

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Executive MBA Program

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1206 South Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820



October 13, 2004

Larry F. Voitik Memorial Scholarship

The Executive MBA Alumni Board is, once again, proud to offer the Larry F. Voitik Memorial Scholarship! Mr. Voitik was a 1993 alumnus of the EMBA program and lost a battle with cancer within a year of his graduation, at age 41. An endowment has been established through the help of his classmates, his widow, the EMBA Program, and its alumni.

While Larry's personal goal of earning an MBA while earning a living as an entrepreneur was achieved, his study group members and his widow wish to ensure that his legacy is not forgotten. Therefore, one annual, unrestricted, cash scholarship will be awarded to a second-year traditional MBA student who demonstrates special interest in entrepreneurial activities and whose academic performance is among the top in the class. The amount of the award will be \$2,500.

The scholarship committee consists of 3 members of Larry's study group; his widow, Pam Voitik; and a member of the EMBA Alumni Board.

The criteria for selection of a possible recipient includes the following:

- ✓ Enrollment in the second year of the traditional MBA curriculum.
- ✓ Evidence of entrepreneurial interest, possibly through involvement in OSBI and the Center for Entrepreneurial Development.
- ✓ Cumulative GPA of 3.8 or better.
- ✓ Completion of a 2-page essay describing how you would use these funds if you are the recipient.
- ✓ A current résumé.
- ✓ 3 Faculty letters of recommendation.

The MBA office will administer the application process. Applicants should complete their essays by November 8, 2004. It is the intent of the committee to announce and make the award before the end of the fall semester.

You will find attached a brief summary of memories of Larry Voitik which you should review prior to making your nominations and which all applicants will read. Best of luck!

Sincerely,

Director
EMBA

The following narrative is a brief summary of our memories of Larry F. Voitik.

Larry Francis Voitik lost his battle with cancer on May 6, 1994. He was 41, and he was a survivor, one of those few people in life, that if you are lucky, you get a chance to know and learn from. One of the things that made him a survivor was his ability to see things for what they really were. "No" was never a definitive answer – it was always an opportunity.

Larry was born on May 20, 1952, the son of an ironworker and a housewife. Both of Larry's parents were hard working, strong-willed, ethical and compassionate people. And, like many other hard working people of the 1950s and 60s, money was not always in plentiful supply. At the age of fourteen, Larry secured his first business loan. It was not difficult; he had had a paper route since the age of seven and always seemed to earn more in tips than the other paper carriers. Unfortunately, as is true for many first-time business ventures, the intended course took a change in direction. That first loan was for an electric guitar and amplifier. He did not become a rock and roll star, but he did become a businessman. By the age of 21 he had already purchased his first home. At 24 he finally decided to give up the band, because his own business was demanding more and more time – and he enjoyed the business more.

He did not follow a decidedly academic path through elementary and high school. In fact, he spent a lot of time in shop classes. His counselors knew his older brothers and the neighborhood he came from. They let him know right up front that he would probably never amount to much, so he had better learn a trade if he was going to survive. Survive he did. That was the first of many of what Larry saw as opportunities in his lifetime.

Larry did continue his education at Joliet Junior College studying his first passion – music. His hopes were to transfer to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, but money was tight. He did not give up on going to college, he simply seized the opportunities that he knew someday would get him there.

He learned a trade. He became an electrician and eventually went to work for a local mom-and-pop alarm company. In the early days of home security systems, many of the companies selling and installing them were less than professional. Of course, Larry saw that as another opportunity. He started his own company. He put that early business experience to work and secured Small Business Administration loans that allowed his company to grow. With the capital he needed, he was able to concentrate on building a solid, trustworthy reputation for his company. As a result, it became a major competitive force in the area security system market.

That reputation also is what sold his business and gave him the financial freedom at the age of 34 to return to college full time. It was the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, however, this time it was not for music, it was electrical engineering. He made the grade; he got accepted. Not bad for someone the counselors said would never amount to much.

