

HOFSTRA

M A G A Z I N E



James Metzger

James Metzger, a 1980 Division I All-American lacrosse player who played for the Hofstra Pride in 1979 and 1980, has donated funds to build a new men's lacrosse locker room at Hofstra. The locker room will be named for Mr. Metzger's former coach and former Athletics Director Harry Royle - who recently retired from Hofstra as director of athletic development - and his former teammate Vinnie Sombrotto.

"When Seth Tierney [head men's lacrosse coach] reached out to me and wanted to get me involved in the program," Mr. Metzger said, "I realized I had some unfinished business." Because of "off-the-field issues," Jim Metzger had cut short his lacrosse career. Though he came to Hofstra on an athletic scholarship and made the All-American team as a sophomore, he never played the game after that year. "I donated the money for the new locker room because I wanted to thank my coach for the support he gave me during my freshman and sophomore years and to pay homage to him," he explained. "And Vinnie Sombrotto is one of the greatest lacrosse players in the history of the game. In my eyes, Vinnie was the closest thing to a perfect player I have ever seen." Vinnie Sombrotto went on to become a 10-time Long Island-Hofstra Club champion and four-time USA player and was inducted into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

Jim Metzger had some unfinished academic business too. He left Hofstra in 1983 one course shy of his degree requirements. When

Mr. Metzger approached Professor Susan Yohn, chair of the History Department, about completing the requirements, he discovered that, because of curriculum changes, he now needed to take two courses to earn his degree. Mr. Metzger finished the first course last fall, and is now on track to complete his degree this May.

Since returning to Hofstra as a student after nearly 25 years, Mr. Metzger has noticed a lot of changes on campus. "Everything has been upgraded," he said, "and the academic brand has improved significantly." One of the best things about returning has been the opportunity to reconnect with faculty and staff he knew more than two decades ago. "I saw Professor [Michael] D'Innocenzo on my first day," he recalls. "He was the most passionate, charismatic professor I had."

As the most senior member of his class, Mr. Metzger found that both his classmates and the faculty valued his real-world experience. In fact, Mr. Metzger was invited to address the history honor society Phi Alpha Theta on the subject of transferring the skill sets they are developing as history majors to the business world. That was easy for Mr. Metzger. Reading, writing and analytical skills are "the foundation upon which I built my career and my life," he explained.

Mr. Metzger has applied those skills to the business world with great success. After getting a start in the insurance business, he started his own company in 1989. Today he is chairman and CEO of the Whitmore Group, a Garden City-based insurance brokerage that is the largest provider of property and casualty insurance products to the funeral industry nationwide.

Mr. Metzger, a bachelor, lives in Manhattan.