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2006 Alma Mater Award

Thomas Roovers '66

Like so many St. Norbert College graduates, Tom Roovers feels his four years at St. Norbert enriched him spiritually and intellectually. Since then, he has enriched the lives of countless individuals through his professional achievement, which has always incorporated Christian values, and through his volunteer efforts to help the poorest of the poor.

When Tom was only a year out of college, he co-founded Management Systems of Wausau, a medical group practice software company that designed and developed real-time software for physician office operations. Over the years since, he has become a national entrepreneur and leader in the field of physician practice management software and electronic medical records. He has designed, developed, marketed and implemented information concepts and software to facilitate data processing in the medical world.

When Management Systems of Wausau was sold to CyCare in 1985, Tom immediately founded T.G. Roovers & Associates, for which he continues to serve as CEO. In 1990, he co-founded Healthcare Processing Systems and launched a software product that quickly became nationally recognized as a leader in the medical group practice software industry. In 1998, he became President of ThinkMed, LLC, a medical intelligence software company.

Then, in 2000, he co-founded Solutions for Healthcare, LLC, a consulting firm comprised of healthcare experts who assist medical group practices in optimizing their practice management and electronic medical record software.

Through his work as CEO of T.G. Roovers & Associates and as managing partner of Solutions for Healthcare, Tom continues to write (monographs and more than 80 articles for national journals pertaining to his field of expertise), lecture and consult.

A true “legend in the national physician practice field,” Tom has earned a reputation for being principled and uncompromising in his business ethics and integrity. Typical of the esteem in which his business associates hold him is this statement from one of them; Tom is “unquestionably ethical, fair and dedicated to a win-win attitude in business,” and that “everything he does brings honor to those around him ... in a time when ethics, especially in business, are under serious question, Tom lifts the standard.”

Tom’s service to the medical field is but half his story. The rest of the story emanates from his time as a St. Norbert student, for it was the College that “taught me that my brothers and sisters

lived all around the globe.”

Responding to such Norbertine core values as responding to particular needs of people throughout the world and the importance of service as a transformative experience, Tom and Mary Pat, his wife of 41 years, have exemplified the biblical “to whom much has been given, much will be expected.”

In 1986, Tom spent two weeks with a humanitarian project on the island of St. Lucia, West Indies. Inspired by this experience, he continued this involvement during the next 10 years. Then in 1997, Tom and Mary Pat decided that they wanted to organize projects that would assist the poor throughout the year. They established the Helping Hands organization. This organization coordinates shipments of materials and supplies to Jamaica, as well as schedules multiple mission trips each year, inviting 12-14 volunteers to construct houses, schools and medical clinics; repair roofs; paint; make home visits; provide medical care and spend time with children.

As an example of the magnitude of this work since 1997, Helping Hands has packed, shipped and delivered 582 tons of materials (medical, clothing, school supplies, furnishings, lumber, etc.) valued at more than \$7.6 million—all to assist the less fortunate. Shortly before Christmas, Tom traveled to Jamaica by himself to build a house for a woman and her nine children who otherwise would have had no shelter. Besides building and repairing houses, Helping Hands has built or refurbished churches, schools, rectories, convents and a medical clinic, and has provided playground equipment for parish schools. Through the Helping Hands organization, about 20 children are sponsored for basic school, primary school and college education each year.

Extending their work beyond Jamaica, Tom and Mary Pat have led three humanitarian trips to Kenya, Africa. In 2004 they led 24 volunteers in building a church, and in August of 2006, accompanied 30 volunteers to work in five villages—building houses and outdoor toilets, repairing roofs and constructing beds. As one of Tom’s friends wrote, “He has an uncanny ability to draw others in and get caught up in his excitement of Christian values and humanitarianism.”

And as the bishop emeritus of Mandeville, Jamaica, said, Tom and Mary Pat “have established close friendships with the most marginalized of society.”

Tom’s St. Norbert education undoubtedly helped him throughout his professional life. The Norbertine spirit and Christian ideals imbued there have distinguished his entire life as he leads by example in expressing his faith through his and Mary Pat’s service to their fellow human beings—whoever they may be, wherever they may live.

St. Norbert College

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