Throughout his life he was always willing to lend a hand to do whatever it took to get a job done whether it was for himself or to help someone else. He was able to transcend the barriers of class and education with ease – he enjoyed people and people enjoyed him. He was a natural leader, charismatic and genuine, a good friend, and a kind and caring husband and father.

To Larry's study group in particular, his impact was profound. He made a difference in our lives. As classmates, we were fortunate to be able to get to know him well. He provided critical assistance and support from the onset, helping his classmates with statistics, production management, and economics courses. With Larry's engineering background, the math was the easy part for him, and he helped make it easier for us. He was an excellent student and did not believe in anything less than an "A." He graduated with Honors and one of the highest GPA's in the class.

Larry possessed such extraordinary academic aptitude and people skills that he was able to make learning and working fun. He had a tremendous ability to explain concepts at any level. If you didn't get it the first time he would simply twist it around and show it to you from another direction. In our study group Larry was light years ahead of the rest of

us when it came to math (and most everything else) and if he wasn't sure he would double-check with Pam.

Larry was one of the most capable, focused and dedicated people we have ever met. He was a "case study" in what it takes to be successful. He had boundless energy, high standards, phenomenal work ethic and a will to succeed that would not be denied. But more than that, Larry was one who could **always** be counted on to lend a helping hand. Any hour, day or night, he was there for us. He was a driving force in our study group and our class. His pursuit of excellence and generosity in sharing his time and talents not only provided invaluable assistance to us his classmates, it also increased the quality of the EMBA experience for all who were fortunate enough to study with him.

Larry's ability to relate to people and his quick wit created fond memories for us all, as was the case for Billy Adkisson, who, along with Larry traveled extensively during his time in the program. Billy recalls numerous late night telephone conference calls from all over the country. Attempts to solve a formula or collaborate on a case study analysis would have to be interrupted for work the next day with the hope that the two students would be able to "find" each other in a different hotel in another city the next evening. They used to discuss their travels and the effects it had upon their families as well as upon themselves, and many a study group meeting was lightened with tales of "jet fumes" – the hilarious stories of their travels. None of us will probably ever smell "jet fumes" again without thinking of Larry.

Ken Van Der Griend will never forget the time that, during one of the groups many lunchtime walks, he disagreed with Larry about nothing important. It was only because he was more than 98% sure he was right that Ken ever took him on. The argument went on for two miles before someone else finally changed the subject to the weather or something equally unimportant. About two weeks later, in front of the entire group, Larry announced that Ken was right, implying that he was wrong. There was a long pause as everyone began to comprehend what they had just heard. This, of course, was followed by uproarious laughter as we all realized that Larry probably hadn't said that in a while. No one laughed harder than Larry.

Jeff Davey recalls that Larry's sense of humor was as enduring and dependable as any of his other stellar traits. No matter how challenging or stressful the circumstances, Larry could always be counted on to lighten up a meeting with jokes, stories or "jet fume" tales.

Larry was also a team player. Despite his travel schedule, he would always pick up that last task when everyone else was tired and reluctant to raise a hand. He was a very accomplished student and at his young age extremely successful in business, however his dedication as a father was unsurpassed. Toward the end of the first year of the program, Larry and Pam were blessed with the arrival of Laura. He was naturally very proud of his daughter and we heard him remark several times, even during our "class trip" to Europe and at our last visit with him in the hospital, that Laura was the best thing he had ever done.

Larry graduated with honors from the Executive MBA program at the University of Illinois in May of 1993 and was on the management fast track in the Security Systems Division of AT&T. The Larry F. Voitik Memorial Scholarship Fund was the brainchild of his EMBA study group. Quite simply, Larry was one of the "good guys" who helped us grow and succeed in a way that would not have been possible without him. The Scholarship is a way to help someone else in the way that Larry helped us to fulfill our dream of successfully completing an MBA at a great University. This is a way to keep Larry's spirit alive in others like him and to ensure that he always remain a part of the MBA program. Although we knew him for only a short period of time, we saw him for what he was; one of those few people in life...

Pam Voitik
Billy D. Adkisson, MBA "93"
Ken Van Der Griend, MBA "93"
Jeffrey W. Davey, MBA "93"
November 1999