College's Centennial Campaign. It is my pleasure and the College's good fortune to have him as a partner in our efforts. Together Dave and his wife Rosalie have set the gold standard for support and commitment to Assumption College," he said. "Without their tireless efforts, wonderful hosting style, and personal generosity, Assumption would not be as strong as it is today. It is hard to be around the Gronens and not come away believing in the mission of Assumption College."

WHAT ROSALIE AND DAVID HAVE DONE FOR Assumption is extraordinary. Three years of exemplary service and support were highlighted during the Gronens made a leadership gift of $1 million to the College for the Centennial Campaign. Their gift was used to support the Seeger Challenge for the Tessa Science Center and to create a scholarship fund in their name. This endowed fund will support both merit and financial-need scholarships for future Assumption students. The Gronens have made substantial gifts to every Assumption campaign since the 1970s, and their total giving now approaches $1.5 million. David was the original sponsor of the College's Father Beanstone Invitational Golf Tournament and the first chair of the Assumption College Tomorrow campaign, which solicits funds from Worcester-area businesses to support scholarship aid for students with need.

The Gronens have many wonderful memories of Assumption to cherish. "A very special occasion that I will remember forever is the day that Dave received an honorary degree from Assumption in 1986," said Rosalie. "Our daughter, Gerri Ann, received her degree from the College on the same day and her husband and infant son—our first grandchild—were there to share the joy of this wonderful family celebration."

David added, "We have been enriched by our involvement with the people at Assumption College. The Assumptionists, my Prep classmates, other College faculty and administrators, and trustees I served with on the Board, have added immeasurably to our lives. Various charities have become a 'sixth child' to us through our giving and estate planning, providing us much joy in seeing their accomplishments in the ability to improve the quality of lives through education, care for the elderly, and other human services.

We believe that Assumption's liberal arts education, rooted in the Catholic faith, must be a viable option for the youth of today. Just as we enjoyed watching our five children grow, it has been satisfying for us to watch the College expand its student body and courses of study while remaining rooted in its Catholic heritage. Its growth has been especially pronounced in the last decade and as Assumption enters its second century, we have contributed to the College as an expression of our pride in its accomplishments and confidence in its future."

The Gronens have impressed and influenced many people through their leadership and their actions. One of David's business partners, Tom Carey '81 said, "What sets Dave..."