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John P. Dols : Young Alumni Award

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2006 Young Alumni Award

John P. Dols '96

What John Dols did as a student at St. Norbert College has become a road map for his life since graduation. Described by a friend as “over-involved” at St. Norbert, John co-founded Make a Difference Day at the College; was a summer orientation leader for new students and their families; initiated a men’s support group; and, as an intern in the leadership and service office, played a major role in developing a social change leadership guidebook and creating a high school leadership camp the summer before he graduated.

John’s constant desire to improve St. Norbert College and the larger community was displayed in his active leadership of several student organizations, and in his involvement in community service projects, theater, campus ministry, student activities programming board and various campus-wide committees. Creating change appears to be a persistent motivation for all John does. As Tamie Klumpyan, former director of Leadership, Service and Involvement, described John, he “was an inspiration to many of his peers [as] he displayed optimism, leadership and enthusiasm throughout each activity and program he pursued.”

A religious studies major at St. Norbert, John’s service to his college and community was recognized by his receiving the Citizenship Service and Leadership Award, St. Norbert College’s Dean’s Award, Peer Leadership Award, and a commendation from the Mayor of De Pere for helping to plan the first Make a Difference Day – all in 1996, his senior year at St. Norbert!

Since January 1997, John has been a high school religion teacher, student organization advisor, coach of several sports, service trip coordinator for students, and student counselor on personal matters. In short, he uses a multitude of vehicles to reach students and influence their lives.

His first teaching assignment was at Appleton Xavier High School where he was co-founder and advisor of the Student Advisory Council, chaperone for a Dominican Republic service trip, Key Club advisor, and a speaker on topics that included teen morality. His work at Xavier was recognized as he was named Teacher of the Year and Advisor of the Year. At Menasha’s St. Mary’s Church, he was coordinator of youth ministry, and developed a youth ministry program.

For the past six years, John has taught at St. Thomas Academy in Minnesota. Once again, John has moved beyond the classroom to provide service and opportunities for service: as campus minister; as focus group member, working to improve communication and collegiality among employees and to improve the school climate; as KEE Club moderator, guiding students in

planning and implementing several community service projects; and as a middle school coach for four sports. John was subsequently honored with the 2004 Mizer Award for Excellence in Education.

This fall, John will begin a new adventure as dean of students at a Catholic high school in the Minneapolis area. In his new position, John “looks forward to being a part of shaping a culture of service and commitment to faith.”

John’s advice to current St. Norbert students, “do something you love, something you are passionate about ... Follow your dreams, follow your passions and see where that will take you.”

St. Norbert College

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